



## Health & Safety Alert #51-02-09

### Health and Well Being is Priority One

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The purpose of this alert is to remind all providers of service of their responsibility to assure immediate health and welfare of individuals. The MUI Unit has recently identified a trend related to the delay in provision of health care services. In the instances identified family members had asked to be contacted prior to obtaining medical treatment for an individual. In some cases, the delay in contacting family has caused grave outcomes for the individuals served. While providers must be respectful of wishes of family members, the providers also must assure that appropriate medical care and treatment is given to the individuals.

#### **What does this mean?**

This means that if any individuals are exhibiting signs and symptoms of a serious medical condition, a call to 911 is made immediately. The family contacts, management calls, and other notifications should be made after an assurance that the health and welfare of the individual has first been addressed.

Discussion should occur annually at each individual's Individual Service Plan (ISP) meeting related to emergency medical treatments. In many cases, families and guardians sign emergency medical consent forms to assure that immediate medical attention is provided as necessary. Often these forms contain the name of the preferred hospital and physician. Generally speaking, boards and providers should not agree to delay calling 911 until the guardian or family is first notified. If a guardian or family has special concerns regarding medical care, these should be addressed at the ISP meeting and in the ISP itself.

The fact that a family member/guardian has asked to be contacted does not relinquish the provider responsibility to assure the health and well being of the individual. As we all know any unnecessary delays in medical treatment can have tremendous negative outcomes up to and including the death of an individual.

Please find listed below information from a previous health and safety alert #28-06-05 identifying when to call 911 for emergency assistance. Understand that this listing may not be all inclusive and should be updated to meet the needs of the individuals you serve.

- The person appears very ill; sweating, skin looks blue or gray
- Severe, constant abdominal pain
- Bleeding heavily, despite direct pressure
- Blood pressure of 220 or above for upper number and/or 120 or above for lower number
- Blood pressure below 90 for upper number, when normally above 90
- Pulse (heart rate) is less than 40 or greater than 140

- Difficulty breathing and/or severe wheezing
- Chest pain
- Fainting, loss of consciousness, or not responsive
- Fall with severe head injury (fall on face, bleeding, change in level of consciousness). **Do not move; keep warm**
- Fall, unable to get up on own and normally would be able to do so, or in a lot of pain when lying still or trying to get up. **Do not move; keep warm**
- Fall, limb deformity noted (bone sticking out, swelling, unusual position of arm, leg). **Do not move; keep warm**
- First time seizure; **roll to side**, protect head, and move obstacles that may pose a threat
- Seizure lasting 2+ minutes; one seizure right after the other; person does not wake up after the seizure; person does not start breathing within one minute after seizure stops (is CPR needed?).
- Possible stroke; new weakness, loss or change in speech
- Repeated vomiting/diarrhea less than 12 hours but not responding normally
- Any bloody or coffee grounds looking vomit/diarrhea
- Sudden loss of vision

**IMPORTANT: When in doubt, seek medical attention immediately!**

Remember, the health and welfare of the individuals we serve depends on quick, decisive, action to obtain emergency medical services. Let's work together to make sure that every second counts.

For questions or comments regarding the above Alert, please contact the MUI/Registry Unit at (614) 995-3810.

**February 2009**