

Bulletin

December 23, 2002

Minnesota Department of Human Services ■ 444 Lafayette Rd. ■ St. Paul, MN 55155

OF INTEREST TO

- County Directors
- Waiver & AC Program contacts
- Public Health
- Personal Care Provider Organizations
- PCA Choice Providers
- Home Health Agencies
- Contracted Health Plans

ACTION

Please read and implement. Make copies of PCA Consumer's Guide for distribution to consumers of PCA services.

EFFECTIVE DATE

December 1, 2002

PCA Consumer Guide and Changes to PCA Choice Option

TOPIC

A PCA Consumer handbook to be used in the PCA Program and the addition of shared care option to the PCA Choice Option.

PURPOSE

Provide consumer information about the PCA Program and to inform about the 2002 legislative change in the PCA Choice Option.

CONTACT

E-mail: DHS.H-C.Policy@state.mn.us or
FAX questions to 651-582-1962, Attention H-C Policy

For TTY, contact Minnesota Relay Service at 1 (800) 627-3529

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Disability Services Division (DSD)
444 Lafayette Road North
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155-3857

SIGNED

MARIA R. GÓMEZ
Assistant Commissioner
Continuing Care

BACKGROUND

Over the years, the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Program has added options to allow flexibility and promote consumer driven models. One option that was added in 2000 was the PCA Choice Option.

This bulletin provides both a consumer guidebook and updated information from the 2002 legislation that authorized the use of shared care in the PCA Choice option.

This bulletin applies to all of the following programs: Medical Assistance Home Care, Community Alternative Care (CAC), Community Alternatives for Disabled Individuals (CADI), Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver (TBIW), Elderly Waiver (EW), Mental Retardation or Related Conditions Waiver (MR/RC), and Alternative Care (AC).

PCA CONSUMER HANDBOOK

Attached is a handbook written for consumers to provide basic information about the PCA Program and the options available for consumer choice to help meet their needs in the community. The purpose of providing a basic handbook about the PCA Program is to increase consumer awareness about the PCA Program and all options available.

It is recommended that counties make copies of this handbook and distribute to all consumers who use or may potentially use PCA services.

SHARED CARE IN THE PCA CHOICE OPTION

A consumer may now use Shared Care when using the PCA Choice Option. This means that consumers who have selected the PCA Choice Option can share a PCA with one or two other consumers at the same time in the same place.

A requirement for Shared Care in the PCA Choice Option is that the consumers who are sharing a PCA **must use** the same PCA Choice Provider.

Information about Shared Care can be found in DHS Bulletin #99-56-8.

Information about the PCA Choice Option can be found in DHS Bulletin #00-56-26.

An updated review of the above options can be found in the MHCP Provider Manual at <http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/Provider/manual/default.htm>; refer to Chapter 24.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

Minnesota Statutes, section 256B.0625 and 256B.0627
Code of Federal Regulations, title 42, part 440

