

STATE OF WISCONSIN
Department of Health and Family Services
Division of Disability and Elder Services

DDES Memo Series 2006-18
Date: August 25, 2006

Index Title: COMPLETION OF LONG TERM FUNCTIONAL
SCREEN FOR PEOPLE RESIDING IN
ICFS/MR AND NURSING HOMES,
RELATED TO THE ICF/MR
RESTRUCTURING INITIATIVE

To: Listserv

For: Area Administrators/ Human Services Area Coordinators
Bureau Directors
Community Integration Specialists
County Departments of Community Program Directors
County Departments of Developmental Disabilities Services Directors
County Departments of Human Services Directors
County Departments of Social Services Directors
County Developmental Disabilities and Long Term Support Coordinators
Program Office Directors
Tribal Chairpersons/Human Services Facilitators
ICFs-MR Directors

From:  Sinikka Santala, Administrator
Division of Disability and Elder Services

Re: ICF/MR Restructuring Initiative – Long Term Care Functional Screen

DOCUMENT SUMMARY

This memo, effective immediately, requires uniform implementation of the Long-Term Care (LTC) Functional Screen for the development, review and implementation of service plans arising from the ICF/MR relocation initiative. All screens are to be completed by June 30, 2007 for all individuals with developmental disabilities.

Although Wisconsin's ICF/MR Restructuring Initiative has now been implemented for over a year, with many people with developmental disabilities being successfully relocated from ICFs and Nursing Homes, approximately 900 people (and 570 at state Developmental Disability Centers) still remain in the setting. Whether these relocations are a result of closing or downsizing of an ICF/MR, or because a court has ruled at the person's WATTS review that the community is the "most integrated setting", each person must now have eligibility determinations completed and reviewed/updated annually. It is critical that Wisconsin utilize the same standard for determining Levels of Care (LOC) for all individuals with developmental disabilities. Counties have done a good job, completing LTC functional screens on the individuals who have moved or are in transition planning.

This memo requires uniform implementation of the LTC functional Screen for the development, review and implementation of service plans arising from the ICF/MR relocation initiative. As part of the annual required Watts review process, and/or to learn more about the individuals remaining in these facilities, most counties have already been completing functional screens for some of the individuals for whom they are responsible.

In an effort to ensure statewide consistency for all people with developmental disabilities, counties are requested to complete a LTC Functional Screen on all individuals with developmental disabilities who still reside in ICF/MRs and Nursing Homes by July 2007.

As of July 2006, the Bureau of Quality Assurance (BQA) discontinued their responsibility for completing level of care determinations for people with developmental disabilities. BQA will, however, continue to update levels of care until a screen has been completed on every individual.

For **adults** receiving long-term care in State Developmental Disability Centers, **initial** functional screens will be completed by Center staff. However, counties will retain responsibility for completing initial screens for all **children** residing at State Developmental Disability Centers using the Children's LTC Functional Screen. All **subsequent** functional screens (updates) will become the responsibility of each applicable county. A county may delegate the completion of the **initial** functional screen to any facility, if the facility has sufficient state-certified screeners to complete the objective within the existing timeframes and is willing to assume this responsibility.

To support county efforts to complete functional screen in a timely fashion, DDES is offering stipends of \$100 for all initial LTC Functional Screens completed by county staff by December 31, 2006. For initial screens completed after January 1, 2007, a \$50 stipend per individual will be offered. No reimbursement will occur after June 30, 2007, at which time it is expected that every person with a developmental disability will have received a LTC Functional Screen. This additional funding option only applies to individuals who have been identified as part of the ICF/MR Restructuring Initiative (i.e. residents of a facility, receiving services prior to December 31, 2004; not those on wait lists). Due to the funding source, this stipend is only payable to responsible counties completing the screen, not to facilities.

The Department is also anticipating that by 2007, individualized "Needs Reports" generated from LTC Functional Screen contents will be available for use by counties at Watt's Reviews. These Needs Reports will provide guardians' and judges a summary of the individual's needs and some context of where and how others with similar needs are supported in their communities. The automated Needs Reports will save counties significant staff time (by replacing narratives) and improve the quality of Watts Reviews (by providing detailed individual information and statewide context of support options to foster more informed decisions about "most integrated environments"). The automated Needs Reports will help counties meet the requirements of Wisconsin Act 33 more effectively and efficiently, by using it as the starting point for the "Community Plan" that counties are required to complete for all residents of ICF/MRs.

Developmental Disabilities LOC Discrepancies and Functional Screen Reviews

The Department has no intention of altering facility residents' LOCs by this change from BQA to the LTC Functional Screen for determinations of LOCs. The Functional Screen LOC determination logic was developed with BQA and experts in Developmental Disabilities Services. Numerous individual and aggregate analyses have proven that the LTC FS yields accurate LOC results **if** the screen is completed accurately. In most cases, when a LOC seems too low, it is because the screener missed some key information — often involving preventative interventions, e.g. door alarms and supervision to prevent elopement. Among 2006 DD facility relocations, a significant number LTC FS levels of care results were lower than previous BQA levels of care.

This is of concern and is being addressed. In particular, counties completing Functional Screens for residents of ICF/MRs or State Centers must follow the following 4 steps:

1. County screeners must communicate with DD facility staff, who are the most familiar with each resident, regarding the previous BQA LOC and the new LTC FS LOC results. If a change occurs, the screener must consult with facility staff, and if a consensus cannot be reached, proceed to step 4. If a facility screener produces a different LOC result, proceed to step 4.
2. Whenever the LTC FS level of care is lower than the last BQA level of care, or whenever anyone questions a LOC result, the screener (and/or Screen Lead) will review the screen results to determine the possible cause of the change. Aspects that will be considered include: whether the earlier BQA LOC was based on clinical information that is no longer true; whether all LTC FS items have been completed and are accurate; and/or whether all LTC FS instructions have been followed, particularly regarding preventative interventions.
3. The screener should review the LTC FS with facility staff most familiar with the resident. In most cases, particular needs can be clarified and the LTC FS edited to yield a more accurate LOC. If either party still thinks the LTC FS LOC is not correct, proceed to Step 4.
4. Contact Rebecca Boyea of the Developmental Disabilities Services Section, who will review the case with the screener and facility staff. (Becky formerly worked at Northern Wisconsin Center and is now a Community Integration Specialist and LTC FS lead for DDSS). These screen reviews will resolve individual cases and will provide invaluable feedback for the Department to improve LTC FS items and instructions. Becky can be reached at (715)-289-3082 or boyeara@dhfs.state.wi.us.

This Functional Screen review process is in addition to the existing appeals processes, which remain the same. (FS reviews can be requested with or without appeals, and will always be done as part of the appeal process.)

Counties are expected to implement this FS review process so that DD facilities are not financially hindered by lower LOCs resulting from inaccurate LTC FS.

Resources: Screener certification requirements, process, screens, and instructions can be found at <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/LTCare/FunctionalScreen/>

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WEB SITE: http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/dsl_info/