



COMMISSIONER
Jon Weizenbaum

February 14, 2014

To: Local Authorities
Home and Community-based Services Program Providers
Texas Home Living Program Providers

Subject: Information Letter 14-05
Role of the Local Authority's Medical Specialist as Resource to Providers

The Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) is committed to ensuring nursing facility residents who have an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD) are served in the most appropriate setting and receive services that address their individual needs. To ensure this commitment, DADS requires the local authority (LA) to provide service coordination and monitoring on a monthly basis for all nursing facility residents with IDD as well as individuals with IDD who are diverted or transition from a nursing facility to community-based services. LA service coordinators are responsible for assisting nursing facility residents with IDD to transition to Home and Community-based Services (HCS) and Texas Home Living (TxHmL) waiver services, and for monitoring former nursing facility residents at least monthly for 180 days after transition. The LA is also responsible for monitoring individuals diverted from nursing home placement to the community at least monthly for 180 days after diversion.

As a resource to HCS and TxHmL Program providers, DADS requires each LA to designate a "medical specialist" who is a qualified registered nurse, advanced practice nurse, or medical doctor to provide general training and technical assistance to the providers when requested. Their role is not to offer medical advice on an individualized basis, but rather act as a consultant and offer a broad overview of care related to an illness, disease, or condition. The medical specialist should not be asked to give advice or make medical decisions regarding the care of a particular individual.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Mirenda Blevins, Program Specialist, at 512-438-5051 or by email at mirenda.blevins@dads.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

[signature on file]

Elisa J. Garza
Assistant Commissioner
Access and Intake