

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

**ACTION REFERRAL**

TO	DATE
<i>Medical Services/Waldrep</i>	<i>2-7-11</i>

DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY	ACTION REQUESTED
1. LOG NUMBER <i>1011340</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for the Director's signature DATE DUE _____
2. DATE SIGNED BY DIRECTOR <i>Cleared 2/18/11, letter attached.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prepare reply for appropriate signature DATE DUE <i>2-16-11</i> DATE DUE _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> FOIA DATE DUE _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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.			

Melinda Edwards, MD  
1587 Terns Nest Road  
Charleston, SC 29412  
(843) 566-3333

**RECEIVED**

FEB 07 2011

Department of Health & Human Services  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

February 4, 2011

Mr. Tony Keck  
Director's Office  
P.O. Box 8206  
Columbia, SC 29202-8206

Dear Mr. Keck,

I am writing to you with a deep concern about the Medicaid reductions for basic therapies being proposed by the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. I am a resident of South Carolina and am a single mother of a special needs daughter.

My daughter Saachi was diagnosed with autism at 16 months of age in April 2010. At that time, she had withdrawn completely from the world. Most of the time she started down at the floor, unable to make eye contact or notice others in the room. She was unable to respond in any way to sounds or to her name. She was mute and made no efforts to communicate or connect with others. She was unable to walk, to feed herself or to grasp or release objects with her hands. As desperately as I tried, I was unable to reach her. I knew that my precious, sweet baby was in there, but in spite of all my efforts, I could not get to her through the cloud of autism.

Saachi is the greatest gift of my life, and is my greatest joy. Her diagnosis brought with it a heartache beyond words, realizing the possibility that she may never be able to engage fully in life, may never be able to connect with and share love and joy with others, and may never be able to live independently.

After her diagnosis, we immediately set up an intensive in-home therapy program. This was possible only through the help of Medicaid and BabyNet. We began to see results very quickly. With weekly physical therapy, she learned to walk at 18 months of age. She is now able to walk up and down stairs with assistance. With twice weekly occupational therapy, she learned to grasp objects, release them, and put food in her mouth. She is now learning to feed herself with a spoon. With twice weekly speech therapy, Saachi learned to communicate with sign language and began to babble. Today, she is able to say some words and continues making great progress with speech. Additionally, she has been receiving daily Applied Behavioral Analysis therapy and Relationship Development Intervention therapy--each of which has been vital to her progress. With just 10 months of intensive therapy, she has made remarkable and miraculous progress.

Perhaps even more astounding and miraculous than the acquisition of so many basic skills is the fact that Saachi's precious, beautiful spirit is now shining through, loud and clear. She is a true light, full of love, joy, smiles and laughter, full of hugs and kisses and new-found mischief. She takes great delight in connecting with and loving others, and is a source of joy to all who are in her life. In truth, being witness to the miraculous blossoming of her beautiful spirit often makes me weep with a gratitude so full it cannot be spoken.

Saachi and I are walking this path together, hand in hand, with the invaluable and essential help of her therapists. While we still have a long journey ahead of us, I have great hope for Saachi--a hope full of possibility, and a hope that makes my heart soar. With continued intensive therapy, my hope is that Saachi will ultimately be integrated into a regular classroom. My hope is that she will some day laugh and play with friends, that she will be able to participate fully in life, and that ultimately she will get to experience the self-confidence and fulfillment that comes with living independently, choosing a fulfilling and meaningful career, and having her own family.

I am certain that without the intensive therapies she has received, Saachi would still be completely in her own world, unable to walk, unable to respond, unable to connect with the world in any way. She would still be staring into space, not registering my voice, not registering my love for her, not initiating any interactions--in fact, not interacting at all. It is because of her rigorous therapies, and because of her own hard work, that she has made such tremendous progress. We know from research studies that without intensive intervention, children with autism regress and their symptoms worsen.

