



CAREPLUS

— HOME HEALTH —

# EMPLOYEE MANUAL

Revised 2/2021

CarePlus Home Health, Inc. provides health care services in the homes of our clients. More importantly, we are in the business of keeping clients happy and well, in the comfort of their own homes.

As one of our carefully chosen staff members, we have made a commitment to treat you with respect and to value your contribution. We welcome you to the special group of individuals who join us in providing quality home health care.

This employee manual is part of your orientation process. You are required to know our policies and are accountable for the contents of this manual. This book will answer your questions about our operations and job descriptions. Ignorance of the following material is no excuse for violations of company policy.

These policies are not intended to constitute a contract. We reserve the right to amend, add to, repeal or deviate from any or all of the rules and regulations described in these policies, wherever we believe it is necessary or desirable to do so.

Thank you for choosing CarePlus and welcome to our family. We are honored that you have chosen to be part of our team.

## **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT CAREPLUS**

### **Employment and Non-Discrimination**

CarePlus Home Health, Inc. provides equal opportunity for all employees and applicants for employment without unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sex, age, disability, citizenship, national or ethnic origin or other bias prohibited by law. Equal employment opportunity includes, but is not limited to, hiring, promotion, transfer, demotion, termination and training.

## **OFFICE STAFF**

The office staff function is to assist you in doing your job in a concerned and competent manner.

### **Staffing Coordinator**

The Staffing Coordinator performs all scheduling for clients and caregivers.

### **Director of Operations**

The Director of Operations is responsible for the overall agency's operations. They supervise the Staffing Coordinator and handle problems that cannot be resolved by your Staffing Coordinator. They handle policy decisions, administrative matters and complaints regarding Staffing Coordinators. The Director of Operations has the final authority on all policies and procedures as well as disciplinary issues. They supervise both the nursing and non-nursing administrative staff. Complaints regarding the administrative staff may be directed to the Director of Operations.

### **Director of Human Resources**

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for recruiting, hiring, and training of new staff, coordinating in-services for existing staff, updating staff on company personnel policies and procedures, and monitoring and evaluating human resources systems. Personnel issues and workers compensation claims are matters handled

by the Director of HR.

### **Billing and Payroll Coordinator**

The Billing and Payroll Coordinator is responsible for all client billing and caregiver payroll.

### **Director of Nursing**

The Director of Nursing oversees the Registered Nurses and handles problems concerning client care that cannot be resolved by your CarePlus office staff. They also oversee development of nursing policy and practice issues.

### **Registered Nurses**

The Registered Nurses develop the Care Plan and supervise the client's medical care. They will provide your instruction and special training as needed. They are the liaison with the client's physician and coordinate care between the client, physician and other health care professionals.

## **DIRECT CARE STAFF**

### **Registered Nurse Employment Profile**

The RN is utilized in accordance with the policies of the Maryland State Board of Nursing, Maryland Nurse Practice Act, and other health care bodies, for the purpose of providing professional, skilled and technical functions to CarePlus clients.

Responsibilities Include:

1. Functions permitted and defined by the Maryland Nurse Practice Act as it pertains to the RN.
2. Carrying out orders from the NS and the client's physician.
3. Documentation and summary of client care and events pertaining to the client's progress and development.
4. Working with other members of the health care team for the purpose of providing sound and continuous client care.
5. Participation in programs and in-service of CarePlus.
6. Initiation of rehabilitative and constructive procedures to aid in the client's status and or progress.
7. Maintains communication with appropriate CarePlus staff to avoid misunderstandings.
8. To complete a supervisory form weekly for each client assigned to.
9. Other responsibilities that may be indicated orally or in writing that have to do with client care and the role of the Registered Nurse regarding individual cases.

Qualifications Include:

1. Current Maryland license to practice as a Registered Nurse
2. A sincere and genuine interest in client care, home care, and compassion for the sick.
3. One year experience as a RN preferred.

### **Licensed Practical Nurse Employment Profile**

The LPN is utilized in accordance with the policies of the Maryland State Board of Nursing, Maryland Nurse Practice Act, and other health care bodies, for the purpose of providing skilled and technical functions to CarePlus clients.

Responsibilities Include:

1. Functions permitted and defined by the Maryland Nurse Practice Act as it pertains to the LPN.
2. Carrying out orders from the CarePlus office staff and the client's physician.
3. Documentation and summary of client care and events pertaining to the client's progress and development.
4. Working with other members of the health care team for the purpose of providing sound and continuous client care.
5. Participation in programs and in-service of CarePlus.
6. Initiation of rehabilitative and constructive procedures to aid in the client's status and/or progress.
7. Maintaining communication with appropriate CarePlus staff in an effort to avoid mistakes and misunderstandings.
8. Other responsibilities that may be indicated orally or in writing that have to do with client care and the role of the Licensed Practical Nurse regarding individual cases.

Qualifications Include:

1. Current Maryland license to practice as a Licensed Practical Nurse.
2. A sincere and genuine interest in client care, home care, and compassion for the sick.
3. Six months experience as a LPN preferred.

**Certified Nursing Assistant Employment Profile**

Certified Nursing Assistants are recognized as key parts of our home health care program. Certified Nursing Assistants perform "hands-on" assistance with a client's physical dependency needs as well as non-skilled medical procedures ordered by the physician and delegated in writing by the CarePlus office staff.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Assist client with bathing       | 6. Assist in and out of bed            |
| 2. Mouth and denture care           | 7. Assist with dressing and undressing |
| 3. Assist client to and in bathroom | 8. Housekeeping and meal preparation   |
| 4. Assist client with ambulation    |  |
| 5. Hair care                        |  |

The following duties may be allowed IF DIRECTED by the CarePlus office staff in conjunction with a Physician:

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|---|---|
| 1. Assist client with wheelchair cane, walker or crutch | 6. Vital Signs  |
| 2. Range of motion exercise (ROM)                       | 7. Application of non-sterile dressing on intact skin |
| 3. Skin care  | 8. Preparation of special meals                       |
| 4. Assist with oxygen                                   | 9. Catheter care                                      |
| 5. Change of ostomy device                              | 10. Measure intake & output                           |

The following **MAY NOT** be performed by the Certified Nursing Assistant:

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Tube feedings               | 5. Catheter or colostomy irrigation |
| 2. Cold or heat application    | 6. Administration of any medication |
| 3. Administration of an enema  | 7. Providing medical advice         |
| 4. Care of a tracheostomy tube | 8. Cutting finger or toe nails      |

Qualifications:

1. Is at least 18 years of age.
2. Is a high school graduate, has a GED, or demonstrates ability to read and write adequately to complete required forms and reports of visits and follow verbal and written instructions.
3. Current CNA certification.
4. Adequate physical & mental health to perform the job and free from communicable disease.
5. Interest in and empathy for the ill.
6. Interpersonal skills necessary to work well with clients, families, and co-workers.

