

June 1, 2017

The Hospital Licensing Act requires a hospital to notify the designated Care Coordination Unit (CCU) at least 24 hours prior to a patient's pending discharge to a skilled nursing facility, so the CCU can perform the Choices for Care assessment (prescreening).

The purpose of the Choices for Care prescreening is to inform the patient and family of all available community services and resources in order to prevent premature and/or unnecessary institutionalization. Communication to the CCU 24 hours in advance is vital to this process. Failure to provide this notice can result in delay of patient discharge.

Legislation that went into effect earlier this year amended the Hospital Licensing Act, revising the prescreening process for patient discharge to nursing facilities. This change provides that when an assessment for skilled nursing services is completed in the hospital, the CCU completing the prescreening shall provide a copy of the assessment prior to discharge directly to the nursing facility where the patient is being discharged.

It is imperative that the hospital discharge planner communicate with the CCU regarding the selection of the nursing facility after completion of the prescreen in order for the CCU to send the required documentation to the nursing facility. Untimely communication can result in a delay or no payment to the CCU or the nursing facility.

To help facilitate these changes, the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) has made changes to improve the process, including developing a standard prescreening assessment form, updating its policy manual and trainings for CCUs, and implementing a new requirement that CCUs maintain weekend hours to complete assessments.

There are several resources available to assist members, including:

- IHA's memo "Revised Process for Hospital Discharge Planners;"
- A recorded webinar hosted by IDoA and IHA on the changes to the Choices for Care prescreening process;
- A copy of the standard prescreening form developed by IDoA; and
- IDoA's Choices for Care Program/Universal Screening policy manual.

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