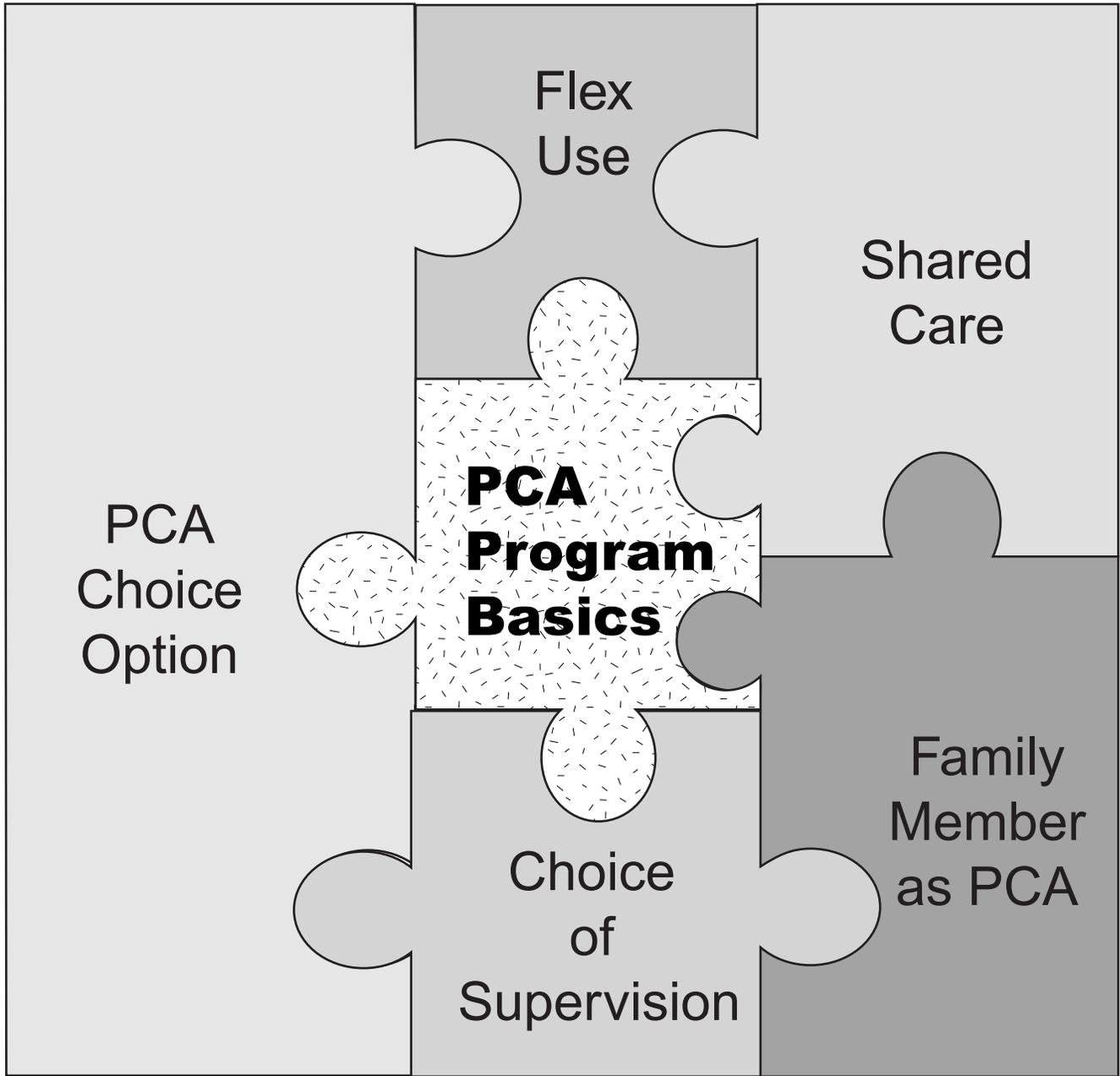
RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

Minnesota Statutes and Rules: www.leg.state.mn.us

DHS bulletins: www.dhs.state.mn.us Click on “Bulletins and Manuals”

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

This information is available in other forms to persons with disabilities by contacting us at (651) 297-4112 (voice), toll free at 1 (800) 747-5484, or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 1-800-627-3529 (TDD), 7-1-1, or 1-877-627-3848 (speech-to-speech relay service).



PERSONAL CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

CONSUMER GUIDEBOOK

MN DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Disability Services Division



This guidebook is written so that the consumer may learn more about the PCA Program and the many options that are available. Minnesota's PCA Program strives for a consumer directed model of service delivery to help people remain safe and healthy in their community.