### **Companion Employment Profile**

The Companion will follow exactly the Care Plan designed specifically by the CarePlus office staff for each client. If there is a reason why the Companion cannot follow the instructions, they must call the office to discuss the situation.

Responsibilities Include:

The Companion functions will vary with each specific case, but these guidelines should always be kept in mind:

1. Work with the CarePlus office staff to follow directions.
2. Communicate problems to the office nurse, especially an unusual event.
3. Follow the Care Plan and keep a daily record of activities of the sheet.
4. Cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, and other duties only according to directions.
5. Remember, as a COMPANION, you are not allowed to provide any "hands on" or direct client care. When in doubt, call the office.
6. Reading to the client, enjoying television, talking, or playing games are good activities that can make the client feel better. Selectively do things that will be of benefit to the client.

### **Live-In Employment Profile**

The Live-in will follow exactly the Care Plan designed by the CarePlus office staff. The Live-in will also follow the Certified Nursing Assistant Employment Profile if they are a Certified Nursing Assistant Live-in or the Companion Employment Profile if they are a Companion Live-in.

As a LIVE IN, there are a number of special considerations and concerns.

1. Live-in employees are to stay at the home at all times and need to call the office if this cannot be done.
2. Live-in shifts are in 24 hour blocks of time (24, 48, 72, etc.)
3. Meals are prepared by the Live-in and the Live-in usually eats with the client.
4. We want you to get a normal night's sleep and the office needs to be notified if you do not.
5. Personal visits are not allowed and personal calls need to be approved.
6. Live-in employees may do no more than two hours per day of housework.

## **ASSIGNMENT POLICIES**

### **Accepting Assignments**

You may accept or refuse any assignment without penalty. Staffing Coordinators will contact employees when openings become available and describe the skills, hours, duties, and special considerations. Questions are encouraged at that time. If you have no interest, tell us when the Staffing Coordinator calls.

When you accept a case, we expect you to be fair and reasonable with scheduling. Don't accept cases if you

know you cannot fulfill the requirements. For example: if a case includes weekend coverage, you must be prepared to accept and complete your share of weekend hours (usually at least every other weekend).

If you don't have the skills for a case, talk with the CarePlus office staff. A training session may be arranged to give you instructions.

## **Scheduling**

Routine scheduling is generally completed one month prior to the month the care is delivered.

Employees are expected to work every other weekend. Employees that work for clients that have weekend coverage will be required to do their fair "share" of weekend hours. Employees will also be expected to "share" holidays when care is required.

Staffing Coordinators will take time off requests after the schedule has been completed but may be unable to accommodate these requests.

**ALL STAFFING MUST BE DONE THROUGH THE OFFICE.** If you must stay past the scheduled time or come in early, the Staffing Coordinator must be notified for approval before the care is provided. **Employees will not be paid for care that has not been scheduled in advance through the office.** Do not ask clients to change scheduled work hours for your convenience.

There is often a period of adjustment at the start of care as we work with the client and family to meet their wishes as well as provide the necessary care. During this adjustment time there may be several staffing and/or scheduling changes as we work together to find the solutions that best meet the needs of the client. These first few weeks of care can be very stressful until schedules stabilize and the client's needs are clearly defined. Ultimately, things work best with a routine schedule and consistent staff.

Emergencies and unscheduled absences by employees do occur. When unable to work, call the office at least 4 hours prior to the shift starting and we will in turn notify the client. Employees should never call the client directly if they are unable to work or need to change hours.

If a client or family member wishes to change hours after you arrive, call the office for approval.

Staffing Coordinators need to know well in advance when you are, and are not, available for work.

It's your responsibility to know your schedule. You may be working with more than one Staffing Coordinator so know who is responsible for your cases.

## **Team Work**

Most clients have more than one employee working for them so you need to be a team player. This includes supporting each other, sharing the workload fairly, adjusting hours when a problem arises and reporting any problems to the Staffing Coordinator or CarePlus office staff.

You should always arrive a few minutes early to receive a report on your client, prior to starting your shift. When you are reporting information to a family member or another employee, be thorough and to the point.

Remember it's common for a client to have a "favorite" employee. If this happens, be particularly supportive of the others, keeping in mind it is the team effort that creates good continuity of care.

Never criticize your fellow employees or office staff in front of the client! If you're having a problem, inform the Staffing Coordinator and they will intervene to resolve the problem.

It's our job to give you the necessary information to provide client care. It's your job to discover the little things that help you succeed on each assignment.

## **Safety**

We are concerned about safety! You, our employee, and our clients matter to us. Use safe procedures at all times when you are providing client care. The safe way is always the correct way to do each job. Shortcuts HURT!!!

The following are some basic rules to assure your safety in the home setting:

1. Use safe lifting techniques. Lifting in-services are mandatory each year but are always available for review. Contact your CarePlus office staff if you need training on a specific client or piece of equipment.
2. Arrive at work well rested, clean and in good health. Report any infections if you feel ill. Keep health tests up to date.
3. Dress properly. Loose fitting clothing, jewelry, high heels and sandals can cause accidents. Wear low heeled, rubber soled shoes.
4. Always follow the Care Plan and your job description. If you do not know something, Do Not Guess!! Call the office for instructions. Do not operate equipment without authorization.
5. When driving, seat belts are mandatory. You must be properly licensed and insured. Do not eat, drink, smoke or use a cellular phone while driving. Obey all traffic laws at all times.
6. When driving your car, it must be properly insured, maintained and in safe operating condition.
7. Pick up clutter underfoot. Wipe up spills completely as soon as they happen. Never climb on ladders, or chairs.- Keep your feet on the ground!
8. Correct or report unsafe conditions or actions immediately. Make safety your business!
9. Do not pet, play with, or otherwise encourage interaction with animals in the home. All animals have the ability to bite and scratch! If possible, keep pets out of the room when you are doing personal care.
10. When an injury, accident or exposure occurs, follow policy immediately! Call the office as soon as possible (always within 24 hours). Follow up with a written statement within 72 hours.

