

Training and Credentialing: Resources for Health Plans

As states expand managed long-term services and supports (LTSS) for their Medicaid enrollees, your health plan may need to engage or contract with a variety of LTSS providers, including existing licensed home and community-based service providers and direct service workers (DSWs) who deliver non-institutional services to individuals with disabilities or functional limitations. Some of these providers may need targeted training, continuing education, or credentialing to meet the needs of your members as well as the requirements established by the state Medicaid program and your own health plan. Your health plan should work closely with your state to determine who is responsible for such training and credentialing. This brief provides an initial list of resources for training and continuing education for DSWs.

Resources

- **National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP).** The NADSP has developed a national credentialing program for direct support professionals. NADSP competency areas include participant empowerment, communication, documentation, and advocacy. The program offers three credentialing levels: registered, certified, and specialist. The registered level requires completion of all state and employer training requirements as well as six months of continuous and current employment as a direct support professional. Training and employment requirements increase as individuals pursue the more advanced levels and re-certification is required for the certified and specialist levels. For more information, visit the [NADSP website](#).
 - **Cost.** The cost of credentialing varies depending on level, registered (\$50), certified (\$150), and specialist (\$100).
 - **Documentation.** Individuals who complete the credentialing process are provided a certificate, a lapel pin, and a personalized letter of congratulations from the NADSP.
- **College of Direct Support.** The College of Direct Support (CDS) offers a series of web-based courses for DSWs in collaboration with the University of Minnesota. Courses offered through CDS cover a variety of key competencies including functional assessment, medication support, direct support professionalism, documentation, and cultural competency. For more information, visit the [CDS website](#).
 - **Cost.** The cost of individual courses range from \$79 to \$99, while the core curriculum package of 11 courses costs \$309.

Determining Training Needs

The training needs of the providers you work with may vary. While some provider organizations will need basic skills training, others may need targeted education to refine existing skill sets. Self-assessments or surveys may help determine the training needs for DSWs. Sample self-assessments and surveys are available for free online, including the following from the Research and Training Center on Community Living:

- Training Needs Survey
- Self-Assessment

- **Documentation.** All of the online courses qualify for Continuing Education Units through the University of Minnesota’s College of Education and Human Development.
- **Direct Care Alliance (DCA).** The DCA offers personal care and support credentialing. Individuals pursuing the credentialing must pass a competency-based exam that covers subjects such as health-related knowledge, personal care knowledge, in-home and nutritional support, and ethics and integrity. Candidates must also provide documentation of completion of coursework or employment. For more information, visit the [DCA website](#).
 - **Cost.** The cost of the exam is \$110 for non-DCA members and \$95 for DCA members.
 - **Documentation.** Individuals who pass the exam and meet all requirements will receive a personalized certificate from the DCA.
- **Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute (PHI).** PHI offers several courses for both DSWs and their managers. Relevant topics include fall prevention awareness and adult abuse and neglect. For more information, visit the [PHI website](#).
 - **Cost.** Course materials are available for free on the PHI website.
 - **Documentation.** While PHI includes pre-and post-tests for some courses, no official documentation is available.
- **SCAN Foundation.** The SCAN Foundation offers a series of continuing education curricula for DSWs. Topics include managing pain in older adults, care at the end of life, and medication and falls. For more information, visit the [SCAN Foundation website](#).
 - **Cost.** The facilitator guides for the curricula are available for free on the SCAN Foundation website.
 - **Documentation.** No official documentation is available.

The Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office (MMCO) in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) seeks to ensure that beneficiaries enrolled in both Medicare and Medicaid have access to seamless, high-quality health care that includes the full range of covered services in both programs. This brief is intended to support health plans and providers in integrating and coordinating care for Medicare-Medicaid enrollees. It does not convey current or anticipated health plan or provider requirements. For additional information, please go to www.resourcesforintegratedcare.com. Please submit any feedback on this brief or topic suggestions for other briefs to RIC@Lewin.com.

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