

MSC E-VISORY

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State of New York Office for People With Developmental Disabilities
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The MSC E-Visory is an electronic advisory which provides pertinent and timely information about programs and services available to individuals receiving MSC. Announcements about MSC training, conferences and meetings appear regularly. **MSC Supervisors: Please share this issue with all MSC Service Coordinators and others as appropriate.** In order to receive an email notification when a new MSC E-Visory is posted, please sign up for our mailing list (listserv). Listserv information and past issues can be accessed via the OPWDD website at www.opwdd.ny.gov or via the following link: http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/service_coordination/medicaid_service_coordination/msc_e-visories

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Prevention of Heat-Related Illness

Attached to this e-visory is the May 2012 OPWDD Health & Safety Alert on "Prevention of Heat-Related Illness". With the recent high temperatures, it is important to take precautions in order to prevent heat-related illness and consequences, including death. Service Coordinators should be sharing this information with the individuals that they serve and their family/others.

Health & Safety Monitoring: The MSC and MSC Supervisor's Role

As a reminder, OPWDD's Health & Safety alerts are posted on the OPWDD website. These are among many valuable resources for service coordinators in both assessing a person's health & safety risks and in developing safeguards as appropriate.

The service coordinator should take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of the individuals on their caseload. When a risk is identified, supports need to be in place to avoid or reduce that risk. Safeguards need to be reviewed and revised whenever a risk factor is identified or a person's needs warrant a revision.

One of the functions of the MSC Supervisor is to ensure that service coordinators provide high quality person centered MSC services and meet all requirements of the service. This includes health and safety monitoring by supporting service coordinators in their advocacy role. MSC Supervisor responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that service coordinators receive all required professional development and on the job training, including what is necessary in order to support individuals they serve. This includes assessing needs, monitoring, and following up on any situations that involve the health and safety of the individual.
- Reviewing all ISPs for individuals that they serve. This involves quality checks that the ISP is complete and covers all necessary information, is individualized and person-centered, addresses natural supports and community resources, and has the necessary safeguards that address the health and safety needs of the individual and programs and services in place to meet those needs.
- Ensuring that service documentation meets all requirements and that MSC notes address health and safety concerns and any follow-up activities that are necessary.
- Ensuring that service coordinators are trained in their role and supporting them in their advocacy role. For Willowbrook Class Members, the service coordination supervisor is responsible for reviewing the SCOR and ensuring the service coordinator took appropriate action to resolve the problems reported.

Prevention of Heat-Related Illness

May 2012

Heat-related illnesses and deaths are preventable. People suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to cool down properly, especially in high temperatures and high humidity. People at greatest risk for heat-related illness are the elderly, the very young, people with acute/chronic illness, those with cognitive impairments, and people taking certain medications. Agencies should activate heat-related plans of action when external temperatures reach 80°, and continue with implementation as temperatures rise.

Taking Precautions:

- Be aware of the heat, and modify or reschedule outdoor activities accordingly.
- Stay in air conditioned areas whenever possible and stay in the shade when outdoors.
- Drink plenty of fluids, limit caffeine, and eat well-balanced, light, and regular meals.
- Wear loose fitting, lightweight, and light-colored clothing.
- When indoors, use window coverings to help keep the inside areas cool.
- Be aware that fans do not provide cooling—they only move hot air around.

Types of Heat-Related Illnesses:

Heat Exhaustion – a milder form of heat-related illness. Signs and symptoms include:

- Heavy sweating, paleness, skin may feel cool.
- Muscle cramps, fatigue, weakness.
- Dizziness, headache, fainting, nausea or vomiting.
- Pulse rate may be fast and weak, and breathing may be fast and shallow.

Heat Stroke – this is a **medical emergency**. When a person's body temperature rises to a dangerous level, it can lead to vital organ damage and death. Signs and symptoms include:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103 °F).
- Red, hot, dry skin, and absence of sweating.
- Rapid, strong pulse rate, throbbing headache, dizziness, nausea or vomiting.

Immediate Steps to Take:

- If heat stroke is suspected or a person is exhibiting extreme symptoms of heat exhaustion—contact Emergency Medical Services (EMS) immediately.
- Get the person to a cool, shady area, and attempt to cool them down with cool water applied to the skin. Monitor body temperature, if possible.
- Give fluids if person is alert and able to swallow.
- Seek medical follow-up for milder heat-related illness as soon as possible.

Training should be provided for all appropriate staff in prevention and recognition of heat-related illnesses. For more information, please visit: www.health.ny.gov/publications/1243/.

Please contact OPWDD at people.first@opwdd.ny.gov should you have questions or concerns about the information in this alert or suggestions for future alerts.