Urgency is NEVER a reason to neglect safety. Take Responsibility! Keep a Safe Environment!

## **Body Mechanics**

Employees lift and move clients, supplies and equipment every day. If not performed correctly, these activities can result in serious injury or damage to you or your client.

### **DO:**

1. Make sure you have good posture.
2. Maintain a wide base of support. Stand with your feet about 12 inches apart.
3. Bend your knees, not your back. This will put pressure on the leg muscles which can better absorb the pressure. Use the stronger and larger muscles of your body. These are the shoulders, upper arms, thighs and hips.
4. Hold objects close to your body when lifting, moving or carrying them.
5. Avoid unnecessary bending and reaching. Leaning and reaching may strain your back and muscles.
6. Avoid lifting when possible. Push, slide, or pull heavy objects when you can.

7. Turn your whole body when you change directions.

**DON'T:**

1. Twist your neck, back or upper body.
2. Bend your back.
3. Strain; the object is too heavy.
4. Jerk at objects or make sudden moves.
5. Try at anything you are not sure you can handle.
6. Lift heavy objects when you are weak or dizzy.

**Always ask your supervisor when in doubt before moving or lifting any object or client!**

**Leaving the Client Alone**

Don't Leave!! Patients should never be left during scheduled working hours. "Breaks" may only be taken when the client does not need active care and must be taken while still able to provide care when needed. You must always stay close enough to recognize and intercede if a medical emergency occurs. CarePlus is a smoke free agency and so smoking is never allowed during a "break" either inside or outside the home.

Occasionally a patient might order you to leave. Don't leave; explain you must call the office and do so immediately! If you are physically threatened or in danger, you may leave the premises but immediately notify the office and the proper authorities. If you have a personal emergency and must leave, call the office and we will arrange for a replacement.

**Care Plans: Your Instructions**

A clinical file folder is in the home of each client. A nursing plan of care is in each folder and it outlines the care you are to provide and how it's to be provided. Care Plans may differ in format and content but all should clearly outline your role in the home.

Care Plans are developed by the CarePlus office staff in conjunction with the doctor, family, and client. Any suggestions you have to update the client Care Plan are appreciated. If you do not find a Care Plan or purple folder in the home, please call the office before providing care.

You are to provide the care as it is outlined in the Care Plan. If the client or family requests care that is not on the Care Plan, or the care needed is not on the Care Plan, please contact the office immediately and report the need for changes to the CarePlus office staff. Do not provide care that is not on the Care Plan without the CarePlus office staff's approval.

Documentation of your activities and care provided is required each time you see a client and must be documented on the Aide Note BEFORE YOU LEAVE the home each day. Caregivers should maintain clear and accurate records for the care provided. Documentation must be thorough, concise, and reflect the Care Plan goals. Our records are legal documents admissible in a court of law.

**Reason for the Care We Provide**

There are several reasons a client may need our services and most payment sources are very specific about what they will pay for so it is important to know the reason for the care and what payer pays for what care. Please make sure you are aware of the "why" we are providing care and contact the office if the family's circumstances have changed.

## **You Are Never Alone**

Communication between field and office staff is of primary importance to good client care. From Staffing Coordinators to Operations Directors, our job is to make your job easier and to provide the best client care.

And, you're never alone. After hours and on weekends, the Staffing Coordinators are available for problem solving and scheduling emergencies. Most problems can be solved during office hours, but if an urgent concern arises, call the caregiver line at 240-396-5892. We are happy to discuss all aspects of your job and any other concerns you may have, but if it isn't an urgent matter, please call during normal business hours (Monday-Friday from 8:30am-5:00pm).

## **DOCUMENTATION POLICIES**

### **General Documentation Policies**

All care must be documented at the time it is provided and must follow the "Care Plan" or "instruction summary" that is located in the client's purple folder, located in the home. This folder should be reviewed for changes each time the employee enters the home, so that the employee may provide the care that is needed for the client to be safely maintained in the home setting. Call the CarePlus office staff immediately if you cannot locate the purple folder in the home.

**When a "condition change" is observed, call the CarePlus office staff.** A condition change is something you find or observe with the client that is not on the original Care Plan, such as level of assistance needed, client injury, or any other client concern.

In the event of any of the following occurrences call the office immediately. Some examples are:

1. Client injury or illness
2. Theft or illegal activities in the home
3. Injury or illness to yourself
4. Unusual or dangerous client/family behavior
5. Any occurrence requiring police or emergency service
6. Change in client condition
7. Client hospitalization
8. Client admitted to a Nursing Home/Rehab
9. Out of Home Respite/Care
10. Structural damage to the client's home
11. Client non-compliance with medical care
12. Unsanitary conditions in the client's home (insects, rodents, mold, etc...)
13. Failure of Universal Precautions or an incident of exposure to blood, bodily fluids or other infectious waste

When you call the office to report such incidents, be sure to answer all questions thoroughly and follow instructions carefully. Document what took place and what was done, and send your documentation to the office within 24 hours after the incident.

**Call the office immediately if the client is not at home or does not answer the door when you arrive to provide care.**

**Write neatly, and legibly on the Care Plan. If an error is made, line through it once, write the correct**

**information beside it, date and initial. Never erase, white out, or write over previous notes.**

### **Skilled Nursing Documentation**

All skilled care requires documentation each time the client is seen. Documentation will be done at the residence when care is given and must be completed before the employee leaves the home each day or visit.

Nursing notes must be clear, concise and complete. Remember, if you did not document it, you did not do it! All notes must be dated, time of day recorded (no military time) and each entry signed. Do not leave any blank areas. Draw a line through all unused spaces. If you have a concern that needs to be documented, but you don't want it left in the home, contact the CarePlus office staff for instructions.

Arrangements are made on an individual client basis for collection of notes. Please clarify with the office what arrangements have been made for each client you care for. Notes must be incorporated into the clinical record in the office within 14 days of the day they are written. Submit all paperwork per HIPAA guidelines.

