

South Carolina
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
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March 12, 2008

HH-HOSP 08-03
NF-CRCF 08-02
NF-GEN 08-02
NF-ICF/MR 08-02
NF-IMD 08-02
NF-IP/IMD 08-02
NF-SB 08-02

MEDICAID BULLETIN

TO: Nursing Facilities, Hospice Agencies, and Nurse Aide Programs

SUBJECT: Paid Feeding Assistant Program

- I. Paid Feeding Assistant**
- II. State Approved Training Course**
- III. Procedures for State Approval**
- IV. Procedures for Bi-Yearly Approval**
- V. Survey Process**
- VI. Cost Reporting**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services published a Federal Register notice on September 26, 2003 allowing long-term care facilities to use paid feeding assistants (PFAs) to supplement the services of certified nursing assistants (CNAs) during mealtimes. In response to the notice, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) published a Medicaid Bulletin dated January 5, 2004 informing nursing facilities of the option to utilize PFAs to augment services during meals with the intent to reduce the incidences of unplanned weight loss and dehydration.

I. Paid Feeding Assistant

A PFA is a person who is paid by a facility to feed residents, or who is used under an arrangement with another agency or organization. A PFA must successfully complete an eight (8) hour State-approved training course, prior to feeding residents. The PFA must work under the supervision of a registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical nurse (LPN). In the event of an emergency, a PFA must call a supervisory nurse for help on the resident call system. The resident call system not only includes the standard hard-wired or wireless call system, but other means by which, in an emergency situation, a PFA can achieve timely notification of a supervisory nurse.

II. State Approved Training Course

PFAs must successfully complete an eight (8) hour State-approved feeding assistant training course. See Attachment A for State Approval Guidelines and Attachment B for the SCDHHS Core Curriculum outline. The facility must maintain a record of all individuals used by the facility as paid feeding assistants and must maintain documentation of successful completion of the State approved training course by those individuals. Nursing facilities may use an existing curriculum; however, it must adhere to minimum federal guidelines and be approved by SCDHHS.

III. Procedures for State Approval

Prior to establishing a PFA program, you must complete the state approval process. SCDHHS is the agency solely responsible for approving training curricula. To initiate this process, interested facilities must contact the Program Representative at (803) 898-2590. Once contacted, SCDHHS will mail a packet that includes Attachment A, which lists program requirements and acknowledges your interest in beginning a PFA program. State approval is given only after successful completion of an onsite review of your program. The onsite review will consist of the following: review of trainer credentials, an observation of the eight (8) hour training, review of PFA's training files and interviews with PFAs.

IV. Procedures for Bi-Yearly Approval

Once initial approval has been granted, each program will be required to complete subsequent reviews every 24 months from the date the program successfully completed the initial review. Procedures for subsequent reviews will be generally the same as procedures for completing the initial review. Effective **January 1, 2008**, a review will be conducted for all programs currently providing this service.

V. Survey Process

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control will continue to provide oversight during surveys to ensure adherence of the regulation. The PFA requirement has five (5) aspects:

- PFAs must complete a State-approved training course;
- PFAs must work under the supervision of an RN or LPN and in an emergency, must call a supervisory nurse for help on the resident call system;

- PFAs assist only those residents who have no complicated health problems related to eating or drinking that make them ineligible for these services;
- PFAs provide assistance in accordance with the resident's needs, based on the charge nurse's assessment and the resident's latest individualized assessment and plan of care; and
- The facility must maintain a record of all individuals used by the facility as PFAs, and must maintain documentation of successful completion of a State-approved training course by these individuals.

VI. Cost Reporting

The cost of PFAs should be reflected in the Nursing cost center. However, training costs associated with PFAs must be reported under the "CNA Training and Testing" cost center.

If you have any questions regarding the program, please refer to the Attachment C or contact the Program Representative at (803) 898-2590. Thank you for your continued support and participation in the South Carolina Medicaid program.

/s/

Emma Forkner
Director

EF/mwhtk

Attachments

NOTE: To receive Medicaid bulletins by email, please send an email to bulletin@scdhhs.gov indicating your email address and contact information.

To sign up for Electronic Funds Transfer of your Medicaid payment, please go to the following link for instructions: <http://www.scdhhs.gov/dhhsnew/serviceproviders/eft.asp>