

**When a Provider Terminates a Service:
Procedure for the Transition of Consumers
6/21/07, updated 1/25/08**

Western Highlands LME policy is that consumers are the responsibility of the provider, who has an obligation (both ethical and legal) to assure ongoing clinical care. Giving a consumer a referral name and phone number or even arranging an appointment does not constitute a transfer.

In the event a consumer is “transferring”, the case responsible provider must assist with the “transfer”. The case continues to be active to the 1st provider, who has all 1st Responder duties, and who continues to carry liability and clinical responsibility until the case is active with a new provider.

(See Communication Bulletin #75 – 1/25/08, *Case Responsible Transfer Procedure* at http://www.westernhighlands.org/pr_commbulletins.htm for policy and procedure on routine transfer procedures.)

The policy regarding the transition of consumers when an agency leaves the Network, or moves out of one of the eight counties in our area, or stops providing a service in the area, is as follows:

1. Your agency must have a face to face meeting with all consumers involved in the process. You must advise the consumer about available providers who will continue to serve their population, with similar services, in their home area. The consumer can then choose a provider. Arranging an appointment with a new provider does not constitute a transfer. You must assure the consumer has an adequate medication supply and that their clinical needs are being met. You must have documentation that this process has occurred for each consumer. The consumer remains your responsibility until they are active with a new provider.
2. In the event that you have documented efforts to meet face to face with your consumers and this effort has failed, it is WHN's expectation that all of the above interventions occur by telephone, and are documented.
3. If you have documented evidence that neither of the above strategies has been successful, you may at that time issue a letter to the consumer requesting that they contact your agency to arrange ongoing treatment. Again, this must be documented by letter to all consumers. It is not acceptable to offer services from other agencies to the consumer by letter.
4. In the unlikely event that each of these efforts fails to link consumers to new providers, and these efforts are documented, you may then issue a letter advising consumers to contact Western Highlands as a last resort. You must document efforts to arrange care for consumers as explicated above. In this situation, you will need to send Western Highlands a copy of notes documenting your efforts to reach the consumer, as well as a Discharge Summary.
5. Discontinuing a service requires significant advance preparation. Failure to adequately plan for, and prepare consumers for ongoing care constitutes abandonment. This is a serious breach of ethics and could potentially lead to reports for ethical violations for your staff, consideration of cancellation of contracts with the LME, and potential withdrawal of endorsement.