PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES (PAS)

A personal assistant (PA) is hired to come to your home to help you do the things that you are not able to do, so you can continue to live independently in your own home. The personal assistant also can assist with activities that take an exceptionally long time to complete. The personal assistant finds out from you, the consumer, what you need and how you need the personal assistant to help you. Examples of activities you may direct the personal care assistant to do may include having the personal assistant cook a meal or help you with bathing or shopping. The personal assistant performs tasks directed by you.

When you decide you want to hire a personal assistant, you and your Care Manager will determine how much service you need each month. The majority of this service will be personal care such as bathing, dressing, and grooming. Personal Assistance Services does not provide 24-hour care nor is it meant to provide socialization.

Consumer Model of Management

- You are the “employer of record”.
- You choose to interview, hire, train, direct and fire attendants, usually without assistance from the agency.
- You MUST direct your own care.
- You MUST verify the accuracy of time sheets that personal assistants submit.
- If you are assessed as being cognitively impaired you may not direct your own care. You may use a caregiver or legally authorized surrogate who is willing to direct the care.
- You must use a Fiscal Agent to take care of the payroll and taxing functions associated with employment.
- If you are admitted to an acute hospital, rehabilitation hospital, skilled nursing facility or are outside of the county for more than 24 hours, the Fiscal Agent must be notified immediately.

Basic services shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Assisting you to get in and out of a bed, wheelchair and/or motor vehicle.
2. Assisting you to perform activities of daily living including, but not limited to the following:
   - Health maintenance activities
   - Bathing and personal hygiene
   - Dressing and grooming
   - Eating, including meal preparation and cleanup

(Please turn over)
Ancillary Services

Ancillary Services are extra services that may be provided if a consumer is eligible for any of the basic services outlined above. Ancillary services include the following:

1. Homemaker-type services including, but not limited to, shopping, laundry, cleaning and seasonal chores.
2. Companion-type services including, but not limited to, assistance with transportation, letter writing, reading mail and escort.
3. Assistance with cognitive tasks including, but not limited to, managing finances, planning activities and making decisions, in which the consumer maintains the ability to direct and control these services.

You can:
- Make choices about the people you hire.
- Make choices about the times you have them in your home.
- Make choices about how much assistance you want from the Fiscal Agent.

You cannot:
- Ask personal assistants to do things which are outside of the realm of the PDA Waiver Program, such as work on your roof, paint a room, or cook dinner for anyone other than you.
- Ask your personal assistant to be paid for hours not worked.
- Ask your personal assistant to engage in any illegal activities.
- Increase the amount of service your personal assistant is providing to you.

Be aware that the State of Pennsylvania has a responsibility to promote services for the health and safety of the consumer. Therefore, the Berks County Office of Aging must step in if they feel you are making a choice that may not be healthy or safe. The Berks County Office of Aging is legally responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all consumers utilizing the program.

The Berks County Office of Aging will intervene if they determine that:
- You are not directing your care.
- You are not following program requirements.
- You are putting yourself in an unsafe situation.
- You are putting your personal assistant in an unsafe situation.

If the Berks County Office of Aging intervenes they can:
- Require certain training.
- Make a change to the service model requiring that you receive personal care from an agency.
- Stop services.

You have the right to appeal any decision that the Berks County Office of Aging makes.
Planning for Back-up

If you are using a Personal Assistant model for your care, you are responsible for having back-up coverage in place. Even the best personal assistants get sick, have family emergencies, and sometimes quit and move on to another job.

Planning for back-up means that you ask people ahead of time if they can provide back-up, and you help familiarize them with your personal assistance needs. A back-up Personal Assistant can be a person that you do not use as a Personal Assistant on a regular basis, but who is willing to be available in this capacity. You may have friends or family members available for occasional back up. You may want to split your personal assistance hours between two or more Personal Assistants so that if one is not available, the other may be.

If your back-up plan fails, your Care Manager will arrange for priority care from an agency. Priority care is defined as only those tasks which consumers need to ensure their health and safety. Ancillary services are not priority care. The agency will respond as quickly as possible, but you may have to wait longer than you would if you had your own back-up. Arranging for your own back-up also ensures that you know the people coming into your home.