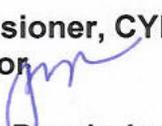


**The Philadelphia Department of Human Services
Children and Youth Division
Policy and Procedure Guide
Issue Date: October 19, 2009**

To: Children and Youth Department (CYD) Staff

From: Dell Meriwether, Deputy Commissioner, CYD 
Pamela Mayo, Operations Director 

Re: Mandatory Consultations to DHS Psychologists and Nurses

Effective: Immediately

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure guide is to inform the CYD staff that the DHS psychologists and nurses must be used for mandatory consultations, during the **Investigative** period of a case, and when **In-Home Protective Services (IHPS)** are being provided.

Discussion

This guide describes some specific criteria as to when a DHS staff psychologist or nurse must be consulted. It would be impossible to address every situation that may arise; therefore, CYD Social Workers and Supervisors must use “best practice”, reasonable actions, and sound judgment for situations that may **not** be mentioned in this Policy and Procedure Guide. If the Social Worker and Supervisor are uncertain as to whether or not they should consult a DHS psychologist or nurse, then it would be best to seek a consultation rather than not do so.

A **consultation** is defined as a phone call, e-mail, or face-to-face contact with the DHS psychologist or nurse. **All medical and behavioral health situations or criteria could not be encompassed in this document. If at anytime the Supervisor or the Social Worker feels a nurse or psychologist consultation is needed, they should contact the DHS nurse or psychologists immediately to do so. When in doubt, seek a consultation.**

POLICY

Assessing Physical Health Concerns For Caregivers and Children

During the **Investigative** period of a case, and when **In-Home Protective Services** are being provided, CYD Supervisors and Social Workers must contact the DHS nurses as soon as mandatory criteria have been identified (see procedure “**Criteria for Mandatory DHS Nurse Consultations**”). CYD Supervisors and Social Workers are required to ensure that children or caregivers with certain physical conditions are immediately referred to the nurse consultants. The nurse consultants will review the medical information about the physical condition of a child or parent; if necessary, they will make a joint visit, with the CYD Social Worker, to assess the child or parent in the field. The nurses will also contact health care providers or read medical evaluations, on behalf of the CYD Social Worker. The

nurses can also assist with gathering medical information, assist in giving a comprehensive consultation, or explain medical terminology or circumstances to the CYD Social Worker to assist with proper case planning. The nurse consultants will also identify follow-up actions, in writing, to the social work team, to be included in the family and/or child section of the case record and family service plan to ensure that physical health problems of children and caregivers are addressed adequately.

Accessing Behavioral Health Services For Caregivers and Children

During the **Investigative** period of a case, and when **In-Home Protective Services** are being provided, CYD Supervisors and Social Workers must contact the DHS Psychologist as soon as mandatory criteria have been identified (see procedure “**Criteria for Mandatory DHS Psychologist Consultations**”). DHS psychologists should also be consulted when Supervisors and Social Workers feel more guidance is needed with caregivers or children who have behavioral health needs, especially with regards to keeping a child safe at home with a plan or returning a child to their home of origin, with a plan. The DHS psychologist can determine if additional or different services may be needed.

DHS psychologists assist primarily with access to forensic evaluations (i.e., evaluations needed to answer questions about children’s safety and permanency, such as: parenting capacity, bonding, and evaluations of sexual abuse and sexual behavior problems, including sex offenses). If there is a behavioral health and/or developmental problem that the Social Work team would like to discuss, the DHS psychologists are available for consultation. The DHS psychologists will acknowledge every request for a consultation via e-mail or verbally. If the psychologist refers the client for an evaluation, the results of the evaluation will be in writing, to the Social Work team.

Social Worker and Supervisor Documentation

Referrals to the psychologist or nurse must be done as soon as any of the **mandatory criteria** have been identified. Referrals must be documented in the family or child section of the case record. Supervisors must verify that all referrals and/or consultations are put in the family or child section of the case record and identified as an objective on the Family Service Plan. Supervisors should be reviewing the case record during conferences, paying close attention to referrals and recommendations from the DHS psychologist and/or nurse, and documenting in the supervisory log with next steps to be taken by the CYD Social Worker.

PROCEDURES

Criteria for Mandatory DHS Nurse Consultations

The following criteria will be used to determine if a consultation to a nurse **must** be sought:

- Failure to thrive
- Feeding issues, i.e.
 - Feeding tube
 - Difficulty swallowing
 - Tracheotomy
- Non adherence to medication regimens
- Failure to comply with standard “Well Child Care Visits” or “sick care” supervision
- Failure to keep appointments with medical professionals
- HIV/AIDS exposed children
- Children with chronic health problems, such as:
 - Asthma
 - Sickle Cell Anemia
 - Diabetes
 - Cerebral Palsy
 - Morbid obesity
- Special health care needs present when the case is accepted for services or newly diagnosed conditions that occur while the case is open for services
- Infants born prematurely on an active case
- Infants born prematurely to drug involved caregivers **who refuse** CAPTA services
- Children who come into the CYD nursery, awaiting placement, who have special health care needs
- Children with special health care needs who are being returned home to their family of origin
- Children with special health care needs who are being placed for the first time
- Any child who has been hospitalized on an open case or a case being investigated
- Any case that has been certified as a near fatality
- Children who are not compliant with life sustaining medical treatment

Criteria for Mandatory DHS Psychologist Consultations

The following criteria will be used to determine if a consultation to a psychologist **must** be sought:

- Caregiver who cannot or will not explain serious injuries to an infant, toddler or preschool age child (five years and under)
- A cognitively impaired caregiver who may not be able to meet the needs of a child with a medically fragile condition or a child who cannot communicate their needs
- Prior to reunification of a sex abuse victim with an indicated CPS juvenile or adult sex offender
- Any case where a child is living with an adult or juvenile sex offender
- A child under the age of 12 labeled in a behavioral health evaluation as a sex offender, sexual perpetrator, “perpetrating (perp) child” or sexual predator

- *Children who are not compliant with life sustaining medical treatment*
- *Child safety is threatened as a result of a caregiver presenting as “intellectually disabled”, i.e.*
 - *Mental retardation*
 - *Developmental delays*
 - *Autism syndromes*
 - *Traumatic brain injuries*
- *One of the following circumstances apply:*
 - *Caregiver intended to cause serious physical harm to a child*
 - *Caregiver is threatening to severely harm a child or threatened they will maltreat the child*
 - *Caregiver has a pattern of aggressive behavior in family relationships and/or community, i.e. **domestic violence***
 - *Committed DHS children who have MR/MH issues that end up in the adult criminal system*
 - *Long-term or severe abuse of the child*

Once a consultation is made, the DHS psychologist may request the CYD Social Worker to discuss the case within an Interagency Teaming or the Sex Abuse Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT), or send in a referral for a Forensic Evaluation.

*A Forensic Evaluation will require the CYD Social Worker to fill out the Social Summary Form, paying particular attention to the “DHS Psychologist Referral Form”, page 7. All information must be completed and submitted to the psychologist via e-mail or dropped off on the mezzanine where the DHS psychologists are located. The DHS psychologist also require that the Social Worker submit other pertinent information to accompany the Social Summary, such as the CPS or GPS investigation summaries (**indicated or with findings present only**), criminal history, Safety Plan and Assessment or DROs (**if the evaluation is court ordered**), etc.*

Questions regarding this Policy and Procedure Guide should be addressed to:

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