

**LIVING  
INDEPENDENTLY  
IN  
NORTHWEST  
KANSAS**



***SUCCESSFUL  
SELF-DIRECTION OF  
DIRECT SUPPORT WORKERS***

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### Introduction

Thank you for choosing LINK, Inc. to assist you with the self-direction of your Medicaid long-term care service. This booklet is designed to introduce you to our policies and procedures and should be used as a reference if you have general questions about our program.

### Choosing Your Lifestyle

Having a disability sometimes requires you to “re-think” how you can stay involved in activities in your home and community. Self-direction allows you to maintain a lifestyle of your choosing; however, you are also taking upon yourself additional responsibilities. We are willing to help you manage these additional responsibilities.

## Utilizing Direct Support Workers

The Plan of Care and Attendant Care Worksheet are important documents for development of a strategy for using your Direct Support Worker (DSW). The Plan of Care identifies the number of hours paid by Medicaid to help you maintain your health and safety. The Attendant Care Worksheet identifies the tasks that the DSW is expected to perform. You need to design a “job description” which lists these tasks and a training program to make sure the DSW understands your expectations. You should also develop a schedule for when you expect these tasks to be done.



## Directing Health Maintenance Activities

Health maintenance activities are treatment activities you would do for yourself if not for your disability. A physician or nurse must agree that treatment activities could be self-administered, if the individual were not disabled. In addition the treatment procedure must be safe when performed in your home. You may be required to keep a record, such as a log, of when medication is taken or a procedure performed. In essence, you must be able to supervise the health maintenance activity.

## Skills for Managing Direct Support Workers (DSW)

In order for you to successfully direct DSWs, there are several skills you must practice. First, you need to *understand* the plan of care and the tasks outlined in the attendant care worksheet. You must be *willing to manage* the relationship with the DSW. This means you must be willing to interview, hire, train, and maintain a working relationship with the DSW. You must be *willing to schedule and supervise* the DSW. You must *complete employment documents and ensure they are forwarded to the FMS Provider and oversee the clock-in/clock-out process*. The purpose of self directing attendant care services is to permit and promote your participation in the community and societal events.

## Communicating Expectations

You must learn to communicate clearly the expectations required of your DSWs. Good communication helps to establish long-term, business friendly relationships. You can be friends with a DSW; however don't forget the boundaries of employment. You are the boss and the DSW works for you. Generally, avoid being sexually, romantically, or financially involved. The DSW is paid for the services outlined in the attendant care worksheet.

## Building Confidence

Confidence is built by learning and doing good self-direction practices. *First*, know why you want to live in your own home. *Second*, learn to complete the paperwork accurately and timely. *Third*, know the qualities and the skills you expect from a person working for you in your home. *Fourth*, if you are not comfortable with interviewing, then practice with a friend, family member or LINK staff person. *Fifth*, develop a "back up plan" for when things go wrong. *Sixth*, practice communicating your needs and directions to others. Be able to describe, teach or supervise the application or administration of any medical process and be able to describe how you want someone to help you with a task.

## Hiring a Direct Support Worker



### Recruiting Applicants

We maintain a list of potential applicants that can be provided to you upon request. If no applicants are available in your area, we will run newspaper ads, attend job fairs and use other means appropriate to help locate potential candidates.

### Interviewing Applicants

The selection of the DSW is your right and responsibility, however, we will provide consultation if you request it. Interviewing is a skill using questions to gain insight into the work habits and temperament of a potential DSW. With questions, you will discover whether or not the potential DSW will

want to work for you. You might ask questions about the applicant's work history, reason for seeking a job as a DSW, and ask the person if there is any reason he or she could not perform the duties you require. At the interview, you need to describe the job duties, scheduling expectations, pay rate and benefits, and the importance of confidentiality. You also may want to call references to ask about the character and work ethic of the applicant.

### **Sample Interview Questions**



1. Are you familiar with independent living?
2. What have your past job experiences been?
3. What was your last job and why did you leave?
4. Do you have any training or experience related to this kind of work?
5. Why are you interested in this job?
6. What other responsibilities do you have, such as education or another job?
7. Are there any reasons that you could not make it to work when scheduled?
8. What would be your procedure if you were going to be late or if you could not come to work?
9. Are you able to accept directions and follow them as I direct?
10. Are you a patient and understanding person and can you deal with frustration in a positive manner?
11. There will be personal care involved with this job, do you have any problems with these duties or is there anything that you feel you could not do?
12. What is your personal feeling about people with disabilities?
13. Are there any types of people you can't get along with or could not work with?
14. Do you understand the role and the importance of a DSW to me for my quality of life and quality of health?
15. How many hours are you interested in working, how flexible can your schedule be, and when could you start?

