

## **Hello Guardians, Conservators, & Family Members,**

The purpose of this message is to outline Phoenix procedures regarding access to emergency services and requirements related to planning for discharge after a hospitalization. It has come to my attention that there are some questions regarding the responsibility of guardians and conservators related to access to care and their role in assisting with discharge planning.

We have scheduled a training session for our family members, staff, and others who serve in the role of assistive decision making as a guardian or conservator. **Andrea Strobel-Ayres, Regional Ombudsman Supervisor, will be presenting information on this at the Phoenix corporate office next Tuesday November 21<sup>st</sup> at 1pm. We are located at 222 Plato Boulevard East, St. Paul, 55107.** Please come and learn more about the role of a guardian or conservator and what resources are available to you.

### **Access to Health Care**

In the event of a change of health condition, the nurse or health care professional will determine if further assessment is required and will coordinate accordingly. However, ***if the individual has an order or plan to limit or restrict care, we will honor that plan, such as Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (POLST), a Palliative Care Plan, or Hospice Care Plan.*** If the health care professional assesses that emergency care is needed, 911 will be called, or if a direct care staff believes that 911 assistance is necessary, they have been directed to initiate emergency services and they do not need to seek permission to implement this level of service. **Please note we will only implement 911 if we believe it is warranted.** If the person has a health concern that the health care professional assesses can be met through Urgent Care or Primary Care, then an appointment will be coordinated vs using emergency services. Guardians are asked during the admissions process to provide consent to allowing Phoenix to implement emergency services as needed.

### **Hospital Discharge Planning Requirements**

If an individual in our care is hospitalized, see below for the instructions that have been provided to Phoenix staff regarding discharge decision making.

### **Discharge from Hospital Best Practice Guidelines**

When considering a return to the home from a hospitalization, review the discharge orders, the person's condition and status before making the decision if they can return to the home safely with the provision of care and services that they need.

The hospital staff typically are not aware of our services, don't know that a nurse is not on duty 24-7, and that we have non-licensed staff working in our settings. The staff at hospitals require some education about who we are and what we have the capacity to do.

Also, hospitals sometimes are just seeking to reduce their census or need to free up a bed due to the needs of the hospital. However, we must always act in the best interests of the people we support. To do so, we must plan properly to assure a safe return home and consider all potential concerns in our decision-making process regarding hospital returns.

We have found that it is more difficult to secure items needed from vendors or the pharmacy on weekends, which may result in readmission to the hospital. This is often traumatic for the person, so if we can avoid this through proper and thoughtful planning, that is what we prefer.

It is not that we don't facilitate weekend discharges, it is more about what is in the discharge plan and if we can safely implement the changes.

**Here are things to consider:**

- Are there changes in the person's care plan? Will those changes require the development of training materials and education of non-licensed personnel?
- Has the person returned to baseline? If they had a feeding tube placed, are they tolerating the feeding without problems? Have they returned to baseline?
- Do they need new equipment? Can we obtain the new equipment?
- Will they need new medications? Can we obtain the new medications?
- If there are no new changes and the person is at baseline, there is no reason to delay readmission to home.

**Discharge to Care of Guardian:**

If a guardian discharges a person to their home without proper planning with Phoenix, ***it will be required that the person remain with the guardian at their home until Phoenix has the provisions in place for a safe return to the licensed setting.*** Guardians are asked to consent to the hospital providing information to Phoenix and the guardian, so that we can coordinate and plan accordingly.

Again, please plan to join us on **Tuesday November 21<sup>st</sup> at 1pm, at Phoenix for information regarding this important topic! Phoenix is located at 222 Plato Boulevard East, St. Paul, 55107.**