Observe the following guidelines regarding documentation:

1. Nursing notes are maintained on all clients each day services are rendered. Entries must be made at least hourly and each time care is given.
2. All care provided including assessments, condition changes, behavior, and mental status should be reflected in the notes.
3. Notes must reflect nursing care, client activity and significant family interaction. Third party reimbursement for your services depends on your ability to make skilled observations and follow skilled documentation criteria.
4. Observation must be specific and objective. Do not state opinions or make judgments.
5. At the beginning of the shift:
  - a) Record the time and date shift begins and from whom you received the report.
  - b) Check and document all equipment for function, appropriate settings and availability, including emergency equipment.
  - c) Perform and document brief head to toe assessment of client including involved systems (respiratory, GI, musculoskeletal, etc.), vital signs, blood pressure and equipment. This assessment may be performed later in the shift in some cases.
6. At the end of the shift:
  - d) Recheck equipment settings and condition and document.
  - e) Document time, date, how the client was left, and who assumes responsibility for care.
  - f) Check to make sure all sheets/ notes are signed, numbered, and dated.
  - g) Last shift of the week: Cross off all unused lines on the sheets. The new week begins with a new sheet of notes.
7. Purple Nursing folders (or binders), notes, medication sheets, flow sheets, and other types of materials are distributed by the CarePlus office staff at the supervisory visit. If your supplies are low, call the office. Be sure you receive enough materials to last until the next visit.
8. Care Plans, schedule sheets, emergency numbers and special instructions are in the purple folder or binder and it should be reviewed each time you provide care.
9. You should always carry a watch with a second hand, bandage scissors, and a stethoscope. All other equipment should be provided at the home. Contact the office if you need something.
10. Remember that nursing documentation in the home is as legal, confidential and as important as it is in the institutional setting. Please make every effort to be thorough, complete, and accurate in all documentation you provide.

## **CNA/Companion/Live-In Documentation and Clock-In/Out Procedure**

Clocking in/out from one of the two below options determines your wages as well as how we bill, so accuracy is essential. DO NOT call the office to clock in/out unless you have tried both of the above methods and are unable to clock in/out.

### OPTION 1: TELEPHONY

To use the Telephony System to clock in/out and document the tasks completed, use the client's home phone and dial 1-888-915-5837 when you arrive. Listen and follow the prompts. At the end of your shift, use the client's home phone and dial the same number as above. Listen and follow the prompts. YOU MUST INDICATE WHICH TASKS YOU HAVE COMPLETED.

### OPTION 2: CAREGIVER APP

To use the *ClearCareGo Caregiver App* (found in the App Store on iPhones and the Play Store on Androids) to clock in/out and document the tasks completed, you must log in to the app when you arrive at your client's home. Then click on the shift to clock in. When you complete your shift, you will log back into the app, click on the shift and select the tasks that you completed. If there were tasks that you did not complete, you must indicate WHY you did not complete them. The app will not allow you to clock out until you have indicated whether or not you have completed all the tasks listed.

### AIDE NOTES

Live-in's MUST complete a weekly Aide Note AND Break/Sleep Log to provide documentation about the day's events.

The Aide Note corresponds to the Care Plan written by the CarePlus office staff and can be found in the purple folder in the client's home. Work from the Care Plan when completing your daily documentation. Do not provide care that is not on the Care Plan. Notify the CarePlus office staff if the client refuses care that is on the Care Plan.

Aide Notes must be properly completed for each client. This includes the client's first and last name, caregiver's first and last name, caregiver's signature, last date of the pay period as well as the items below.

For each shift worked:

- 1) Enter the date (month and day i.e. 1/3 for January 3rd) on the date line below the day of the week listed.
- 2) At the start of care, enter the starting time in the "Time In" slot and circle am or pm. Starting time begins after you enter the client's home and begin to provide care.
- 3) At the end of the shift, check the boxes that correspond to the care you provided on that day.
- 4) Lastly, enter the ending time in the "Time Out" slot and circle am or pm.. Ending time is prior to leaving the home when the last task is completed and documentation is finished.

Your written documentation verifies that the work was completed and is required.

Aide Notes that are not complete or not correct will not be accepted and will be returned to the employee for completion prior to being eligible for payment.

The Aide Note may only reflect time that the client is present in the home. If the client is not in the home when the shift is scheduled to start, call the Staffing Coordinator immediately for instructions.

Information placed on the Aide Note must be accurate and reflect care actually performed for the client by the employee. Any falsification, including but not limited to, times, days, signatures, care performed and level of care will be grounds for dismissal and may constitute felony health care fraud.

**If you are submitting Aide Notes, they must be turned in by 4:59pm on the Monday of the week you are paid.** Aide Notes may be mailed or hand delivered to the office, emailed as a PDF document to docs@careplusinc.com or faxed to 301-740-8871 as soon as you have completed your last shift of the second week of the pay period. REMEMBER: Aide Notes are confidential client records and should be maintained in a HIPAA compliant manner.

The pay period starts with the day shift on Monday and ends on the second Sunday's night shift. Each pay period is two weeks long.

### **Paychecks**

You may pick up your paycheck from the CarePlus office on payday, which is every other Friday. If you receive direct deposit, payroll is deposited directly to your account on payday.

Mail delivery varies, so allow at least 3 working days for your check to arrive. Please check with your local post office before calling the office. CarePlus is NOT responsible for a delay in the mail. Banking Policy requires a 10 day waiting period before a replacement check can be issued. A check can be replaced and issued in less than 10 days at the employee's expense.

If you change your address, you need to notify the Director of Human Resources at once so we may send your check to your new address.

Travel time to and from work, and mileage are not reimbursable and should not be noted. Mileage IS reimbursed when you use your vehicle to transport clients. The number of miles should be noted in the Caregiver App or Telephony System when you clock out.

Starting and ending times of all shifts will be scheduled from the office. Any deviation from these times must be reported to the office for permission prior to the care being delivered.

Skilled Nursing visit based care is paid at a flat rate.

## **CAREPLUS EMPLOYEE POLICIES**

### **Absences, Sickness, Tardiness**

If you cannot work due to sickness or emergency, contact the office immediately to speak with a Staffing Coordinator, regardless of the time. Sending an email or text is not acceptable. **Failure to speak directly with a Staffing Coordinator will result in your absence being documented as "unexcused" and will result in reprimand or discharge.** Absences must be reported at least 6 hours prior to the start time of your scheduled shift. All absences require written documentation. Please be aware, if you call out for one shift, you may be removed from the next two shifts.

All absences, tardiness, and/or changes must be reported to the office prior to the start of the shift. Excessive tardiness and/or unexcused or excessive absences may result in termination of employment.

## **Staffing Limitations**

You may work no more than sixteen (16) hours in any one twenty-four hour period. Exceptions are made by the Administrative Staff and are only approved for emergency situations. If you are requested to work more than sixteen hours in any twenty-four hour period, make sure that the Staffing Coordinator is aware of all the hours you are working.

