

SB1329 Self-Directed Attendant Care

Background

Currently ALTCS elderly and / or physically disabled (EPD) members who reside in their own home receive in-home services (e.g., attendant care, personal care, homemaker and skilled nursing) through provider agencies. A significant amount of the in-home services that members receive are considered unskilled / paraprofessional services. Some ALTCS EPD members do require **skilled care** from RNs and LPNs who are employed by Medicare or State-licensed only Home Health Agencies. ALTCS members can receive in-home services that are up to, but no more costly than institutional (nursing facility) care.

What is self-directed attendant care?

Self-directed attendant care is a service option that will allow ALTCS EPD members to hire their own attendant care worker and to direct the caregiver to provide for their specific needs **including skilled care** needs (e.g., bowel care, chronic wound care, gastrostomy tube feedings). The attendant care worker under self-directed attendant care is considered to be legally employed by the ALTCS member

Who would be permitted to participate in self-directed care?

ALTCS members receiving home and community-based services and selecting self-directed attendant care would have the option to direct their attendant care worker to provide skilled care. These members must be determined to be medically stable and competent to direct their own care (i.e. no diagnoses of dementia or moderate to severe cognitive disability) or be residing with an individual who is capable of directing care on the individual's behalf.

An ALTCS member's attendant care worker(s) shall be trained to provide specific skilled services by a RN via a home health agency. Similar activities currently take place when nurses train consumers and their family to perform specific skilled services in the home. The caregiver is restricted to providing the skilled tasks to the member who has requested the training of their caregiver. The process has to be repeated if the caregiver is to provide the same skilled tasks to another consumer.

What services would be included in self-directed care?

AHCCCS is working with the Board of Nursing and stakeholders to determine what self-directed skilled care services will/will not be permitted under the auspices of this legislation. For example, caregivers **MAY BE AUTHORIZED** to perform bowel care or chronic wound care under the direction of a competent ALTCS member. Caregivers **WILL NOT BE PERMITTED** to provide more complex skilled care services such as administering intravenous medications or performing deep tracheal suctioning.

How much compensation will attendant caretakers receive?

Wages for attendant caregivers will be similar to what attendant care workers receive if employed by a provider agency.

What are the benefits associated with self-directed care?

1. ALTCS members will be empowered to determine who will provide their care, including skilled care.
2. ALTCS members will be able to limit the number of "outside" caregivers who come to their home.
3. Higher acuity members may be able to receive more attendant care services to better meet their needs because the more expensive nursing services from a home health agency may no longer be needed.
4. Allows additional flexibility to RNs and LPNs to provide skilled care to more vulnerable ALTCS members who cannot or choose not to participate in the self-directed attendant care program.
5. This option will not increase costs and in some cases will produce cost savings.