As with any government-funded program, there will be changes to the rules and regulations. The information in this handout is current as of 2002. For the latest version of this booklet, please contact your public health agency or the Department of Human Services, Disability Services Division at 651-582-1998.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1 – PCA Program Basic Description

Description	Page 1
Eligibility	1
Accessing PCA Services	2
Categories of PCA Services	3
Expectations	5

PART 2 – Core Elements

Personal Care Assistant criteria	Page 6
Qualified Professional	7
PCA Providers	8
Assessment	9

PART 3 – Options in the PCA Program

Flexible Service Use	Page 11
Shared Care	12
Choice for Supervision	13
Family Members as PCAs	14
Type of Provider	15
PCA Choice Option	17

PART 4 – Frequently Asked Questions

Responsible Party	Page 21
Service Agreement	21
Care Plan	21
Changing Agencies	22
Appeals	22
Doctor's orders	22

Part I – PCA Program Basic Description

The PCA Program provides support to:

- **People with disabilities**
- **The elderly**
- **People with chronic health conditions**

PCA Services are for people who need help with day-to-day assistance in meeting their personal care needs. With help from a Personal Care Assistant (PCA) people can live independently in their homes and community.



Eligibility for PCA Services

- ◆ You must be receiving Medical Assistance (MA) or Minnesota Care Expanded Benefits (pregnant women and children under age 21) or be eligible for Alternative Care Program
- ◆ The PCA services must be medically necessary
- ◆ You must be able to make decisions about your care or have a responsible party living with you who can make decisions
- ◆ Your doctor must order the service

PCA Services are **NOT** available to:

- GAMC (General Assistance Medical Care) recipients
- Adults enrolled in Minnesota Care except for pregnant women

ACCESSING PCA SERVICES

A person can receive PCA Services through one of the programs described below. Think of these as the “doors” to starting PCA service, with each program differing in how it is administered.

Home Care

- This program is sometimes called MA Home Care. PCA Services are one type of service available.
- Contact your county for more information. The county public health nurse is responsible to do the PCA assessment.

Waiver Programs and Alternative Care

- These programs have specific eligibility criteria and have additional services to help people remain in the community
 1. Alternative Care (AC)
 2. Community Alternatives for Care (CAC)
 3. Community Alternatives for Disabled Individuals (CADI)
 4. Elderly Waiver (EW)
 5. Mental Retardation/Related Conditions (MR/RC)
 6. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Contact your county social services department to learn more about the waivers and how to get services
- A Service Coordinator/Case Manager is responsible for coordination of all services including PCA

Prepaid MA Program – Managed Care

- This program is sometimes called PMAP.
- Contact your health plan for more details on how to access PCA services

Categories of PCA Services

There are four categories of services a PCA can provide. The categories and short description are listed below.

1. Assistance in accomplishing activities of daily living (ADLs)

includes assistance with things like:

- * Dressing
- * Grooming
- * Bathing
- * Eating
- * Positioning
- * Toileting
- * Transferring
- * Mobility

2. Assistance in completing other (instrumental) activities of daily living (IADLs) with things like:

- Meal planning and preparation
- Managing finances
- Shopping for food, clothing and other essential items
- Completing necessary homemaking tasks
- Communication by telephone and other media and
- Getting around in and participating in the community

3. Assistance in health-related functions are services that can be delegated or assigned by licensed health care professionals. Health-related functions must be provided under the direction of a Qualified Professional (QP) or a physician.

Examples of health-related functions

- Special Skin Care
- Non-sterile catheter-care
- Tube Feedings

4. Redirection and intervention for behavior including observation and monitoring.

Examples include:

- reminders to start and complete activities of daily living
- redirection of behavior that has the potential to cause harm to you or others

PCA service may be used wherever your life activities take you:

- ◆ Work
- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Medical appointments
- ◆ House of worship
- ◆ School and
- ◆ Other places in the community



What about using PCA services at school?

A child who needs PCA services during the school day will have an individualized education plan (IEP/IIIP) written.

Parents have a choice of how PCA services are delivered at school.

To learn more, talk with the school special education director.

Things to Think About

- What kind of assistance do I need and when?**
- How do I want to use my PCA hours?**
- What kind of things do I want to do in my community?**
- Do I need a PCA at work?**

EXPECTATIONS

The PCA Program is designed to be a flexible consumer driven model of service; however there are certain expectations you must keep in mind.

