



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Social Services

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Courier 56-20-25 Fax 919-715-0023

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Buell, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director
(919) 733-3055

September 5, 2001

Dear County Director of Social Services and Area Mental Health Program Director:

Subject: Interim Plan for Implementation of Resident Evaluation Services

This letter is to tell you about the Department of Health and Human Services' interim plan for implementation of Resident Evaluation Services.

As you know, the 1999 Session of the General Assembly directed county departments of social services to provide Resident Evaluation Services (RES) to applicants and recipients of State/County Special Assistance for Adults (SA). In related legislation, Senate Bill 10, the General Assembly directed adult care homes licensed under G.S. 131D to assess all residents, using an assessment instrument approved by DHHS, within 72 hours of admission and annually thereafter, and to develop comprehensive care plans based on the assessment. The Medical Care Commission adopted licensure rules requiring adult care homes licensed under G.S. 131D to assess all residents for care planning purposes and to use the RAI assessment instrument approved by DHHS for the assessment.

The RAI-ALNC assessment instrument will be used by county departments of social services for Resident Evaluation Services and by adult care homes licensed under G.S. 131D. The DHHS is in the process of automating this instrument for statewide use. A pilot of the automated RAI-ALNC system as well as the programmatic policies and procedures is to occur prior to statewide implementation.

Given that the pilot and statewide implementation of RES will take some time to carry out, Secretary Carmen Hooker Buell directed us to develop an interim plan to immediately screen SA recipients for possible referral for mental health, developmental disabilities, and/or substance abuse services. This interim plan will help to assure that the legislative requirement for RES to identify and refer SA recipients for mental health services is met until statewide implementation for this program is complete. The interim plan involves **all** county DSSs and area mental health programs and is described in the attachment.

Currently there are 23,100 SA recipients statewide. The Divisions of Social Services and Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services (MH/DD/SAS) are working with the Division of Medical Assistance to use data from the Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS) to identify a subset of SA/Medicaid recipients who need to be screened and possibly referred for further evaluation of the need for mental health treatment or habilitation services.

County DSSs will use existing adult services staff and funding sources to screen SA/Medicaid recipients for possible referral for mental health, developmental disabilities, and/or substance abuse services. Referrals may be made to area mental health programs or other qualified professionals. County DSSs will use a short, paper screening tool based on a subset of the questions on the RAI-ALNC assessment instrument.

Area mental health programs will use their established procedures for handling these referrals, which is to assess the individual and determine if services are needed. Time frames for completing evaluations and communicating with county DSSs and facilities about findings from the evaluation by the area mental health program are outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Divisions of Social Services and MH/DD/SAS dated February 8, 2000. A copy of the MOU is included with this letter for your ready reference.

We anticipate that all screenings/appropriate referrals will be completed by June 30, 2002. Once the MMIS data is evaluated, and the exact number of SA recipients to be screened has been determined, this completion time frame will be adjusted as needed.

Staff from the Divisions of Social Services and MH/DD/SAS will conduct training for county DSS and area mental health program staff. This one-day training will be conducted during the months of October/November 2001 at nine locations across the state. Your agencies will soon receive a training announcement with information about registration and directions to the training sites. Training dates and locations are included in the attachment.

Additional information about the RES legislative mandate and the interim plan is enclosed with this letter. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Suzanne Merrill (919-733-3818) or your Adult Programs Representative in the Division of Social Services, and Dave Peterson (DD Section-919-733-4665) or Ken Marsh (Adult Mental Health Section-919-571-4980) in the Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services.

Sincerely,

Pheon E. Beal, Director
Division of Social Services

Authur J. Robarge, Acting Director
Division of Mental Health/Developmental
Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services

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