



HEALTH ALERT

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HEALTH ALERT: EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES OR AUTISM

Individuals with intellectual disabilities or autism living in Community Homes may require emergency treatment for medical or behavioral reasons. When such events occur, these individuals are typically treated in the emergency room (ER) or an urgent care facility and then returned home. It is critical that Community Home staff accompany individuals to the hospital, stay informed about treatments, be actively involved in discharge arrangements, and understand the follow-up care required. This Health Alert serves as a reminder of the importance of continuity of care in these situations.

CLINICAL BENEFITS OF ACCOMPANYING INDIVIDUALS TO THE HOSPITAL

- **Ensures Accurate Medical Information:** Staff can provide detailed medical history, medication lists, allergies, and information on baseline behaviors, reducing the risk of errors during treatment.
- **Effective Communication with Healthcare Providers:** Staff familiar with the individual can share insights about behaviors, symptoms, and the context leading to the ER visit, helping medical personnel make informed decisions.
- **Involvement in Discharge Planning:** By participating in the discharge process, staff ensure a smooth transition back home, understanding treatments administered, new medications, and follow-up care.

- **Monitoring for Potential Complications:** Knowledge of treatments allows staff to monitor for side effects or complications, ensuring prompt action if needed.
- **Behavioral Support:** Familiar staff presence can help alleviate anxiety or challenging behaviors, ensuring a more positive experience in an otherwise stressful environment.
- **Timely Follow-Up Care:** Staff involvement ensures that necessary follow-up appointments, therapy, or medication adjustments are arranged, preventing health deterioration or readmission.
- **Advocacy and Rights Protection:** Staff advocate for the individual's needs and preferences, ensuring their dignity and comfort are maintained throughout treatment and discharge.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Supervision levels must be followed during these visits unless individual plan specifies otherwise.
- Maintain clear communication with healthcare providers.
- Be actively involved in discharge arrangements.
- Understand and implement follow-up care promptly.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY ROOM VISIT

- Provide the ER staff with all necessary medical information, including medication list, allergies, and the individual's baseline behaviors.
- Stay with the individual throughout their hospital visit.
- Ensure you receive a full briefing from medical personnel on treatments provided.
- Be actively involved in planning for the individual's return home.
- Monitor the individual closely for any side effects or complications after returning home.
- Arrange and follow through with any required follow-up care or appointments.