PCA service is approved to provide direct assistance to YOU.

This means:

- You need to be there with the PCA
- You or your responsible party provide direction to the PCA staff
- The PCA follows the care plan describing your needs for assistance
- The PCA completes the activities on your care plan with you at home and wherever you may go

PCA can be a flexible service

This means:

- You have the PCA providing assistance to you when you need it
- The PCA must be physically with you to provide assistance

Your home is the work setting for the PCA.

This means the PCA is not to bring their children to your home while they are working.

Billing the state for PCA services

- The PCA agency can bill only for the hours the PCA was providing assistance directly for you.
- If there are bills sent to the state that are hours counted when the PCA is NOT serving the consumer – IT IS FRAUD and DHS can investigate.

PCAs may not be paid for the following:

- Staying in your home while you are not there
- PCA travel time to your home
- Being “on call” by phone or pager or computer

PART 2 – Core Elements

This section will tell you more about the PCA Program including the people involved, the assessment process, and provider information. There will be questions for you to read and think about and options for you to choose from – all with the goal to help you get the assistance you need in your home and community.



A Personal Care Assistant (PCA) must:

- Be at least 18 years old or
- Be 16-17 years old with additional special training
- Be employed by an agency or you
- Be trained and competent to help you
- Be able to provide the services you need
- Pass a criminal background check

Training

A PCA needs training to provide assistance to you. This training can be from the provider, you, or a formal education program from a school. A 16-17 year old can be a PCA if they have completed school-based training or prevocational training programs.

Other information

A PCA must be able to communicate with you and provide services according to your care plan.

Because of federal and state labor laws, you may need more than one PCA during the week. When you have selected an agency, you will need to talk about the maximum numbers of hours per week your PCA can work. Some agencies are not able to pay for overtime hours.

Qualified Professional

A Qualified Professional is either a Registered Nurse or a Mental Health Professional

A Qualified Professional:

- Can work with you to write a care plan describing your needs and how a PCA will help you
- Will orient the PCA to you and your assistance needs
- Will train the PCA to help with your health care needs
- Will make ongoing contact with you and the PCA to make sure things are going the way they should to meet your needs
- Can communicate changes you may need in PCA services to the right people such as your doctor or the public health nurse
- Can be employed by an agency or you

Consumer Choice

In the PCA Program you can choose if you want to have supervision of the PCA done by a Qualified Professional. You can also choose to do your own supervision or do joint supervision. The county public health nurse will discuss this option at the time of your PCA assessment.

? Why would I want to supervise my own staff?

If you are able to supervise your own staff, you may find you have more control over the daily activities where you need help.

? Why would I choose to have a qualified professional for supervision?

You may feel that having a professional would give you support for some of the times when you need help or for doing the activities listed above.

Providers of PCA Services

Providers may be one of these types of agencies:

- **Personal Care Provider Organization (PCPO)**
- **Home Health Agency**
- **PCA Choice Provider**

Personal Care Provider Organization is sometimes called a PCA Agency. This agency is responsible for recruiting, hiring, training, scheduling, and paying the PCA staff it employs. A PCA Agency also has a qualified professional on staff to help you if you choose that option.

Home Health Agency is an agency that has a license from the Department of Health and is Medicare certified. The agency provides nursing visits, home health aide visits, and therapy visits. Some also provide PCA services.

PCA Choice Provider is a different kind of provider in the PCA Program. This provider is there to serve as the fiscal intermediary for you and the staff you hire. We will talk about this option in greater detail later.

? **How do I find a provider?**

You can call your county public health office, talk to others who use PCA services, look in the Yellow Pages or use the Internet.

You may also call 211 to ask for help; or if 211 is not available in your area, dial 1-800-543-7709, First Call for Help.

? **What should I ask a provider?**

- Policies for service, including ability to provide staff and back-up
- Wages and benefits for staff
- Scheduling practices
- Can you interview staff before they come to care for you?
- What kind of training does the PCA staff get?

