



Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care

Southeast Region Health Care Quality Unit

Health Care Alert

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION PROVIDING TIPS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION AND THEIR SUPPORT TEAMS IN ACCESSING HEALTH CARE THROUGH THE MANAGED CARE SYSTEM

Oral Hygiene Updates



Regional Dental Provider Survey



Do you have the feeling that the number of dentists willing to work with people with mental retardation is shrinking? So do we, so PCHC put together a survey to collect the names and types of all dental providers used across the Southeast Region. The survey stems from a request by the Southeast Dental Steering Committee to look at access to dental care across the state for people with special needs, and will serve to provide accurate information to the State Offices of Mental Retardation and Medical Assistance Programs. The survey will collect information about specific dentists and the types of dental services provided by each, based on the following categories:

- ☺ **Primary:** Dentist provides routine care (I.e. fillings, cleanings, X- Rays, prophylaxis)
- ☺ **Secondary:** Specialty dentist (I.e. periodontist, endodontist, orthodontist)
- ☺ **Tertiary:** Specialized care provider or specialized center that works only with people who require sedation or anesthesia or only with people with MR (I.e. Special Smiles)

PCHC will distribute this survey with instructions to all residential agencies in the Southeast Region. It is important that the appropriate residential staff fill out the survey listing each dentist used, distinguishing which category he/she fits into, and ranking the service provided. PCHC will track receipt of the surveys and compile the information. A report will be sent to all residential agencies that complete the survey. The information will also be shared with the Medical Assistance HMO's and advocacy groups. For more information regarding the survey, please call Melissa Evers at PCHC: (215) 546-0300 (ext. 3636).

The information presented to you is to increase your awareness of health conditions. It is not intended to replace medical advice. Please seek the advice of a physician for any health related concerns.

Oral Hygiene Support Project

The PCHC HCTA Unit recently completed an Oral Hygiene Support Pilot Project for direct care staff supporting individuals with mental retardation in community homes. This training is now available to any interested agency. The training runs approximately 2 hours and focuses on basic information about the importance of good oral health care. An announcement detailing the project will be distributed in the near future. If you have any questions, please call PCHC and ask to speak with Donna McMonagle, extension 3652, or Melissa Evers, extension 3636.

Dysphagia Summit



PCHC will be hosting a Dysphagia Summit on May 5th and 6th 2004. The Summit is designed to develop strategies to raise awareness in the area of dysphagia (eg. signs and symptoms of swallowing, swallowing evaluations, etc.). Even though attendance is by "invitation only," regional approaches to this life threatening condition will soon be underway, designed by a broad group of stakeholders.



The Importance of Paperwork!

One of the most common reasons for cancellation of medical or dental appointments and "no-shows" is improperly completed paperwork. This is frustrating and time consuming for staff as well as for medical or dental providers. It can also be upsetting to the individuals we support. It is crucial to have all the necessary information gathered and completed before you take someone to a medical or dental appointment. Make sure that the requested information is correct and accurate. This is very critical to avoid any errors such as medication interactions, compliance with pre-sedation/anesthesia instructions, etc. It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that relevant paperwork is in order before the day of the appointment. Reducing the number of missed appointments will benefit everyone.

Risk Management

Feeding Tubes

Unlike regular eating and drinking, with tube feeding, the mouth, larynx and esophagus are skipped. Food goes directly to the stomach where a nasogastric tube or a gastrostomy tube (G-tube or PEG tube) is used. Food can also go directly to the small intestine when a jejunostomy tube (J tube) is used. A combination of a G tube and a J tube are sometimes used. The feeding tube(s) is chosen by the individual's physician and is based on each person's individual need. There are various types of tubes, formulas and methods used for supplying nutrition. Feedings are given either continuously or intermittently (bolus). A feeding pump may or may not be used to deliver formula. Most medications can be safely given through a feeding tube.

Since feeding tube use is based on individual need, anyone providing support to a person using a feeding tube (s) must be trained on the type of tube(s), formula, method of delivery, positioning, maintenance, trouble shooting and problem solving associated with the person's feeding/hydration program. This training is provided by Health Care Professionals and all new care takers must be trained before supporting the individual.

Common Problems

The most common problems encountered with feeding tubes are formula spills and clogged tubes. Most of the time neither problem is very difficult to solve. However, if you are unable to clear a clogged tube after several attempts, you will need to call your health care professional. *Two other common problems are:*

- A tube that has come partially out—Call you health care professional immediately.
- A tube that has come completely out—Call your health care professional **and** go to the emergency room.

More Reasons to Call Your Health Care Professional...

If any of these problems develop for a person receiving tube feedings, call your health care professional:

- Choking or difficulty breathing
- Blood in or around feeding tube
- Leakage of formula or stomach contents around tube site
- Tube site red or irritated
- Symptoms of dehydration, such as dark urine, small urine output or being very thirsty
- Weight loss or gain of more than 2 pounds in a week
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea that lasts for 2 days
- Unusual weakness or other symptoms different from normal

This information should be included in the individuals annual plan so everyone is aware of what to do when certain situations arise.

It's Alive! - Introducing the *New & Improved* PCHC Website!

Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care (PCHC) is proud to announce enhancements to its website.

Please visit us at: WWW.PCHC.ORG

You can now register online for PCHC trainings directly from the website. You can also request PCHC newsletters and publications online, including the ability to download past issues of the Health Care Alert! Please take advantage of this new opportunity to access PCHC materials and training supports.



Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care

123 S. Broad Street ♦ Philadelphia, PA 19109 ♦ 215-546-0300 ♦ fax 215-790-4976

PCHC is a core program of PMHCC, Inc.