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AGING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN

SUBJECT: Area Agency on Aging(AAA)/Living Independently for Elders (LIFE) Interface

TO: EXECUTIVE STAFF
PA ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING
AREA AGENCIES ON AGING
BUREAU OF HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES
OFFICE OF LONG TERM LIVING

FROM: 

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Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Aging

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Aging Technical Assistance Bulletin (ATAB) is to inform you of LIFE's role in Pennsylvania's Long Term Living System and provide the AAA with guidance on their role while interfacing with LIFE Programs.

- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:**
- I. **LIFE's role in Pennsylvania's Long Term Living System**
 - a. LIFE is an integral and growing part of Pennsylvania's long term living continuum of care.
 - b. Current and potential consumers of long-term care in Pennsylvania who reside within counties or Zip Codes served by LIFE are entitled to information about this long-term living option.

- c. As Pennsylvania's pre-admission assessment agency for Medicaid funded nursing facility care, and home and community based living services which have nursing facility as their institutional antecedent, AAAs have a responsibility to provide information about the LIFE program option to all potentially eligible consumers who reside within Zip Codes served by a LIFE program.
- d. Consumers have a right to choose among programs for which they are determined eligible.
- e. Consumers who have been determined eligible for both the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) Waiver and the LIFE program will benefit from a thorough explanation of both programs prior to making an informed selection of the program in which they will participate.

II. AAA Roles in Interfacing with LIFE Programs

The following list of AAA roles for interfacing with LIFE programs in their planning and service areas (PSAs).

- Work with the Office of Long Term Living (OLTL) and the PDA to help recruit potential LIFE providers to serve the PSA.
- Participate in planning meetings with LIFE providers, sometimes also attended by OLTL and PDA, to prepare for the implementation of LIFE programming in the PSA.
- Provide or access cross-training for assessors and other appropriate AAA staff on the LIFE program, including a tour of a functioning LIFE adult day center.
- Provide cross-training for LIFE staff on the AAA assessment process including a detailed review of determining nursing facility clinical eligibility.
- Inform all eligible consumers about all of their choices for receiving community-based long-term care services, including the LIFE program.
- Identify consumers presenting with indicators of particular appropriateness for the LIFE program. (See

recommended indicators in Section III below.)

- Encourage consumers showing indicators of appropriateness for the LIFE program to receive a presentation from a LIFE marketing representative prior to choosing a service program.
- Participate in regular local networking with LIFE provider(s) in the PSA.
- Participate in regional or statewide cross-network conferences as they become available.
- Collect and report data on LIFE interface activities as may be prescribed by the PDA or OLTL.

This is intended to be a general guide on PDA-recommended interfacing activities. It is not meant to restrict AAAs from participating in other locally initiated collaboration.

III. Indicators of Appropriateness for the LIFE Program

On November 7, 2007, the PDA and OLTL convened a statewide work group of experts on AAA assessments and LIFE program operations to discuss how referrals of eligible consumers from AAAs to the LIFE Program could be enhanced in a relatively efficient manner. This group came to a consensus that there are a number of indicators of particular appropriateness for the LIFE program, which if one or more are present should normally trigger strong encouragement of eligible consumers to agree to a contact from a LIFE representative. Whether the LIFE program is ultimately selected is up to the consumer, but the presence of such indicators suggests that the LIFE program should receive serious consideration. These indicators include:

- a. Consumer has chronic medical needs which require and/or would benefit from close coordination and integration among the preventive, primary, acute and long-term care that is provided.
- b. Consumer would benefit from an integrated, coordinated pharmacy benefit which includes a single point of administrative and clinical medication management.
- c. Consumer has neither a strong working relationship with a primary care provider (PCP) nor a strong emotional

attachment to his/her current PCP.

- d. Consumer has informal supports that are at risk of withdrawing without more extensive caregiver support services.
- e. Consumer presents with a need for improved socialization and recreation such as may be received in an adult day program.
- f. Consumer presents with a need for restorative services such as improved nutrition or physical, occupation or speech therapy.
- g. Consumer would benefit from integrated door-through-door transportation to and from adult day services and medical appointments.

Again, consumers fitting the above criteria may not ultimately select the LIFE program, but they would quite probably benefit from the program, and should have the option fully explained to them by LIFE enrollment personnel.