RNs, LPNs and companions may not routinely work over 40 hours per week. Overtime requires administrative approval in advance and cannot be used for routine scheduling. Overtime may never be used for providing "respite care".

## **Personal Appearance & Uniform**

You represent CarePlus when you are in the client's home, so appearance is important. Daily bathing, clean clothes, clean hair and good oral hygiene are the minimum requirements. Please do not wear perfume. Many clients have allergies.

You are required to wear a CarePlus polo shirt and slacks. Shorts, miniskirts, tattered clothing, T-shirts with advertisements or obscene language and midriff tops are not appropriate. **NO JEANS ARE ALLOWED.** Make sure what you wear fits properly and you can perform your duties in it.

Wear low heeled, rubber soled shoes. Jewelry should be kept simple, practical and to a minimum. Scrubs may be acceptable for some clients, check with your CarePlus office staff.

## **Professional Behavior**

You are a health care professional and are expected to always behave in a professional manner in a client's home. Your language, attitude and behavior should always be courteous and professional even if the client and/or client's family is not acting in a reasonable manner. You must use personal restraint in difficult situations and report any concerns to the office immediately.

Failure to maintain professional behavior may violate a client's rights and may be grounds for immediate termination.

## **Courtesy & Respect**

Employees are expected to be courteous to clients and others in the home at all times. Clients and their families will not be subjected to yelling, foul language, sexual misconduct, discrimination, threats or battery of any kind, by the employee. CarePlus will investigate all such allegations and, if substantiated, will be grounds for discharge.

If the employee experiences any of the above behaviors from the client or others in the home, they are to report it to the CarePlus office staff immediately.

## **Personal Relationships**

Employees are expected to maintain a professional relationship with all clients while providing care. Do not discuss your personal lives with clients, give them your phone number or address, or have contact with them outside of your work hours. Do not offer to assist them with additional needs or call them for any reason outside of your regularly scheduled hours.

Personal relationships outside of the workplace disrupt the professionalism needed to assure the client's needs

are the sole priority of care. The line between work and friendship often becomes blurred and can lead to fraud, abuse and violation of the client's confidentiality.

Please notify the CarePlus office staff immediately if a client asks you to do anything outside your normal work hours or indicates they want to pursue a friendship outside of work. Also notify the CarePlus office staff if you see a need the client may have that is not being met.

### **Drug Free Workplace**

The use of, or being under the influence of, alcohol and illegal drugs while on duty is grounds for immediate dismissal. If you are taking medication ordered by a physician that may affect your job performance, please inform the CarePlus office staff before accepting work.

In an effort to maintain the safest environment for both client and employees, CarePlus will promote, monitor, and enforce a drug free workplace.

It is strictly prohibited for any CarePlus employee to be involved in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession or use of a controlled substance in the workplace or client's home. This type of conduct will not be tolerated and will result in an immediate discharge of that employee.

As a condition of continued employment, all employees will abide by the above guidelines. Any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace must be reported to CarePlus no later than five (5) days after conviction.

### **Drugs & Alcohol in the Home**

Please report any recreational drug or alcohol use in a client's home to the CarePlus office staff immediately.

You may not provide care in a home where illegal or recreational drug activity is occurring. Alcohol use by the client during hours of care is prohibited as well as excessive use of alcohol by individuals in the home during times of care.

Call the CarePlus office staff immediately if you suspect drug activity or excessive alcohol use in the home by anyone.

### **Sleeping**

Hourly employees may not sleep or nap while on duty. Sleeping is grounds for immediate dismissal for these employees. "Live-In" caregivers may sleep during the night while the client is sleeping but they must have a procedure in place for the client to wake them when needed.

### **Non-Harassment Policy**

CarePlus strives to provide a comfortable work environment. We are committed to a workplace that is free of discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability, citizenship or any other protected status. Same sex harassment is also unlawful. Offensive or harassing behavior will not be tolerated against any employee. In addition, those in the supervisory or managerial position will be responsible for taking proper action to end such behavior in their work areas. In an effort to prevent sexual harassment and other forms of harassment from occurring, this policy against harassment will be communicated to each employee. No employee of this company is exempt from this policy. Every CarePlus employee has the right, as well as the responsibility, to communicate any harassment allegations directly to Administration.

*Prohibited Behavior.* Offensive conduct or harassment that is of a sexual nature or based on race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability, citizenship or any protected status is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to:

- Physical action, written or spoken language and graphic communications
- Expressed unwelcome and unwanted physical contact
- Demands or pressure for sexual favors

The above mentioned conducts are prohibited forms of harassment when any or all of the following is/are true:

- There is a promise or implied promise of preferential treatment or negative consequence regarding employment decisions or status.
- Such conduct is intended to, or has the effect of, creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment or unreasonably interferes with a person's work performance.

*Disciplinary Actions.* Harassment is considered a form of employee misconduct. Violation of this policy will subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination. Any employee, who has knowledge of such behavior, yet takes no action to report it, or in the case of supervisors and managers, to end it, is also subject to disciplinary action. Each employee will be held responsible for their actions and must maintain compliance to this policy, accepting full liability of all damages and associated legal costs if determined culpable of an offense.

*Retaliation is prohibited.* Complaints made in good faith will not be held against an employee. Under no circumstances will an employee be penalized for the valid reporting of improper conduct. It is our goal to stop unlawful behavior and prevent it from recurring.

## **Smoking**

CarePlus is a smoke free environment. **Do not smoke in client's homes and while on company time.**

## **Telephone Use**

**Do not use your personal cell phone while on duty in a client's home.** Personal calls made from work **must** be limited to urgent concerns that cannot wait until you are off duty and must be approved by the office. Never place a personal long distance call on the client's phone.

All emergency calls from your family or friends must come through the office.

When answering the phone at a client's home, answer it by saying "Mr. or Mrs. (client's name) Residence."

Clients are required to have a working telephone in the home for emergency use. Notify the office immediately if one is not available.

Do not give the client your telephone number and do not contact them directly. All communication with the client should come through the office.

## **Television Watching**

Do not watch the client's TV unless they are watching and invite you to join them. Do not tell the client what show you want to watch. Follow their lead and watch what they want.

### **Personal Visits**

**It is never permissible for an employee to bring another individual, including children and pets, into any client's home for any reason.** Personal visits are not permitted during working hours. Explain to your family and friends they are not to visit you while at work. If you need to be picked up or dropped off by another person, do not allow them to enter the client's home or have any personal information about the client.

