

## **What is private duty nursing?**

Private duty nursing (PDN) refers to registered nurses (RN) or licensed practical nurses (LPN) who come to your home to provide care to your child. The purpose of this nursing care is to allow you to take care of other things you need to do for your family during the day or to allow you to sleep at night.

## **How many hours of PDN will my child get?**

Your insurance will authorize a number of hours per day to be used for PDN. An average number of hours for PDN is 8-12 hours per day. You can schedule the nursing at any time you would like. Keep in mind nurses may not be available for the exact hours that you desire. You may have to use nurses when they are available and adjust your schedule. Also keep in mind there is a shortage of nurses and you may not have enough nurses to fill all the hours your insurance approves.

## **How do I arrange for PDN?**

The hospital case manager will start the process to get PDN hours approved by your insurance. The case manager will also contact agencies that employ the nurses to find out if there are nurses available in your neighborhood. The agency will call you to set up interviews for you to meet nurses and determine if they would be a good fit for your child and your family. It is good to have 2-3 different nurses who will be working with your child so you have a backup if one nurse is not available. We have provided a sample of some questions you may want to ask nurses when you interview them.

### **How long will it take to get nursing set up?**

It can take 4-6 weeks to receive the approval from your insurance company, interview the nurses, and get a schedule set for discharge.

### **What if I don't like any of the nurses I interview?**

Keep in mind there is a shortage of home nurses. Ask yourself if you think the nurse would be willing to learn your child's care. You do not have to like each nurse, rather, you should look at their skills as a nurse. We encourage families to try their best to work with the available staff.

### **How will the nurses learn my child's care?**

The nurses are all licensed to practice nursing so they know the basic skills. What you'll need to teach them is specific likes and dislikes of your child. The nursing agency will have a supervisor assigned to your child's case. This supervisor makes sure that all the nurses working with your child have learned the ventilator and appropriate skills to care for your child independently.

### **Are there any tips that other parents have shared that make home nursing work better?**

Yes! Parents have been working with private duty nurses for many many years and offer the following tips and tricks to help nursing run smoothly in your home:

- Decide where to have the main area of care for your child. A more central room may work best such as a family room, living room or dining room as opposed to a child's bedroom. This allows the bedrooms to be private for the family.
- Give nurses access to a kitchen area, a bathroom, a place to chart, and adequate light, especially at night.
- Be specific about your child care. Be available to answer questions for new staff.

- Be flexible. There is more than one way to do most care. The outcome for your child is what matters.
- Use a communication book to exchange messages with the staff between nurses.
- Set reasonable ground rules. For example, where staff should park their cars, store their lunches, take their break times and what the quiet times are for the household.
- Be open-minded about new staff. It is very important to realize that you probably will not like all of the nurses caring for your child. Concentrate on the care they're providing.
- If you're going to be away from home, be sure to return on schedule so the nurses can leave at the end of their shift.
- Do not ask nurses to care for other children in the family. They are there to care only for your child with special health care needs.
- If problems arise, try to talk honestly with the nurse right away or call the supervisor at the agency. Don't let little problems grow into big ones.

### **How is private duty nursing different from hospital nursing?**

In the hospital, if the nurse is sick and unable to come to work there is a replacement. In private duty nursing that is not the case. If the nurse is sick or has a problem getting to work, there is no replacement and the family is responsible for arranging care. Nurses may be late without notice.

### **If I don't like the agency that I was discharged with can I change agencies?**

Yes, you can change agencies or you can bring on a second agency. Keep in mind once your child has been discharged, it will be your responsibility to contact agencies to determine if they can help you with additional staff. The ventilator team can provide you with an updated list of agencies.

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