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Better Health Care for all Floridians

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Twelve Months of Actions to Support Medically Complex Children

–Additional, new program for all children who receive private duty nursing services to begin soon–

Tallahassee, Fla. – In the last year, the State has taken many steps to support medically complex children and the Agency continues to work toward improving processes for all children. A summary of some of the most significant actions taken in the last year is listed below. This list represents some of the actions taken by the Agency for Health Care Administration (the Agency), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). **The number of children in skilled nursing facilities decreased from 221 in September 2012 to 195 in February 2013.**

“We’re not stopping here,” said Secretary Liz Dudek. “In an effort to ensure the children receive the appropriate level of care that they need, in the coming months, the Agency will begin a program of increased care coordination for all medically complex children who receive Medicaid private duty nursing services in the home.”

This program will ensure that the prescribing and reviewing physicians each use the same medical and social support information to conduct a comprehensive review of what services are needed. In addition, it will help both parties confirm all necessary supports are being provided to keep the children in their home. As a part of the care coordination process, all services and supports for these children will be reviewed using an inter-disciplinary team approach between the child’s treating physician, the child’s family, the prior authorization nurse and physician, and the multi-agency care team.

“Through this additional level of coordination, we believe we can provide a sense of predictability among parents who have medically involved children,” said Justin Senior, Medicaid Director. “Reviewing the documentation and authorizing all services at the same time should improve the flow of communication between the provider and our quality improvement organization. We look forward to working with Florida families on this enhancement.”

Highlights of actions taken in the last 12 months include:

- **March 2012:** The Agency implemented quality assurance measures with its contractor, eQHealth Solutions, to ensure that no reductions in home health services for children occur unless there is a change in the child's medical or social circumstance. As a result, the quarterly denial average of private duty nursing/personal care services requests decreased.
- **September 2012:** Agency staff visited all children residing in a skilled nursing facility to determine whether they were being provided necessary services.

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Agency staff also contacted the parents/guardians of children residing in a skilled nursing facility to discuss the option of having a Children's Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (CMAT) reassessment of their child's case.

- **October 2012:** The Agency, through its contractor, began visiting with the parents of children receiving private duty nursing services in the home to determine their satisfaction with the level of services. **Since October, 967 parents have been consulted; 99.1% expressed satisfaction with the level of services and amount of hours that their child is receiving.**
- **November 2012:** DCF implemented a prior approval process for children in the care and custody of the State for all transition requests between facilities as well as transitions to foster family placements.
- **December 2012:** The Agency began an enhanced weekly monitoring process whereby a 10% sample of all denied requests for private duty nursing services will be reviewed to ensure that services are not inappropriately denied.

The Agency launched the enhanced care coordination and transition planning process for all Medicaid eligible children residing in a skilled nursing facility.

The Agency, DOH and DCF held a face-to-face meeting with various advocacy agencies representing children and disabled persons to discuss the State's policy improvements and solicit recommendations for additional improvements.

- **January 2013:** The Agency's nurse care coordinators began contacting families and began transition efforts for several medically complex children residing in skilled nursing facilities.

The Agency submitted an amendment to the Model waiver to reserve capacity for children transitioning from skilled nursing facilities to provide additional supports to facilitate transitions.

- **February 2013:** The Agency initiated rulemaking to improve its service delivery system for in-home and community based care for medically complex and medically fragile children.

Local staff from the Department of Children and Families' community-based care agencies met with the local DOH Medical Foster Care (MFC) teams to discuss recruitment efforts for identifying additional foster care parents in order to increase the number of MFC parents. Several dozen prospective MFC parents around the state are working through the process.

Agency staff held additional meetings with families and advocacy agency stakeholders to discuss Medicaid services for medically complex and medically fragile children.

The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. The Agency administers Florida's Medicaid program, licenses and regulates more than 40,000 health care facilities and 37 health maintenance organizations, and publishes health care data and statistics at www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov.

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