




STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
1500 Jefferson Street, SE • P.O. Box 40975 • Olympia WA 98504-0975

POLICY MEMO

June 27, 2023

TO: Child Welfare Employees

FROM: Natalie Green, Assistant Secretary 

RE: Changes to [4517. Health Care Services for Children Placed in Out-of-Home Care](#) policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

SUNSET REVIEW DATE: July 1, 2024

Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance to Child Welfare (CW) employees of the updated policy and procedure requirements to align with [House Bill 1227: Keeping Families Together Act](#), [KW](#), and [LCS](#) supreme court decisions.

This policy is under full review for further revisions, but the following changes will take effect July 1, 2023:

New Policy Requirements

Caseworkers must:

- Prior to the shelter care hearing:
 - Inform parents or guardians, before authorizing evaluations and treatment for children's and youth's routine and necessary health care appointments, i.e., initial health screens (IHS), physical health, evaluation of emotional health, emergency care, and dental, unless they cannot be reached.
 - Provide parents and guardians the opportunity to attend any health care appointments, unless prohibited by a court order.

New Procedural Requirements

Caseworkers must complete the following for children and youth when they are placed in out-of-home care:

- Inform parents and guardians:
 - At the time of removal, that they:
 - Will be notified of health care appointments scheduled for their children or youth prior to the shelter care hearing.
 - May attend appointments until the Shelter Care Hearing, unless prohibited by a court order.
 - After the Shelter Care Hearing, if the child is placed in out-of-home care, they may attend and participate in medical and dental appointments when it is safe.
 - Of the dates, times, and locations of health care appointments, by:
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Mail, when they cannot be reached by phone or email.

- Consult with the assistant attorney general (AAG) if there are safety concerns related to the parent or guardian attending health care appointments.
- Identify whether children or youth have any health care needs. If they have:
 - An emergent health care need, verify they are taken to urgent care or the emergency department immediately to be evaluated.
 - A non-emergent illness, chronic health issue, injury, or health concern verify they are taken to their health care provider for an Initial Health Screen to be evaluated no later than five calendar days of entering out-of-home care. These children and youth are still required to have an Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) to complete the Child Health and Education Tracking (CHET) requirement.
 - No known medical needs, coordinate with CHET screeners to schedule the required EPSDT as soon as possible.
- Follow the [Consent Decision Tree](#) publication to obtain or release children's and youth's protected health information.
- Document efforts made to inform the parents or guardians of health care appointments.

Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Trishia Benshoof, Foster Care Health Program Manager, at trishia.benshoof@dcyf.wa.gov or 360-789-0049.

Cc: Brenda Villarreal