### **Documents for Hiring**

Medicaid and employment law requires completing necessary forms after you sign-up to self-direct. These forms will be provided to you by the Financial Management Service Provider you choose. When you hire a DSW all forms included in the New Hire Packet provided by the Financial Management Services Provider must be filled out, signed and returned to

them. Timesheets will need to be filled out and forwarded to the Financial Management Services Provider according to a schedule provided to you. If you have any questions about how to complete or who signs any of these documents, please call your Financial Management Services Provider. ***All DSW employment is conditional upon successful completion of required background checks.***

## **Training a DSW**

You have the responsibility to train your DSW about duties, tasks and expectations. You should explain to your DSW about the following items:

- What is the work schedule
- What is the quality of work expected
- What to do if not able to come to work
- How to respect your privacy when performing personal care tasks
- How to help you with health maintenance activities
- How to properly use any type of equipment
- How to complete timesheets and records
- How to prevent transmission of disease, if there is a possibility of contact with bodily fluids.
- How you want to deal with medical emergencies, such as seizures or diabetic shock
- How to help you in a weather emergency

We can help you learn to train your DSW upon request. As your health needs change, you may need to change your DSW training program. In addition, you will want to review some training elements regularly, so that your DSW knows what to do in situations that do not happen often. You have the responsibility to help the DSW avoid work related injuries. If your DSW is required to lift or move you to perform a task, then you must provide training. Do not presume that use of the equipment is simple and obvious. Proper training prevents accidents.

## **Prevention of spread of blood and air borne pathogens**

Some diseases are spread by contact with bodily fluids, such as blood, feces, or saliva. All people who might come in contact with bodily fluid need to take precautions. It is your responsibility to help keep your DSW safe, even if you are not a carrier of a disease. You should instruct your DSW to do the following:



- Wash his or her hands if they have any contact with any bodily fluid, (i.e. washing hands after urination or bowel movement.)
- Use plastic or latex gloves if there is contact with blood. Keep some plastic gloves for use. Instruct people how to take the gloves off after use.
- Cover mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing. Keep some Kleenex for use.

## Management of a DSW

### Issues of scheduling

You are self-directing your DSW services so that you can maintain the quality of life you want. Scheduling is a skill that permits you to receive service when you want it. Reasonableness creates a successful schedule. Flexibility is the attitude that will promote a stable, long-lasting relationship. You have to communicate your plans while considering the needs and schedules of your DSW. Scheduling successfully is negotiation and compromise. A simple tool for communicating schedule expectations is a calendar. In addition, for recording actual work time, the LINK calendar would be a good tool. ***Your work week begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday.***



### Payment of a DSW

We have developed an annual calendar of deadlines and payday dates. You and your DSW must meet the deadlines in order for the DSW to be paid in a timely manner.

### Keeping Accurate Documents

It is your responsibility to complete any forms accurately and truthfully. The time clocked must accurately reflect the time worked and the activity performed. In addition, the time clocked must be truthful. Intentionally submitting false timesheets is perjury and a crime. This act can also disqualify you from the Medicaid Program.

### Dismissal or Resignation of a DSW

You must notify your Financial Management Services Provider if a DSW is fired or resigns using the Notification of Termination of DSW form. You need to state why the DSW is no longer working for you and the last date of

employment. If you have fired a DSW, you need to explain your reason for dismissal. You should give the DSW a warning of poor performance and a chance to improve, which should be explained in the Notice of Termination.

### **Long term and stable DSW relationships**

A DSW may work with you for a short or long period of time. Good communication skills, clear expectations, and flexibility in scheduling, will help you to develop a mutually beneficial relationship.

## **Conclusion**

With self-direction, you have decided to take control of your quality of life, the activities of your life, and the person who provides services in your home. As the “Employer” of the DSW, you may be doing things you have not done before. This booklet is intended to explain the skills needed to have a successful self-direction experience. We will help you learn the skills and develop the confidence to successfully direct your DSW in order to succeed in your self-direction experience so you have the quality of life you desire.