ASSESSMENT

The assessment process for PCA services is completed by:*

- **County Public Health Nurse for MA Home Care**
- **County Public Health Nurse for the MR/RC Waiver**
- **Service Coordinator for the CAC, CADI, EW, TBI Waivers & AC Program**
- **Contact for the PMAP health plan**

*Refer to page 2 for descriptions of the types of programs

An assessment of your need for PCA services is done at the start of service and every year after that. If you need to have a change in your services, you need to contact the person listed above to have an assessment more often.

The assessment covers the areas of activities of daily living, health-related needs, behavior issues, and instrumental activities of daily living. It takes about an hour of your time and needs to be done in your home.

After the assessment is complete, you will be asked to sign the assessment form. You can ask for a copy of the assessment and service plan. Your agency will also get a copy of the assessment and the approval for services to begin.

? What else do I need to know about the assessment?

- You will be asked questions about your needs for assistance
- You will be asked to make choices on the different program options described in the next few pages
- You will be responsible for choosing a provider
- You will have time to ask questions about other resources such as transportation and waiver services.

? PCA Assessment for children

The PCA assessment is based on needs over and above what a parent or other caregiver would normally provide. It is sometimes difficult to assess for hours of PCA service for a young child.

PART III – OPTIONS IN THE PCA PROGRAM

The PCA Program has six options to help you meet your needs in the community. You will need to read about them, think about how you could use the options, and tell the person doing the assessment about your choices.

Options available are:

- 1. Flexible Service Use**
- 2. Shared Care**
- 3. Supervision Choice**
- 4. Family Members and Hardship Waiver**
- 5. Type of Provider**
- 6. PCA Choice Option**



Option #1 -- Flexible Service Use

- This option allows you to use your authorized PCA hours in a flexible way to meet your needs for assistance throughout the year. This means that you do not have to use your hours the same each day.
- You may choose this option during the assessment or at any other time during the year.
- You will need to describe how you will plan on using the approved hours over the year.
- You and the provider need to keep track of the hours used so you will not use up your authorized hours before the year is up.
- The state cannot authorize more hours in the year span unless you have a change in your condition requiring an increase of PCA services. The county public health nurse will need to be called if you have an increased need.



An Example of Flexible Service Use –

Mary has been authorized the use of 5 hours of PCA services each day. She chooses the Flexible Service Use because she knows that some days her family is there to help her and she does not need the PCA for assistance. On the days her family is not available, she can ask the PCA to stay 5 or more hours to provide assistance.

Mary will keep track of the hours she has to use and be careful to make sure she has enough hours to last throughout the year.

Option #2 -- Shared Care

This option allows two or three consumers to share PCA services in the same setting at the same time from the same PCA worker.

- There are some requirements when using this option:
 1. Each person who needs assistance must have authorized PCA hours
 2. Each person must have a plan on how they are using shared care.
 3. There needs to be a back-up plan in place in case of illness for you or one of the other persons.
 4. This option is determined appropriate and safe for each person.

- Tell the public health nurse at anytime that you are choosing to use the shared care option.

- You can use both one-to-one PCA along with Shared Care PCA; you decide how to use your authorized hours.

- There is a different rate for billing Shared Care PCA; your provider will be responsible for knowing the rate.

- If you are using a PCPO or Home Health Care Agency for your PCA staff, there may be more than one agency involved.

- If you have selected the PCA Choice Option and wish to use shared care, then each person using the Shared Care PCA option needs to be using the **same** PCA Choice Provider.

Examples of Shared Care PCA Option

1. People who use PCA services who are living in the same home
2. Could be used in a work setting or a children's daycare setting
3. In your home with friends or neighbors coming over so they could share one PCA

Option #3 -- Choice for Supervision

You have the choice to supervise your own PCA or to request supervision from a Qualified Professional.

