

Featured Health Alert

Unscheduled Hospitalizations



Prevention is Key

Adults with disabilities are at a higher risk for hospitalizations. When an event occurs which leads to an unscheduled hospitalization, it is imperative for providers to effectively communicate an individual's health information upon admission and even more importantly to understand discharge instructions.

Providers, DSP's, and family members should be ready to support someone they serve who has trouble communicating verbally by explaining their symptoms, when their symptoms began, any related medical history, and what actions were taken if emergency personnel were needed. Staff can be prepared for unscheduled hospitalizations by keeping a list of the individual's medications, allergies, current medical conditions, and any medical equipment needed. Additionally, staff should fully understand discharge orders, such as any referrals to specialists, follow-up appointments, new medications, diets, or treatments.



Individuals with disabilities are at a higher risk for medical errors when in the hospital. As care providers, you can help by communicating with hospital staff the following:

- How best to communicate with the individual
- If they are a fall risk
- Diet needs such as modifications for swallowing
- Current medications
- Specialized equipment that may be needed

To help keep individuals from unnecessary hospitalizations, preventative care is critical. Some preventative measures to follow include but are not limited to the following.

- Reduce risks of falls and accidents; be mindful of individuals who have risks for falls and reevaluate for risks as needed.
- Stay active physically and mentally. To the best of your ability, encourage individuals to participate in day support programs, community engagement activities, or to participate as they can in community outings.
- Maintain prescribed diets and follow meal time protocols. Mealtimes can be a busy time in group homes however this is a key time to monitor individuals who are at risk for aspiration.
- Attend annual physicals and doctor's appointments. Regular checkups with an individual's medical team can identify changes in medical or mental health status.
- Monitor for signs of illness; don't ignore symptoms. Staff members who work with individuals on a daily basis often are the first to notice a change. Report any new or unusual signs to the proper channel. When in doubt, get checked out!

CaregiverStress.com (2018) Prevent senior hospitalizations. Retrieved from <https://www.caregiverstress.com/senior-safety/prevent-hospitalizations/>

Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). (2018) Health and welfare alert: unscheduled hospitalizations #60-9-18 Retrieved from <http://dodd.ohio.gov/Communications/SiteAssets/HealthandWelfareAlertUnscheduledHospitalizations.pdf>

Hosking FJ, Carey IM, DeWilde S, Harris T, Beighton C, & Cook DG. (2017) Preventable emergency hospital admissions among adults with intellectual disability in England. *Ann Fam Med*. Sep;15(5):462-470.

Walsh KK, Kastner T, & Criscione T. (1997) Characteristics of hospitalizations for people with developmental disabilities: utilization, costs, and impact of care coordination. *Am J Ment Retard*. Mar;101(5):505-20.



 2019 DSP of the Year

Nominations are Open!

The National Advocacy Campaign promotes the professionalization of the Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce through the recognition of the dedication and vital role DSPs play in supporting individuals with disabilities through the annual DSP of the Year Recognition Contest.

DSPs provide individuals with an opportunity to be as independent as possible to fulfill their goals to flourish on a personal level. To be a Direct Support Professional, it takes a truly amazing person to maintain a commitment day in and day out to ensure our individuals are a part of their community and living life to the fullest.

Do you have an outstanding DSP to nominate? Full contest details can be found at <http://www.nationaladvocacycampaign.org/newsroom/news/2019-dsp-year-nominations-are-open>

Thank you to the many hard-working DSP's across Virginia!

American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR). (2018). 2019 DSP of the Year Nominations. Retrieved from <http://www.nationaladvocacycampaign.org/newsroom/news/2019-dsp-year-nominations-are-open>



Office of Integrated Health

Team Highlight

The Office of Integrated Health's growing dental program offers fixed-rate general and sedation dentistry, as well as mobile dental options. Services include exams, x-rays, cleanings, basic fillings, referrals to specialists, and emergency services. Through these services, the dental program seeks to maintain equal access to care, community integration, and utilization of updated, best practice care models which use no restraints or unnecessary sedation. The dental team works one on one with CSBs, families, and direct service providers to learn about each client requesting services, ensuring they are placed in the setting that fits them individually.

Additionally, the dental team is excited to welcome two new members, Amy Jo Baker and Kyle Grubb!

Casey Tupea, BSDH, RDH, EMT-1
Casey.tupea@dbhds.virginia.gov
Dental Program Lead
Dental Hygienist

Tamika Clark, BS, DA
Tamika.clark@dbhds.virginia.gov
Dental Assistant

Amy Jo Baker, CDA
Dental Assistant

Kyle Grubb, BSDH, RDH
Dental Hygienist