### **Gifts & Favors**

Do not accept gifts of any kind from the client or the client's family, including gifts of money or "tips". Do not remove anything from the client's house with or without permission from the office. Do not accept or give "loans" of money or possessions to clients. In the rare instance that you will need to handle money for the client, notify the CarePlus office staff for instruction and inclusion on the Care Plan. Contact the office if a client wants you to have a special gift.

### **Theft**

Unauthorized removal of anything from a client's house or property is theft and you will be prosecuted. We will not tolerate theft and it is grounds for immediate dismissal.

All allegations of theft made by a client will be referred to the local police department or sheriff's office for investigation. If contacted by the agency or the local authorities, you will need to cooperate fully with the investigation. Failure to cooperate in a criminal investigation will be grounds for dismissal.

### **Dependents in the Home**

Employees may not be responsible for anyone in the home other than the client(s) assigned to them by the office. If you are left in the home with individuals, other than the client, that require care or supervision, call the office immediately.

### **Where Care May be Provided**

**All care must be provided in the client's home.** Any exception to this must be noted in the Care Plan and you must have permission from the office.

**Care may never be provided in the employee's home.**

### **Videotaping in the Home**

Videotaping employees in the home while they are providing direct client care is becoming a common occurrence in home care. This videotaping may be done with, or without, the knowledge of the agency or the employee. If the agency is aware that videotaping is being done, we will inform the employee prior to assigning them to a case. However, an employee's behavior and conduct should always be above reproach at all times so that any videotaping done, with or without their knowledge, will only confirm that the employee provided safe, effective and compassionate care in accordance with state and federal regulations.

### **Pictures**

Do not take pictures of clients or their families without written permission from the office.

## **Automobiles, Transportation**

Clients may need transportation to medical appointments or to run errands. CNA's/Companions with a valid driver's license and proof of automobile insurance may transport clients in their own personal vehicle. If a CNA/Companion has a valid driver's license but does not have his/her own vehicle or proof of insurance, he/she may still transport clients in the client's vehicle. If you are providing transportation in your own vehicle, make sure it is clean and clear of clutter. Sometimes, a CNA/Companion may be requested to accompany a client who is being transported by a licensed transportation provider (i.e. handicapped city bus, cab, ambulance, etc).

The employee must report to the office when they are leaving the home with the client and when they return.

Arranging transportation to and from work is the employee's responsibility.

## **Privacy & Confidentiality**

Information regarding the diagnosis and treatment of a client is **private and confidential**. Employees should only discuss client information when reporting off to other employees/caregivers or when reporting concerns to the office staff.

Never discuss other clients with your current client and do not answer questions about other clients even if you know the clients know each other. If a client continues to ask about other clients, notify the CarePlus office staff.

Do not discuss a client's diagnosis or treatment (or any other medical information) with their family members unless they are assuming the care of the client.

Do not give **anyone** a client's name, telephone number or address. Tell your family and friends to call our office in an emergency. We will contact you immediately.

The client's purple folder should be kept in a secure location determined by the client and CarePlus office staff. Make sure it is secured before you leave the home each day and do not disclose its location to anyone.

Concerns regarding a potential violation of a client's privacy should be reported to your CarePlus office staff immediately for investigation.

**Violation of a client's right to privacy may be grounds for immediate termination.**

## **Resignations**

Should you plan to leave the agency, a two (2) weeks written notice is required for resignation. Failure to adhere to this policy will not allow us to provide you with a reference and will make you ineligible for rehire.

## **Verbal & Written Reprimands**

Except in a case where the Administrator concludes the circumstances warrant discharge, a progressive discipline procedure will generally be used in an effort to give employees advance notice of unacceptable performance and an opportunity to correct the problem. Under this approach, the employee will be counseled concerning the unacceptable behavior and a verbal reprimand will be issued. If the behavior continues, then a written reprimand will be issued and the individual will be again counseled concerning the unacceptable

behavior, by a CarePlus office staff. If the unacceptable behavior still continues, the employee will be discharged.

Examples of the types of conduct for which a reprimand may be issued, but are not limited to:

1. Tardiness.
2. Using your phone to make personal calls/texts while on duty.
3. Unwillingness or failure to satisfactorily perform the duties of your job.
4. Unsatisfactory work performance.
5. Cancellations without proper excuse/notice.
6. Leaving an assignment without proper relief/approval.
7. Failure to report to work as assigned without notifying your supervisor.
8. Failure to schedule or staff any client without notifying your supervisor.
9. Failure to report a missed shift or visit to a supervisor.
10. Poor work effort or attitude.
11. Minor insubordination.
12. Working or scheduling overtime without prior authorization from your supervisor.
13. Accepting gifts or tips from your client or client's family members without prior approval of your supervisor.
14. Failure to abide by the CarePlus employee's uniform policy/dress code.
15. Discussing personal problems with a client.
16. Failure to abide by CarePlus policies or procedures.
17. Providing a client with another CarePlus employee's telephone number or personal information.
18. Failure to follow requirements for the storage, transportation, treatment or disposal of infectious wastes.
19. Failure to use universal precautions, when the employee has direct contact with blood or other bodily fluid.

The preceding list is not all inclusive. Other types of unacceptable conduct may occur for which written reprimands may be issued. Furthermore, under the circumstances of a particular case, a written reprimand may not be issued.

## **Discharge**

If at any time a report of client endangerment against a CarePlus employee is substantiated, immediate discharge of that employee will result. It must be remembered that your employment with CarePlus is at the mutual consent of CarePlus, and yourself, and either may terminate employment at will, at any time, for any reason. The Director of Human Resources of CarePlus, therefore, may immediately discharge an employee without a prior written reprimand whenever the Director of Human Resources believes the circumstances warrant discharge.

Examples of other types of conduct which can result in an immediate discharge include:

1. Submitting a false reason for absence from work.
2. Placing false or misleading information on an application for employment or other CarePlus records.
3. Theft, destruction or waste of agency or a client's property.
4. Serious insubordination.
5. Solicitation during working time.
6. Rudeness, discourtesy, verbal or physical abuse of any client, client's family member, visitor, or CarePlus employee.

