



Family Resource Network  
of Alameda County



# A GUIDE TO In-Home Nursing Services for Children with Special Health Care Needs in Alameda County

## What are in home nursing services?

- A nurse comes to the child's home and provides medical care because of the complexity of the child's medical needs. Home nursing services can help to keep a child at home who might otherwise need to be cared for in a hospital or other medical facility.

## How would I know that my child needs nursing services at home?

- Your child's doctor decides if he/she needs nursing services at home. Recommendations for nursing are usually made when the child has had a change in his/her medical condition or is being discharged from the hospital.
- There is no list that says which medical conditions require home nursing services. However, typically a child needing medical care throughout their day, such as a child with uncontrolled seizures, a tracheotomy, dialysis or with a g-tube, **might** need these services.

## If I think that my child needs nursing, what do I need to do?

- IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD NEEDS NURSING SERVICES, YOU SHOULD START DISCUSSING THIS WITH YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
- Make sure that the doctor understands all your concerns and needs so that they can recommend the appropriate number of hours to adequately care for your child.
- When your doctor recommends nursing, he/she writes a *letter of medical necessity* to your insurer describing why the service is necessary for your child. It's a good idea to get and keep a copy of that letter.

## Who pays for nursing services?

- This can be complicated and confusing as there are a number of options and steps that you may need to go through.
- If you have **private health insurance**, then you first **MUST** request that **THEY** provide this service.
- You will need the letter of medical necessity no matter who pays for the nursing service. Your private health insurer will review the doctor's request **and if they agree nursing is medically necessary** then they will contract with a provider to send a nurse to your home for a certain number of hours per day.
- Your insurer will review your child's circumstances periodically, to make sure that the services continue to be necessary for your child.

**If you don't have private insurance OR if your insurance denies coverage OR provides fewer hours than recommended by your doctor, there are government-funded programs that may be able to pay for these services.**

**California Children Services (CCS):** A child with a serious medical condition who has Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, or is low-income may be eligible for CCS services. A list of CCS eligible medical conditions can be found at [www.acphd.org/media/89292/ccsprovbro.pdf](http://www.acphd.org/media/89292/ccsprovbro.pdf). **CCS will only approve nursing services if the need for nursing is the result of CCS eligible condition.** If your child needs nursing services, your child's nurse case manager will assist you in obtaining these services. You can also call the Parent Health Liaison at Family Resource Network for assistance.

**If your child is not eligible for CCS, Medi-Cal may be able to pay for these services. You will have to apply for Medi-Cal, if you don't already have it. Regional Center clients may be eligible for Medi-Cal regardless of their parents' income or assets. Your regional center caseworker can assist you in this process.**

**Medi-Cal:** Your child may be enrolled in either Managed Care or Fee-for-Service Medi-Cal. In Alameda County managed care is provided by Alameda Alliance for Health or Anthem Blue Cross.

- Medi-Cal Managed Care: Your child's doctor must send an Authorization Request to the Utilization Management Department of the respective managed care plan.
- Fee-for-Service (FFS): Your child's doctor needs to submit a **Treatment Authorization Request** (called a **TAR**) to the county Medi-Cal office for approval. Most children who also have private insurance have FFS Medi-Cal. The TAR is sent to the county Medi-Cal office.

**If your child does not have private insurance, CCS, or Medi-Cal OR if more hours are needed than what has been approved, OR if there is a delay in getting nursing services approved, there is one more option.**

**Regional Center is the "payor of last resort."** Children who are clients of the Regional Center may be eligible for nursing services but only after getting denials from other agencies that might pay for these services. This may offer only a short-term solution for nursing services and may require that a family formally appeal the denials of other agencies. Regional Center will only pay for or supplement up to 16 hours/day of nursing. Your Regional Center caseworker can help you get nursing services approved.

**REMEMBER THERE ARE APPEALS PROCESSES FOR EACH AGENCY. ALWAYS REQUEST DENIALS IN WRITING, AND MAKE SURE AUTHORIZATIONS ARE KEPT UP TO DATE.**

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Family Resource Network	(510) 547-7322
California Children Services:	(510) 208-5970
Alameda Alliance:	1-877-371-2222/ TTY :711 or 1-800-735-2929
Anthem Blue Cross (Medi-Cal):	1-800-467-4627 (Customer Care Department)
Department of Managed Care:	(800) 466-2219
Department of Insurance:	(800) 927-4357
Medi-Cal Ombudsperson:	(888) 452-8609
Regional Center of the East Bay	(510) 383-1200