

Important Information for Physicians Concerning TennCare Changes in Coverage of Private Duty Nursing and Home Health

WHO:

- Adult TennCare enrollees age 21 and over will be affected by these changes.
- Children under the age of 21 will **NOT** be affected

WHAT:

CHANGES TO PRIVATE DUTY NURSING

TennCare will only cover private duty nursing (PDN) for adult patients who:

1. Are ventilator dependent (for at least 12 hours per day), OR
2. Have a functioning tracheostomy requiring suctioning AND need other specified types of nursing care*.

* Patient must require all of the following: 1) oxygen, 2) nebulizer or cough assist, 3) medication via G-tube, PICC line or central port and 4) TPN or nutrition via G-tube.

CHANGES TO HOME HEALTH

For all other adult patients, the following home health (HH) coverage limits will apply:

Limits for Most Adult TennCare Enrollees

Home Health Aide Care

- Up to 35 hours per week
 - No more than 8 hours/day
 - No more than 2 visits/day
 - HH aide and nurse care combined cannot exceed 35 hours per week
- For example, 35 hours/week =
 - 7 hours, 5 days/week
 - 5 hours, 7 days/week

Home Health Nurse Care

- Up to 27 hours per week
 - Each visit must be < 8 hrs
 - No more than 1 visit/day
 - HH nurse and aide care combined cannot exceed 35 hours per week
- For example, 27 hours/week =
 - 5 hours, 5 days/week
 - 3.5 hours, 7 days/week

Limits for TennCare Adults Who Qualify for Level 2 (Skilled) Nursing Facility Care

Home Health Aide Care

- Up to 40 hours per week
 - No more than 8 hours/day
 - No more than 2 visits/day
 - HH aide and HH nurse care combined cannot exceed 40 hours per week
- For example, 40 hours/week =
 - 8 hours, 5 days a week
 - 5.5 hours, 7 days a week

Home Health Nurse Care

- Up to 30 hours per week
 - Each visit must be < 8 hrs
 - No more than 1 visit/day
 - HH nurse and HH aide care combined cannot exceed 40 hours per week
- For example, 30 hours/week =
 - 6 hours, 5 days/week
 - 4 hours, 7 days/week

WHEN:

- Effective **September 8, 2008** for **new** orders.
- Effective as early as September 18, 2008 for **existing** orders.

WHY:

- 24/7 private duty nursing costs on average over \$300,000 per person per year compared to an average annual skilled nursing home cost of less than \$60,000.
- TennCare's private duty nursing and home health costs have grown from \$54 million to \$243 million in a four year period.
- The annual growth rate of 53% is unsustainable in a taxpayer funded program.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ASSIST YOUR PATIENTS:

A notice of the benefit change was mailed to **all** adult enrollees on August 8th. On September 8th, MCOs will begin sending an additional letter to any patient who is currently receiving amounts of care in excess of the new limits providing 10 day advance notice before TennCare stops payment on services exceeding the limits.

It is critical that you work with your patients currently receiving amounts of care in excess of the limits to determine the best course of action which may include:

1. A new order for an amount of home health which is covered by TennCare.
2. A continued order for the same amount of home health, with the understanding that the patient will be financially liable for amounts of care exceeding the limits.
3. An order for nursing home care, if you and the patient/patient's family believe this is needed.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THESE BENEFITS:

- Home health services and private duty nursing orders require prior authorization by the MCO. The ordering physician must provide **specific information** regarding the services the nurse or aide is expected to perform (not just an order for a number of hours of care).
- A home health nurse visit for an adult will **NOT** be extended in order to perform skilled nursing functions at more than one point during the day, unless skilled nursing services are medically necessary throughout the intervening period.
- Home health nurses/aides and private duty nurses do **NOT**:
 - provide general supervision, safety monitoring or sitter services
 - provide non "hands on" care such as housecleaning and meal preparation
 - transport patients
- Home health nurses/aides do **NOT** accompany adult patients outside the home.
- Private duty nurses may accompany an adult patient outside the home **only** to school, work or health care appointments.
- Home health and private duty nursing can **include** services to teach and train the patient and the patient's caregivers to manage the patient's treatment regimen.
- To ensure the health and safety of the patient, in order to receive PDN, the patient must have a family member or other caregiver trained and willing to meet the patient's nursing and non-nursing needs.