- During the assessment process, you will be given information about supervision tasks and how you want the supervision to happen. Those tasks are listed in the table below.
- You will be asked:
 - If you want to supervise all of the tasks by yourself, or
 - If you want a qualified professional to supervise all tasks, or
 - If you want joint supervision with the qualified professional.
- You will be marking the Service Plan with your choices of supervision:
 - Consumer means you will do all of the supervision;
 - QP means you want the qualified professional to do all the supervision;
 - Joint Supervision means you and the qualified professional will supervise together.
- The following table is from the MA Home Care Service Plan and is completed by the consumer or responsible party at the time of the assessment.

Consumer	QP	Joint Supervision	Supervision Tasks
			Care plan development (physician can assist) to identify my personal care needs, when to provide assistance, and how I want to receive the assistance.
			Orient PCA to my personal cares and needs
			Train PCA to provide hands on assistance with special health care tasks <i>-Required to be directed by my physician OR a qualified professional</i>
			Day-to-day supervision of the PCA which means ongoing monitoring of my PCA's ability to provide cares according to the care plan -The professional would not need to make routine visits to observe the PCA.
			Communicate needed changes in PCA services to the agency, physician, or others

Option #4 -- Family Members as PCAs

Family Members who CANNOT be paid as a PCA

1. Parents of a minor child (under age 18)
2. Spouses
3. A corporate legal guardian or conservator
4. The Responsible Party
(Someone who lives with you and helps to direct your care)

Family members who are required to have a Hardship Waiver

*****Hardship Waiver - state approval for certain relatives to be paid as a PCA**

1. Parents of an adult using PCA services
2. Adult children(18 years or older) of an adult using PCA services
3. Adult brothers/sisters of a person using PCA services

Hardship Waiver Requirements and Process

- To be eligible for a Hardship Waiver, the family members named must meet one of the following criteria in order to assist you:
 1. Resigns from a job
 2. Changes from a full time to a part time job with a decrease in pay
 3. Takes a leave of absence without pay
 4. Has substantial expenses because of providing you assistance
 5. There is a special need you have that only a family member can provide such as special language needs or intermittent hours of care.
- There is a simple application form that must be completed and sent to DHS for review and approval. Talk with your agency or county nurse for help with this.
- Once the Hardship Waiver is approved for your family member (usually within 20 days), you will receive a small card from DHS. Keep that card in your wallet or other safe place, so that you can share it with your agency when asked.
- The family member must be hired by a PCPO or, if you are using a PCA Choice Provider, you will enter into a written agreement with your family member after the Hardship Waiver is approved.

Option #5 -- Type of Provider

You need to choose a type of provider to help you meet your needs.

1. PCA Agency (PCPO) or Home Health Care Agency

Is responsible for the following:

- Recruiting, hiring, and training PCA staff
- Recruiting and hiring a qualified professional
- Applying for the criminal background check for all staff
- Monitoring and evaluating staff
- Getting doctor orders for each person
- Maintaining the required liability insurance
- Billing the state
- Scheduling and paying the PCA staff
- Having policies to help you be safe and healthy, including a back-up plan for staffing and emergencies

The PCPO and home health care agency are required to complete all of these tasks for you. You should expect the agency to provide you complete and adequate service.

2. PCA Choice Provider – Also called a Fiscal Intermediary

Is responsible for the following:

- Maintaining the required liability insurance
- Billing DHS and paying staff you hire
- Applying for the criminal background check for staff you hire
- Having written agreements with the staff you hire

You have increased flexibility, determine who you hire, how much they get paid, and how the staff provides assistance for you.

How do I decide which kind of provider?

Think about the types of providers, review what they are required to do and make a decision on the type of provider that will meet your needs.

The following questions may help you with your decision

Do I feel confident I can find my own PCA(s)?

Do I feel confident I can train my own PCA(s)?

Do I feel confident I can write a back up plan to use if my regular PCA is not able to come?

Do I feel confident that I can make sure my PCA does what I ask?



If you have answered YES to these questions, then a PCA Choice Provider in the PCA Choice Option may work for you.

Read more about this option starting with page 17.

