



# Imagine Different...Achieve Different Coalition

## ***FAST FACTS:*** Pediatric Shift Nursing in Pennsylvania

### **Overview**

Pediatric shift nursing helps children with complex medical needs live at home with their families. The nurse comes to the home, school or other community setting to care for the child by providing ongoing skilled assessment and monitoring, administration of medications, tube feedings, and so on.

### **Medical Assistance (MA, also called Medicaid) Coverage**

Under MA's children's benefit (called EPSDT), children under 21 are entitled to receive shift nursing care to the extent it is medically necessary (private insurance, if any, must be billed first.) A doctor's letter explaining the medical necessity must be submitted to the child's MA plan. Shift nursing is not considered medically necessary when a parent is able and available to provide the care, taking into consideration their need to sleep, work, and attend to other responsibilities.

If your child's MA plan denies, reduces, or terminates your child's services, you have the right to file an appeal. If filed within 10 days of a notice of reduction or termination, services must continue pending the outcome of the appeal. If nurses are authorized but not available, call the Special Needs Unit at your child's MA plan for assistance. A national shortage of nurses is an ongoing barrier to needed care.

### **Other Funding Sources**

For children, unlike for adults, MA's Home and Community-Based Service waivers do not offer shift nursing services, but do offer Respite by a nurse when parents *are* available but need a break. Other waiver services can also be provided by a nurse at times when no nurse is otherwise authorized.

Children are also entitled to nurses provided by the school district if needed to attend school. You may rely on your child's MA benefit for this service or on the school district. Be sure to list the service in your child's Individualized Education Program or "504 Plan."

### **Special Needs Units (SNUs)**

Geisinger Health Plan Family	1-855-214-8100
Gateway Health Plan	1-800-392-1147
Health Partners Plan	1-866-500-4571
Keystone First Health Plan	1-800-573-4100
United Health Care Community Plan	1-877-844-8844
UPMC for You	1-866-463-1462

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Pennsylvania Health Law Project  
[www.phlp.org](http://www.phlp.org), including *How to Appeal a Denial in HealthChoices*, available at:  
<https://www.phlp.org/uploads/attachments/ckf2pete7mlzhyxu8vwcga9ps-how-to-appeal-a-service-denial-in-healthchoices-2019.pdf>

Disability Rights Pennsylvania  
[www.disabilityrightspa.org](http://www.disabilityrightspa.org)