7. Failure to obtain and submit to CarePlus acceptable health clearance/physical examinations, license or certification as required by license regulations.
8. Use, possession, or appearing under the influence of intoxicants or controlled substances on working time.
9. Two (2) complaints of poor work performance from client or client's family members which the Director of Human Resources determines to be valid complaints.
10. Sleeping on duty (except when permitted, i.e. live ins).
11. Contacting clients or client's family members without prior approval from the supervisor.
12. Excessive cancellations or other absences.
13. Hiring privately with a client.
14. Signing the client's or any other persons' name for any reason.
15. Dishonesty, including being untruthful to anyone.
16. Failure to pay any debt owed to CarePlus.
17. Performing techniques beyond the employee's level of training or qualification.
18. Loss or restriction of appropriate license or certification to practice.
19. Falsification of any CarePlus record, including Aide Note.
20. Major failure to follow requirements for storage, transportation, treatment, and disposal of infectious waste.
21. Major failure to use universal precautions when employee has direct contact with blood or other bodily waste.
22. Violating a client's "rights".
23. Failure to cooperate in a police investigation.

The preceding list is not all-inclusive. Other types of unacceptable conduct may occur for which immediate discharge may occur. Furthermore, under the circumstances of a particular case, a written reprimand may be issued rather than immediate discharge or no disciplinary action may be taken. The exercise of the discretion by the Director of Human Resources of CarePlus is not a waiver of CarePlus's right to discharge or discipline the same employee or any other employee for the same type of offences in the future.

### **Taking a Client Privately**

**YOU CAN NEVER WORK FOR A CLIENT PRIVATELY.** REMEMBER that CarePlus is your employer, not your client or their family. Your check comes from CarePlus. If you are found to be taking CarePlus clients to a competitor or working with clients directly, you will be **TERMINATED and LEGAL ACTION could be taken against you. YOU WILL ALSO BE CHARGED A FINE OF \$2,500.00.** Caregivers will not accept private employment with a CarePlus client within one year after the most recent shift you worked for said client.

## **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

### **Wages**

Experience, skill level, type and location of case, among other factors, influence your rate of pay. Pay rates are confidential. Never discuss your pay rate with your client or other employees, other than your supervisor.

Employees are paid bi-weekly. Our pay period starts Monday morning of the first week of the pay period

through the Sunday night shift of the second week of the pay period. Wages are paid on the following Friday. Read the section on AIDE NOTES for more information.

### **Holiday Pay**

If you work a recognized holiday shift, you will be paid one and a half (1 ½) times your regular rate. A recognized holiday shift is one of the following:

- 1) Night shift of the EVE of the recognized holiday.
- 2) Day shift on the DAY of the recognized holiday.
- 3) Afternoon shift on the DAY of the recognized holiday.

The live-in who works the majority of the holiday's hours is paid the holiday rate. If the hours are divided evenly, the employees split the holiday pay.

The six recognized holidays are: Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. If you have questions concerning holiday pay, clarify it before you work the shift.

### **Overtime**

Hours worked over 40 hours per week are paid at one and a half (1 ½) times your regular rate. Live ins are not subject to overtime compensation.

### **Evaluations**

Yearly Evaluations for all field staff are completed in the month of February.

### **Vacations/ Leave of Absence**

Please notify the Director of Operations or Director of Human Resources, in writing, at least one month in advance of the time you wish to be gone. If you are working with other employees, please schedule time off on different days. You must give a two week notice for a leave of absence except in emergencies. You may or may not be assigned to the same case on your return.

### **Training/Education/In-Service**

Certified Nursing Assistants are required to have 4 hours of in-service each year to maintain active employment status with CarePlus. CarePlus offers in-service at our Kentlands Manor location monthly. Attendees will receive a certificate.

CNA's must have in-service requirements current and be ready to work to receive unemployment benefits, temporary disability benefits through workers compensation or to be considered for a pay increase.

### **Liability Insurance**

All categories of employees are covered by liability insurance for hours scheduled by the office that are actually worked providing care to the scheduled client. This insurance protects the employee and this agency. For your own protection we encourage licensed personnel to have individual malpractice insurance as well.

### **Worker's Compensation**

Work related injuries or exposures are covered by Worker's Compensation and must be reported at the time they occur. Employees that require medical treatment beyond first aid are required to come into the office to document the injury and be drug tested prior to being seen by a physician.

More serious injuries that require immediate attention in an emergency room setting will be drug tested at the facility at the time of treatment.

A written statement of the events leading up to the injury will need to be submitted by you within 72 hours of the time of the injury or within 72 hours of your release from treatment in a hospital.

Employees not working due to worker's compensation injuries will be required to call the office daily to report their medical status unless they are in the hospital. All scheduled medical visits will be reported at that time. Medical appointments will be scheduled at the earliest possible time convenient for the medical provider. Failure to keep an appointment or rescheduling appointments may result in forfeiture of disability benefits.

Beginning one week after an employee has begun treatment for a work related injury that prevents them from performing their regular job, they will report to the office daily. They will be assigned to work within their restrictions at the discretion of the office staff.

Failure to follow the guidelines above may result in forfeiture of disability benefits. CarePlus believes it is our responsibility to assist our employees in the process of getting well. It is our goal to keep our valued employees active and productive and not facing a loss of income during work related injuries.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act**

The Family and Medical Leave Act mandates that an employer provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for certain medical and family related reasons. Unpaid leave must be granted for any of the following:

#### **Basic Leave:**

1. For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth.
2. To care for the employee's child after birth, or placement for adoption or foster care.
3. To care for an employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent, who has a serious health condition.
4. For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job.

## **CLIENT'S RIGHTS**

Our clients have a "Client's Bill of Rights" mandated by federal law and we expect you to follow these rights. Our clients are special people who have the right to retain their life styles and routines. Treat them with the dignity they deserve. It is our responsibility as health care providers to recognize and encourage our client's need to maintain their autonomy and individuality. Included here is a copy of our "Client's Bill of Rights". Please review it carefully. Violation of a client's rights is grounds for dismissal. Clients of CarePlus have a right:

- \* To appropriate care regardless of sex, age, race, religion, national origin or source of payment.
- \* To be informed, in advance, and to participate in planning care and treatment regarding the care to be furnished, any changes in the care to be furnished, the disciplines that will furnish care and the frequency of care proposed to be furnished. The client's family/guardian or legal representative may exercise the client's rights when the client has been judged incompetent.
- \* To participate in the planning of care and to be advised, in advance, of any change in the plan of care before

the change is made.