OPTION #6 -- PCA Choice Option

By choosing the PCA Choice Option YOU are choosing to have more control and responsibility about your services.

The two primary differences between the PCA Choice Option and the traditional PCA service are:

1. You will take on the responsibility for hiring and training your staff so your needs are met
2. You have a different kind of provider – a PCA Choice Provider (refer to page 14 for more information).

Participation in the PCA Choice Option is voluntary. This option is open to anyone requesting or currently using PCA services.

You have responsibilities if you choose the PCA Choice Option:

- You will need to find people who want to be hired as your PCA staff and meet the requirements as noted on page 5.
- You will need to find a qualified professional to help you supervise the PCA if you want that kind of help.
- You will need to decide which PCA Choice Provider you will use.
- You will need to tell the public health nurse that you are choosing the PCA Choice Option.
- You will sign a written agreement with the provider, each PCA, and, if you want one, the qualified professional.
- You will train your PCA staff to help you.
- You will be responsible for setting the PCA's work schedule
- You will make sure you have a care plan for the PCA to follow.
- You will have a copy of your doctor's orders for PCA services for you – keep in a file.
- You will make sure the PCA staff sends in correct timecards for the hours actually worked.
- You will watch how many hours you are using so you do not run out of time before the end of your approved hours.
- You may have to fire the PCA if the PCA is not doing what you expect.

How do I find my staff when using the PCA Choice Option?

- You can advertise in the newspaper, at schools, colleges, and place of worship
- You can ask friends and family.
- You can ask your current staff.
- Other resources can be found on the internet; 3 web sites below:
 1. <http://www.pva.org/NEWPVASITE/publications/pdf/PersAsst.pdf>
 2. <http://www.tbi-sci.org/pdf/pas.pdf>
 3. <http://www.wa-ilsc.org/toc2ack.html>

What do I need to know about hiring my PCA staff?

- Interviews of potential staff may be a way to start.
- Have your care plan available to show the people you interview.
- Does the person seem comfortable with the tasks on your care plan?
- Is the person qualified to help you?
 - Strong enough to help you transfer?
 - Able to speak to you in a language you understand?
 - Meet the age requirements?
- What about transportation for your staff? Do they have their own car?
- Are you comfortable with a family member or friends providing your care?
- Does the person have other responsibilities that might interfere with helping you?
- **Always ask for references.**

What do I need to know about training my PCA staff?

- Make sure your staff knows about your care plan and how you want them to assist you
- You may want to try different kinds of training such as the use of written directions; your own video of special tasks such as transferring from bed to your chair; and asking your current PCA to demonstrate how to provide assistance.
- If you have hired a qualified professional, you can ask that person to help you with the training of your PCA staff.
- Explain to the PCA why you want things done a specific way.
- Your PCA may not get things right the first time, but with encouragement and more directions from you, the PCA may learn and improve.

What else do I need to think about with my PCA staff?

- Make sure your staff has signed the written agreement with your provider.
- Begin a work schedule for your staff and expect them to call you if they are going to be late or not able to work their assigned time.
- Tell your staff if you need to change the schedule for any reason.
- Think about your needs for back-up staff or support when your regular PCA staff is not available.

How do I supervise and evaluate my PCA staff?

- Supervision is the day-to-day informal communication between you and your PCA. It is a time when you can give directions to your staff, and expect the PCA to follow your directions to provide the assistance you need.
- Evaluation is a more formal time to sit down and talk about how the job is working out. You may want to do this on a planned schedule so your staff knows how they are doing. An example would be to do an evaluation every 6 months. Keep track of the formal evaluations you do.

What if I decide to have a Qualified Professional (QP) help with supervision of my PCA staff?

(See choice of supervision option on page 13 for details)

- Make sure the QP has signed the written agreement with your provider.
- The QP needs to visit you in your home at least one time during the year. You can request more visits; you decide what is best for you and your PCA.
- You may need to have the QP come to help train the PCA on new cares.
- The QP can help you with supervision and evaluation of the PCA, writing a care plan, getting the doctor's orders, and other tasks you may have.



