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**SECRETARY**

January 17, 2025

## **Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) Contract Interpretation: 2025-01**

Applicable to the **2025-2030 SMMC contract** benefits for:

- Managed Medical Assistance (MMA) and MMA Specialty
- Long-Term Care (LTC)
- Dental

### **Re: Nursing Facility Transition Assistance Benefit**

The Managed Care Plan shall perform the program enhancements in accordance with Attachment II and its Exhibits. The Managed Care Plan's Plan-Specific Commitments are described in Exhibit I-N, Plan-Specific Commitments, of Attachment I. The Agency reserves the right to modify Exhibit I-N as needed. The Agency will provide the Managed Care Plan with at least thirty (30) calendar days written notice before changes become effective (Attachment I, Section IV.B.). The purpose of this contract interpretation is to provide clarification regarding the Nursing Facility Transition Assistance benefit.

To help meet the challenges faced by families of children residing in nursing facilities due to complex health needs, the Agency has negotiated with SMMC plans to develop a Nursing Facility Transition Assistance benefit that will be available beginning February 2025. While there are variations by health plan (Attachment 1), the benefit is based on a child's comprehensive assessment that determines what is needed to transition the child from the nursing facility. This benefit:

- May be used to address housing-related barriers to moving a child home with their family
- May be used only after covered services and expanded benefits have first been incorporated into the overall plan for addressing the child's needs
- May not include direct monetary payments to the family
- May not be used for exclusively aesthetic purposes or beyond what is needed to overcome the barrier to transition

The Nursing Facility Transition Assistance benefit is intended to have broad application to address many types of barriers to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the child, while balancing the tenets of innovation and reasonableness. Although there is a recognition that many families are challenged to secure affordable housing, this benefit cannot be used as an ongoing source of rental assistance or other long-term housing payments. Health plans should address issues of that nature by assisting families to coordinate with organizations and agencies that provide housing assistance funds or access to public housing programs.



Examples of uses of the Nursing Facility Transition Assistance benefit include, but are not limited to:

- Renovations to a home (beyond what would be available through a home modification covered service or expanded benefit) such as improving the electrical system in the home to be able to support the power needs of a ventilator or other medical equipment with substantial power needs
- Purchase of a generator to address equipment needs during power outages
- An addition to the home to provide the child with their own bedroom large enough to accommodate required medical equipment
- An addition to allow a family member such as a grandparent to move in with the family to assist with the child's care or to provide space for private duty nursing in the home.
- The addition of an accessible bathroom if the current bathrooms could not be successfully renovated with home modification funding
- Adaptations to or purchase of an equipped vehicle to meet the child's transportation needs.
- Deposits to facilitate transition, including rental security deposits and move-in fees
- Renovations to address the needs of other children in the home and pets so that bringing the child home from a nursing facility does not negatively impact the well-being of other family members
- Repairs or services to a home to ensure a healthy environment, such as mold mitigation, carpet cleaning, HVAC system repairs, or pest control
- Funding to facilitate moving the child to family that resides out-of-state or to assist families living out-of-state to move back to Florida

The Agency recognizes that families may have unique circumstances that necessitate viewing the appropriateness of the uses of the funding as highly individualized. For example, if divorced parents have joint custody of the child, use of funds at more than one household may be appropriate for that family but not for another family whose occasional visits to an extended family member's home do not factor into the decision of whether a child can be safely transitioned home.

The Agency encourages health plans to creatively use this innovative benefit to achieve transition success. This benefit offering has been incorporated in the Health Enrollee Handbook template. Plans must insert their plan-specific offering and provide that update to their Agency contract manager for approval (Attachments 2 and 3). Agency oversight will be focused on ensuring there is access to the benefit, there is judicious use of limited funds with efforts to maximize other funding sources first, and there is well-documented assessment and care planning efforts surrounding use of the benefit alongside other covered services.

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Also attached to this communication is the letter template (Attachment 4) sent by the Agency to families of children residing in nursing facilities due to complex health needs to notify them of this new benefit available.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact your Agency contract manager.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Meyer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Brian Meyer  
Deputy Secretary for Medicaid

BM/jp

Attachment 1: Plan-Specific Nursing Facility Transition Assistance Benefit Details

Attachment 2: Health Enrollee Handbook Template

Attachment 3: Health Enrollee Handbook Template - Redline

Attachment 4: Nursing Facility Transition Assistance Benefit Letter