As a physician, I am also well aware that these first years of life are a crucial and precious time of rapid brain development. It is imperative that we give it all we have, especially now, as this precious window of opportunity of brain malleability occurs only now. The symptoms of autism become more and more rigid and more difficult to treat over time. Now, during these early years, is the most vital time to invest resources--so that our children can reach their full potential and ultimately live as independently as is possible for each of them. If we do not give our children every opportunity now, we will all most certainly pay the price later on.

Mr. Keck, I am writing to ask you, indeed, to beg you, for the sake of my daughter, for the sake and future of all of our special needs children, for the sake of all the residents of South Carolina, to please put a halt to the proposed Medicaid reductions of basic therapies. The price our children will pay without the opportunity for intensive treatment is their future--and the opportunity to reach their full potential. The price the residents of South Carolina will pay is the burden of knowing that we have not provided the next generation with the opportunity to live a full and engaged life--and the financial price of caring for the immense needs these children will have as adults if they do not receive intensive treatment now, as children. The price I will pay as a mother is a heartache beyond words, knowing that I have not been able to give my Saachi the life she could have had.

I do know that you are facing many difficult and necessary decisions related to budget and financial constraints--more than I can even imagine. I want to ask that you take into consideration the long-term financial price we will pay if we drastically reduce basic treatment for our special needs children.

Mr. Keck, I would love to meet with you, and I would love for you to meet my daughter. If this is possible, or if I can offer any assistance or help in any way, please call me.

Thank you, for carrying the burden of so many difficult decisions, and for guiding us all through some very challenging times.

Sincerely,

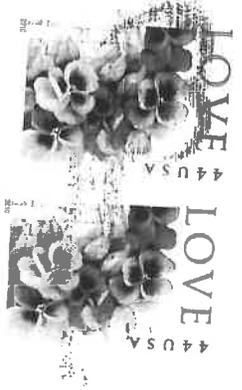
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melinda Edwards', written in a cursive style.

Melinda Edwards, MD



Melinda Edwards, MD  
1587 Teams West Rd  
Charleston, SC 29412

CHARLESTON SC 29412  
FEB 07 2011 1 3 20



**RECEIVED**

FEB 07 2011

Department of Health & Natural Resources  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

*[Handwritten signature]*

Mr. Tony Keck  
Director's Office  
PO Box 8206  
Columbia, SC 29202-8206

292028206



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

ACTION REFERRAL

Relayed from Welsch to Platt on 2/9/11

TO Medical Services/Waldrep DATE 2-9-11

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\* Issues about OT, ST, PT

Not Approved

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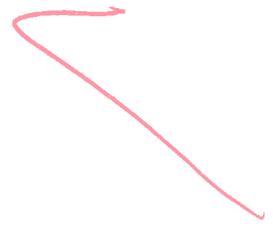
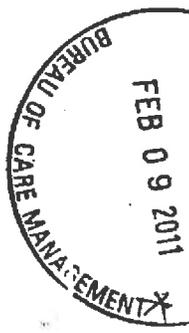
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FEB 09 2011

