


MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 3, 2009

TO: DD Waiver Providers, DD Waiver Case Management Agencies, DDS D Staff, DHI Staff Interested Parties

FROM: 
Jennifer Thorne-Lehman, Deputy Director

SUBJECT: ASPIRATION RISK MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL MANUAL – PILOT PHASE

Having completed multiple training sessions in all regions statewide regarding the new Aspiration Risk Management Protocol, effective August 3, 2009 we will officially begin the pilot phase of this initiative. Therefore teams shall implement this protocol in conjunction with each individual's annual ISP meeting for all **adults** (age 21 and older) served through the DD Waiver. Per the protocol, the screening tool should be completed by the responsible agency nurse two weeks prior to the meeting, with results discussed at the annual meeting and proceeding through the rest of the protocol based upon results of the screening. The protocol should also be implemented upon discharge from any hospitalization for aspiration pneumonia.

In December we will be issuing a survey to collect information from teams about their experience with this new protocol, so that it can be refined prior to being published as a proposed regulation in spring 2010. There will also be a public hearing and comment period when the proposed regulation is published. Your trial of the protocol and subsequent feedback is essential to making sure that the final regulation is sound. Implementation of the new protocol should continue as a "pilot" until it is replaced with the final regulation, therefore individuals who have annual meetings in January through June may still be under the current version of the protocol manual.

I realize that many of you have already begun to use the protocol for individuals who had annual ISP meetings in July. Please know that we greatly appreciate your prompt implementation and that your feedback will be used as well. The delay in the *official* start of the pilot phase is due to: 1) the need to postpone the training for the Southeast Region until mid July and 2) the need to edit the protocol manual to provide clarification based on questions collected at the various training sessions. I appreciate your patience.

The Aspiration Risk Management Protocol Manual and all associated forms and support materials will be posted in the "What's New" section of the DDS D website as well as in the Clinical Services Bureau section. We encourage you to review this document and associated tools and forms thoroughly.

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Should you have questions or need technical assistance please do not hesitate to call our Aspiration Coordinator, Deborah Brady at (505) 841-6188 who will be happy to provide or arrange the help you need.

During the pilot phase, the Division of Health Improvement has agreed that if they identify a team that should have begun to pilot the new protocol, but either has not done so, or is struggling to do so, they will refer that team to the Regional Office for technical assistance through submission of a Request for Regional Office Intervention (RORI) form. They will not be issuing deficiencies during the pilot phase related to the new protocol manual. However, they may issue a deficiency if the team is not at least in compliance with the current Aspiration Prevention Policy & Procedure effective since 2004. (Those that implement the new protocol will *exceed* the requirements in the 2004 Policy & Procedure.)

I am also still working with our Senior Management to explore possible mechanisms to provide additional compensation to providers serving individuals identified in the high risk category to support the extra time involved in implementing the high risk protocol. Further information regarding this matter will be issued under separate cover.

I appreciate your assistance in this endeavor.