



August 13, 2009

TIME SENSITIVE INFO! PLEASE READ ENTIRE LETTER ASAP!!

Dear Respite Families and Caregivers:

Effective 7/1/09, families may not use more than 90 hours of respite per quarter without an exception, according to new laws* associated with the state budget passed on 7/28/09. Our letter to families in July stated that our agency had begun implementing the new respite restrictions in the state. Please review the information below and contact our office immediately if you have any related questions or concerns.

- **What are the new respite standards?** The Department of Developmental Services has ordered regional centers to not pay out more than 90 hours per quarter, based on a family's authorization. This equates to a monthly authorization of 30 hours. We have already started receiving authorizations reduced back to July 1st. Therefore, as of July 1, any hours submitted for payment to a caregiver that exceed 3 months of a family's authorized respite (or max 90 hours/quarter, whichever is less) will not be paid until we have received written approval from the regional center. As an example, if a family is authorized for 24 hours/mo, they will be limited to 72 hours/quarter. Families who have acted as the Respite Caregiver's employer for directing care above their authorized amounts will be responsible for reimbursing the caregiver directly.
- **Will our unused respite hours continue to roll month to month?** Yes, but only within the quarter, and only up to three months worth of hours. It is our understanding that hours cannot be saved up throughout the year and used all at once, unless an exception has been received from the regional center allowing that pattern of use. Quarters end Sept. 30, Dec. 31, March 31, and June 30th of each year.
- **What if our family has a current exception?** If a family's hours currently exceed 30 hours/mo, and their exception was approved prior to 7/28/09, they should call their Service Coordinator right away to make sure that the exception is still valid.
- **What if a family needs more than 90 hours/quarter? What are the new criteria for exceptions (aka "exemptions")?**
 - a. The family should contact the regional center and ask for an emergency IPP meeting to discuss their respite needs
 - b. The family needs to be prepared to explain why they need more than 90 hours/quarter of respite.

The only reasons that the regional center can now grant a respite exception are as follows:

- (i) the **intensity of the consumer's care and supervision needs** are such that additional respite hours are necessary to maintain the consumer in the family home, or
- (ii) there is an **extraordinary event** that impacts the family member's ability to meet the care and supervision needs of the consumer.

If any changes are made to a family's authorization, we ask that they please call our office immediately! The regional center Service Coordinator caseloads have gone up again and there is a lot of confusion about all the changes in services, so we need to make sure communication between everyone remains open and clear.

We are here to help you, so please call if you have any questions. Families can call or email us at anytime for a breakdown of the hours they have been authorized to receive, hours paid out, and hours remaining each quarter. Caregivers are responsible to help the families keep track of hours too. PLEASE carefully track all of your hours on a calendar, or ask us to send you one.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon M. Francis".

Sharon M. Francis
Chief Executive Officer
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