DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

ACTION REFERRAL

TO	DATE
Myers	12-23-10

DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY	ACTION REQUESTED
1. LOG NUMBER 001276	[ ] Prepare reply for the Director's signature DATE DUE _____
2. DATE SIGNED BY DIRECTOR Cleared 1/18/11, letter attached!	[X] Prepare reply for appropriate signature DATE DUE 1-7-11 [ ] FOIA DATE DUE _____ [ ] Necessary Action

APPROVALS (Only when prepared for director's signature)	APPROVE	* DISAPPROVE (Note reason for disapproval and return to preparer.)	COMMENT
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

Log: Myers

December 20, 2010

To Governor-Elect Nikki Haley:

CC: Representative Bryan White, Senator Thomas Alexander, Felicity Myers – SC Medicaid Office

I realize that there are necessary budget cuts and many other issues that need your attention when you take office. However, I can't imagine a more desperate situation than the inadequately evaluated plan to reduce physical, occupational, and speech therapy to, in some cases, one third of what a child needs to not only progress but prevent regression.

The confusion over this policy is unbelievable. The Medicaid department can't begin to explain the details such as, "Did the 75 therapy visit limit begin at the beginning of the fiscal year resulting in no services at all for the next 6 months?" If the details of the policy can't be understood by top officials, then the consequences of such neglect of our most defenseless citizens certainly can't be understood.

As the mother of two autistic sons who are both working their hearts out to overcome the limitations of autism, I can see how such neglect will result in a decline in quality of life. I can see that in the long run this irresponsible policy will result in increased expenses rather than cost savings. Without those therapy services, our children will not obtain the highest level of independence possible, resulting in further reliance on governmental support throughout their lives.

The only budget that may be tighter than governmental budgets is that of special needs families. This change in Medicaid is as irresponsible as it would be for our family to cancel health insurance. **In order to provide all the necessary therapies to prevent regression and allow our children to become more independent functioning members of society, we need our South Carolina Medicaid Program to be fully funded.** We need the program to be fully funded to avoid further irresponsible decisions due to "budget" concerns, rather than actually being concerned not only about our children's quality of life, but the financial impact of their long term care that will result from a lack of therapy services.

Unless you have lived a life of special needs parenting, you can't possibly begin to understand the demands that are placed on families. You hope your children succeed while we hope our children have a quality life free from abuse. You hope that your children can become the best in their sport while we hope that our children continue to move because that prevents the look of depression in their eyes. Yet without the assistance of therapists to help us around setbacks and hurdles, their quality of life declines. It is no wonder families with such stress result in an 80% divorce rate, leading to the necessity of more governmental assistance to single parents.

An even more difficult pill to swallow is that while making reductions in our school district, the administration spent $25,000 on IPADs for administrators. Why aren't we taking the time to responsibly seek out guidance from medical professionals in evaluating proposed changes and looking for unnecessary, wasteful spending, such as the $25,000 IPAD project?

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Wright

Elizabeth Wright
720 Oxbow Drive
Myrtle Beach, SC 29579
bethwright@sc.rr.com

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~~MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY & BENEFICIARY SERVICES~~
Director's Office / by

Blue Log No. 0274

South Carolina Department of
Health & Human Services

William Wells ▪ Interim Director
Nikki Haley ▪ Governor

January 18, 2011

Ms. Elizabeth Wright
720 Oxbow Drive
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 29579

Dear Ms. Wright:

Thank you for your letter dated December 20, 2010 regarding your concerns on the 75 visits cap (total of 300 hours of therapy) for private rehabilitative services. While South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS) does regret having to place any limitations on service volume, there are times when it is necessary. We have determined that there are systems changes that will be required prior to our enforcing this limitation; therefore, the implementation date has been postponed until 4/1/11. We will make every effort to clarify the rules associated with this change so that the enrolled private therapists can know and understand the requirements for coordination with each child's primary care physician. This information will be made available in a Medicaid Bulletin. All Medicaid Bulletins and Provider Manuals are located on the agency website, www.scdhhs.gov.

While these limits will be in place, as indicated in the Private Rehabilitative Therapy and Audiological Services Manual, on pages 2-4, "Payment for services that exceed frequency limitations may only be justified as a result of an Early and Periodic screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) examination and must be pre-approved by SCDHHS." This policy remains unchanged; should a physician determine, through an EPSDT visit, that a child requires additional private therapy services, that physician should document the medical necessity and request additional visits. Such requests must be made in writing, must indicate the diagnosis and/or functional impairment that establishes medical necessity, and must be signed by the child's physician. This documentation should be faxed to SCDHHS staff at 803-898-8222, Attention: Private Rehabilitative Therapy Services Authorization, prior to provision of the service. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in denial or recoupment of payment.

Again, we are sorry that any limitations are necessary. However, we will continue to work with you, physicians and therapists to ensure that services are made available for the children in our state.

Sincerely,

Felicity Myers, PhD
Deputy Director, Medical Services

CC: Representative W. Brian White
Senator Thomas Alexander

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