PCA Choice Provider responsibilities listed below:

- Required to send in a criminal background check for all of your staff
- Required to have a written agreement with you and all of your staff
- The written agreement must have the following:
 1. Duties for you, your staff, and the provider
 2. Salary and benefits for your staff
 3. Administrative fee and services of the provider
 4. Methods to respond to billing or payment complaints
 5. Methods for hiring and firing your staff as you request
- Required to collect the time cards of your staff and keep records
- Required to bill the state for the PCA services
- Required to write the checks and withhold taxes for your staff
- Required to provide tax forms

What about timecards and paying my staff?

- Your PCA Choice Provider has a plan on how you are to fill out and send in the timecards for your staff. Please make sure you know what that plan is.
- Do not sign any timecards for staff when they do not work their scheduled hours; you are to watch and monitor the hours the PCA is with you.
- If you are concerned about the PCA not working the hours you have scheduled, it is up to you to talk to them about it. You are in charge of your staff and need to take on this responsibility.

PART 4

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When a person cannot direct his or her own care, who can be a responsible party?

Someone who lives with the consumer of PCA services who is capable of providing the supportive care necessary for the consumer to live in the community. This person must be 18 years old and not be the consumer's PCA. The responsible party must be able to identify, direct and evaluate the PCA's work, and provide for the consumer's health and safety.

2. What happens after the assessment is done?

MA Home Care PCA -The county PHN completes the forms and recommends a number of PCA units care for your use. The information is sent to the state for review and approval. You and your agency get a copy of the assessment from the county and a Service Agreement letter from the state.

Waiver & AC Programs – The Service Coordinator determines and approves a number of PCA units and submits the information to the state. You can ask for a copy of the assessment. You will receive a Service Agreement letter from the state.

Managed Care Programs – You will need to contact your health plan contact to learn about your assessment.

3. What is in the Service Agreement letter?

The computer-generated letter reports the total number of PCA units and Qualified Professional units that have been approved for your use. It will also tell you the length of time of the Service Agreement. This is important to know when you are monitoring the use of your PCA units/hours when you are using the Flexible Service Use Option. Your appeal rights are on the back of the letter.

4. What is a care plan?

This is a document that states what kind of assistance you need to be independent in the community. This can be written by you with the help of your doctor or a qualified professional if you choose to have one.

The PHN can give you a copy of a sample care plan form. A care plan is required to be in your home so the PCA staff will know what you are expecting from them.

5. How do I change agencies?

When you decide to use another agency for your PCA services, you first need to find and interview a new agency. Then tell your current agency about your decision to change agencies. The two agencies have a process to follow to make this change for you.

If you are choosing a PCA Choice Provider in the PCA Choice Option, you also need to let the county PHN know about your decision.

6. Can I use more than one agency to provide PCA services?

The answer depends on the type of provider you have chosen.

Yes, if you are using a PCPO or Home Health Care Agency as your provider of PCA services, then you can use more than one agency to meet your staffing needs.

No, if you are using a PCA Choice Provider in the PCA Choice Option. You can use only one provider because you are responsible for finding your own staff.

7. What does appeal mean?

If you do not agree with some of the decisions made during the assessment process, there is an appeal process. Read the back of the Service Agreement letters (see question #3) you get from the state for directions on how to appeal. You have thirty (30) days to request an appeal once you get the letter.

8. What does “medically necessary” mean?

You have a need for assistance based on your disability, diagnosis or chronic condition. The PHN will be reviewing this during the assessment process.

9. Why do I need to have doctor’s orders?

This is a requirement of the PCA Program. If you are using a PCPO, the agency is responsible for getting the doctor’s orders. If you are using the PCA Choice Option and a PCA Choice Agency, **YOU** are responsible for getting doctor’s orders and filing them with your care plan.

10. What is the “Bill of Rights”?

This list has been developed to help you understand what to expect as your rights in using health care services.

Your provider is required to give you a copy.