



Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS)

BQIS Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life. This document provides general information on the topic and is not intended to replace team assessment, decision-making, or medical advice.

Intended Outcomes

To provide general information about personal emergency response systems (PERS) and describe how PERS can be used by some individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Definitions

Personal Emergency Response System: An electronic communication device that allows an individual to communicate the need for immediate assistance in case of an emergency.

Facts

- Typical equipment set-up:
 - Help button: A pendant or wristband; the wristband resembles a watch and is more attractive to males who are reluctant to wear the pendant.
 - Communicator: A hands-free two-way console plugged into the wall telephone outlet that allows the individual to talk with an operator who can dispatch assistance.
 - Landline: A telephone line is needed for the service.
- How it works:
 - During an emergency event when assistance is needed, the individual pushes the personal help button to activate the system and initiate a call to the preprogrammed emergency response center.
 - A professional emergency dispatcher announces themselves on the hands-free two-way console speaker phone and speaks directly to the individual to find out what kind of help is needed.
 - The emergency dispatcher has a specified emergency “call list” consisting of local family, friends, and neighbors who are readily available to go assist the individual. The dispatcher contacts someone on the list and explains the need for assistance.



- In the event of an emergency, or if the emergency dispatcher cannot establish two-way voice communications (they respond to the button being pushed and the individual does not answer), they immediately notify paramedics.

Funding:

This service is available under each of Indiana's 1915(c) Home and Community-based Service (HCBS) Medicaid waivers

Additional Information:

The coverage range includes any location in the home and possibly a short distance outside the home.

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. The individual, guardian, and other team members may consider the use of personal emergency response systems (PERS) for someone who lives alone, has less than 24-hour staffing, and/or has a potential for needing to call for assistance when not being able to get to a phone.
2. Anyone using a PERS should be provided clear instructions on its use.
3. When deciding whether or not a PERS system is right for an individual, recognize the limitations of personal emergency response systems and consider individual needs and abilities.



Learning Assessment

The following questions can be used to verify a person's competency regarding the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. A personal emergency response system is:
 - A. An electronic device on the person
 - B. The same thing as a telephone
 - C. An emergency communication system.
 - D. Both A and C
2. During an emergency call on a personal emergency response system:
 - A. A dispatcher can speak to the person in need through a speaker phone
 - B. The dispatcher will call 911 only after they have spoken with the person who pressed their call button
 - C. The personal emergency response system is activated when the person makes a phone call to the service.
3. Which statement is not true of personal emergency response systems?
 - A. A landline phone is needed for the service.
 - B. The cost of installation and monthly service fees are covered by Medicaid.
 - C. Coverage range includes only the inside of the person's home.
 - D. Users are encouraged to check in every week to test the system.



4. Personal emergency response systems are appropriate for:
- A. Everyone
 - B. Everyone who lives alone
 - C. Some persons who live alone
 - D. Persons with 24-hour staffing.

References

Medicaid Waiver Services, Codes, and Rates, (July 2015). Retrieved 07/17/2015 from <http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/RatesChartDDRSWaivers.pdf>

Personal Emergency Response Systems. Federal Trade Commission. Retrieved 07/17/2015 from <http://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0316-personal-emergency-response-systems-health-information-older-people>.

Waiver Service Definition of Personal Emergency Response System. Indiana Administrative Code 460 6-3-39 Retrieved 07/17/2015 from www.in.gov/legislative/iac/T04600/A00060.PDF.

Learning Assessment Answers

- 1. D
- 2. A
- 3. C
- 4. C