

TO: Local District Commissioners, Medicaid Directors

FROM: Betty Rice, Director
Division of Consumer and Local District Relations

SUBJECT: Personal Emergency Response Services (PERS)

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Local District Support Unit
Upstate (518) 474-8216 NYC (212) 268-6855

GIS MESSAGE ON PERSONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICES

The purpose of this GIS message is to clarify certain aspects of the assessment process that social services districts should apply when determining whether personal emergency response services ("PERS") are appropriate for personal care services applicants or recipients.

Personal emergency response services mean (1) "the provision and maintenance of electronic communication equipment in the home of an individual which signals a monitoring agency for help when activated by the individual, or after a period of time if a timer mechanism has not been reset; and (2) the continuous monitoring of such signals by a trained operator and, in case of receipt of such signals, the immediate notification of such emergency response organizations or persons, if necessary, as the individual has previously specified." [18 NYCRR § 505.33(a)]

Social services districts must evaluate all requests for PERS in accordance with Department regulations at 18 NYCRR § 505.33 and 91 Administrative Directive Memorandum 42, entitled "Personal Emergency Response Services (PERS) Procedures and Guidelines." In addition, social services districts should bear in mind the following criteria when assessing whether a particular Medicaid recipient is appropriate for PERS:

1. PERS authorizations must be based on an individualized assessment. The social services district must evaluate all requests for PERS solely on the basis of the individual's medical or functional need for PERS, as determined on an individualized, case-by-case basis. Authorizations and reauthorizations for PERS must be based on the physician's order and the comprehensive assessment required by Department regulations at 18 NYCRR § 505.33(c).

2. No threshold amount or level of personal care services is required. Social services districts must not require that PERS applicants receive any threshold or minimum number of hours of personal care services to be eligible for a PERS. However, PERS is not a "stand-alone" service. This means that the social services district must not authorize PERS for any applicant unless the applicant also requires, and is authorized to receive, assistance with one or more personal care services tasks.

3. PERS does not substitute for assistance with personal care services tasks. Social services districts must not authorize PERS as a substitute for, or in lieu of, assistance with recognized personal care services tasks, such as transferring, toileting or walking.