FEB 09 2011

Division of Medical Support Services



**Melinda Edwards, MD**  
*1587 Terns Nest Road*  
*Charleston, SC 29412*  
*(843) 566-3333*

**RECEIVED**

FEB 07 2011

Department of Health & Human Services  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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Director's Office  
P.O. Box 8206  
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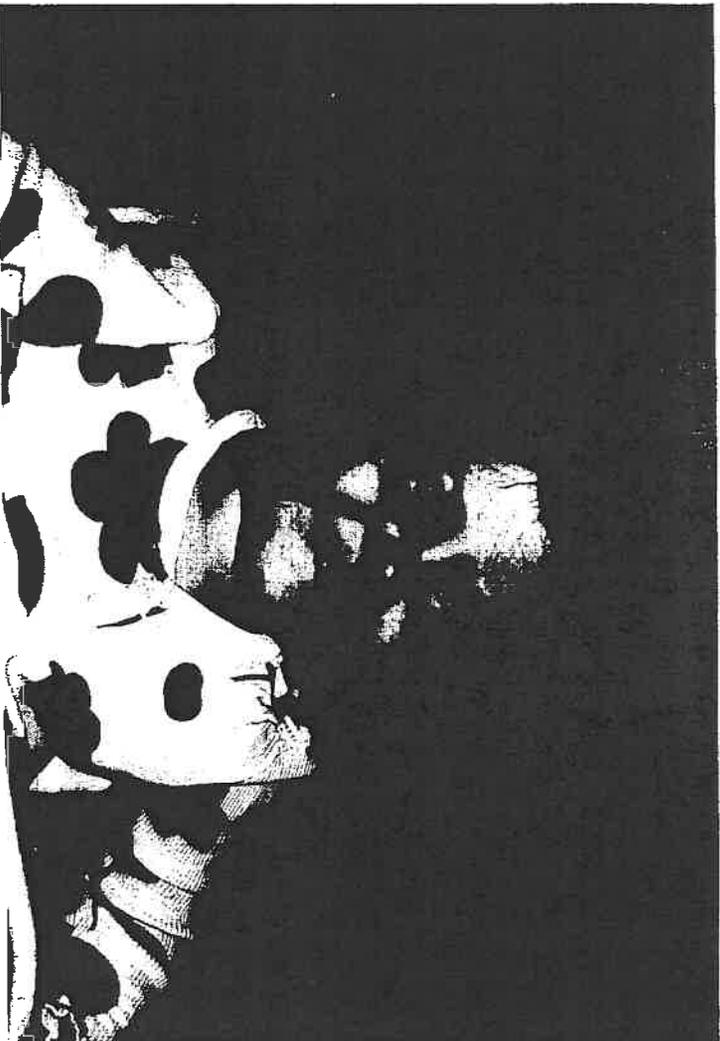
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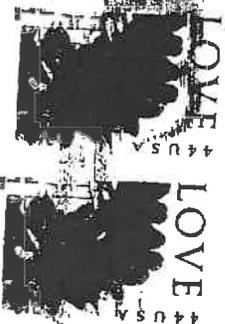
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melinda Edwards'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'M' being particularly large and stylized.

Melinda Edwards, MID



Melinda Edwards, MD  
1587 Toms West Rd  
Charleston, SC 29412

CHARLESTON SC 29412



**RECEIVED**

FEB 07 2011

Department of Health & Human Services  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

*[Handwritten signature]*

Mr. Tony Keck  
Director's Office  
PO Box 8206  
Columbia, SC 29202-8206

292028206





February 18, 2011

Melinda Edwards, MD  
1587 Terns Nest Rd  
Charleston, South Carolina 29412

Dear Dr. Edwards:

Thank you for your letter dated February 04, 2011, regarding your concerns on the 75 hours cap (300 units) for Private Rehabilitative Therapy 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 April 1, 2011. 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](http://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 must only be justified as a result of an Early and Periodic screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) examination, and 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. These requests must be made in writing. These requests must include an evaluation overview, proposed treatment plan with expected outcomes, relative progress notes, and anticipated units of services needed to address need(s). The documentation 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 803-255-8222, 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 share the disappointment with you that any limitations are necessary. However, we will continue to work with you, physicians and therapists to ensure that services are made available for children in our state. If you have any additional questions, please contact Diane McLeod, Department Manager for Medical Support Services, at (803) 898-2655.

Sincerely



Sheila B. Platts  
Division Director

SBP/w

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR



**ACTION REFERRAL**

Logged from Workshop to Platt on 2/9/11  
 TO \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 Medical Services/Waldrop \_\_\_\_\_ 2-7-11

DIRECTOR'S USE ONLY		ACTION REQUESTED	
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\* Issues about OT, ST, PT

NO DM  
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\* She becomes Mom can  
 of age - applies  
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