- \* To privacy and confidentiality concerning medical treatment.
- \* To have access to, or receive a copy of, their clinical record upon written request. A written authorization of release of information shall be required when not authorized by law.
- \* To voice complaints/grievances regarding treatment or care that is (or fails to be) furnished or lack of respect for property without reprisal or discrimination for same and be informed of the procedure to voice complaints/grievances with CarePlus. Complaints or questions may be directed to the Director of Operations at 301-740-8870. Complaints may also be submitted in person or in writing to the CarePlus office in Gaithersburg. CarePlus will investigate the complaint and resolution of same.
- \* To be free from verbal, physical and psychological abuse and to be treated with dignity.
- \* To have their property treated with respect.
- \* To decide what medical treatments they want or do not want. They may choose someone they trust to make these decisions for them if they become unable to make them themselves. They record these decisions in a document called an Advance Directive.
- \* To know the extent to which payment may be expected from Long Term Care insurance and to know the charges for services that the client may have to pay.
- \* To be advised orally and or in writing of any changes in expected payer sources and charges that the individual may have to pay. CarePlus will advise them of these changes within 30 days from the date CarePlus becomes aware of the change.
- \* To know CarePlus policies and procedures regarding Universal Precautions in the home setting.
- \* To have, upon written request, in advance of furnishing care, a listing of all individual's or other legal entities who have an ownership or control interest in the agency.
- \* To contact the Maryland State Department of Health concerning the implementation of Advance Directive requirements, to lodge complaints regarding treatment/care or to discuss questions or concerns regarding local home health care agencies.

## **CLIENT CARE GOALS**

### **Physical, Rehabilitative Goals:**

We implement and pursue a Care Plan that includes helping the client improve their physical health and condition. The Care Plan may specify ambulation, range of motion and other forms of toning and conditioning that your client needs. Clients may need assistance in bathing, cleaning, and grooming to maintain a feeling of optimal well being. All care is to be provided as directed on the Care Plan. Any changes need to be reported to the CarePlus office staff immediately.

### **Family, Home, Environment Goals:**

The home is the focal point of attention for the client and the care of the client. Special attention needs to be given to the client's lifestyle, condition of the home, atmosphere, and other factors that influence whether the client is happy or unhappy at home. Again, we strive to develop a plan which incorporates these considerations in the interest of providing complete and total client care.

### **Emotional, Personal, Mental Goals:**

Many clients live with personal problems involving depression, anxiety, confusion, and pain. Efforts to reduce or alleviate these problems are undertaken for the sake of making them as happy and comfortable as possible. **IMPORTANT!** Don't bring your own problems to work. Your client needs a pleasant atmosphere and probably has enough to deal with already.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

In the event of an extraordinary occurrence, call the office immediately. Some examples are:

1. Client injury or illness
2. Injury or illness to yourself
3. Unusual or dangerous client/family behavior
4. Any occurrence requiring police or emergency service
5. Change in client condition
6. Failure of Universal Precautions or an incident of exposure to blood, bodily fluids or other infectious waste

When you call the office, answer all questions thoroughly and follow instructions carefully.

Document what took place and what was done, and send your documentation to the office within 24 hours after the incident. The office staff will also need to fill out our special incident report form and will follow up for insurance and legal purposes. Please cooperate with the office staff!

### **Fire, Police, Ambulance**

Call 911 for help! While waiting for help to arrive, try to provide the best assistance you can according to the situation and your abilities. Contact the CarePlus office as soon as possible.

### **Medical**

CarePlus office staff are always available for non-urgent medical concerns. For true medical emergencies, call 911. Other emergency numbers should be in the purple client folder.

Provide any emergency interventions noted in the Care Plan until help arrives and notify the office and document the care provided as soon as possible.

### **Client Death**

Take the following steps in the event of suspected and possible client death. The only exception would be when you have specific instructions in the purple folder, and you are attending to a terminally ill client with an expected death.

1. Provide whatever emergency intervention you can
2. Call 911 or the emergency number (located in the purple client folder) to get help
3. Notify the office and follow instructions
4. Stay in the home until the office instructs you to leave
5. Document all occurrences when time allows

## **FRAUD AND ABUSE PREVENTION**

CarePlus Home Health, Inc. (CarePlus) is committed to provide quality services to clients in the home care setting according to all Federal, State and Local laws and within applicable regulatory guidelines.

**We will strive to provide quality home care to our clients in an honest and ethical manner and expect all employees to provide care based on these principles.** CarePlus expects its employees to do everything they can to prevent and detect false claims and potentially fraudulent behavior in the workplace.

All job performances and all written documentation will reflect a true and accurate picture of the care provided to clients by our employees. Failure to comply with these standards will result in discipline and/or discharge. CarePlus has a zero tolerance policy towards fraud and abuse.

## **CONCLUSION**

Home care is one of the fastest growing and most exciting places to be in the healthcare field today. In no other field do you, as our employee, get the opportunity to help others with chronic and acute illnesses live happy and productive lives in their own homes. But with this opportunity also comes the huge responsibility to make sure the care we provide is safe, appropriate, medically necessary and delivered in an honest and ethical manner. CarePlus expects all employees to adhere to all Federal, State and Local laws, regulations and standards when providing client care. Failure to do so will result in termination from the company and possible civil and even criminal charges.

## **UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS**

To help protect you from risks that can come from working around infectious diseases, you are required to know about these possible hazards. Universal Precautions are measures taken when caring for all clients, not just those with diagnosed communicable diseases. Emphasis is placed on protection of you, the employee. The components of Universal Precautions are the wearing of gloves, gowns, masks, goggles, and thorough hand washing when there is the possibility of contact with body fluids, especially blood. Universal Precautions is mandatory when caring for all clients.

We know that these precautions take some extra time and effort to use but they will become second nature to you. Remember, Universal Precautions weren't meant to make your life more difficult, they were meant to save it!

## **Training and Equipment**

We will provide training and equipment to each employee to implement Universal Precautions when the

employee's duties require them to have direct contact with blood or bodily fluids. At the time of the initial assessment, the Nurse will determine the client's "at risk" factor and leave a supply of the appropriate equipment in the home and instructions on the Care Plan for the employee's use. The Nurse will also make sure the home has disposable tissues, plastic garbage bags, and either bleach or 70% Isopropyl Alcohol available for use if the client is determined "high" or "low" risk.

It is then the responsibility of the employee in the home to make sure they have an adequate supply of equipment available at all times. Additional equipment may be picked up at the CarePlus office or a request may be made for the Nurse to bring additional equipment at the time of his/her regularly scheduled supervisory visit. Always keep at least 2 weeks' supply of equipment at the client's home. The employee will also be responsible to notify the Nurse if the client has a condition change that may affect the client's "risk" classification. Additional protection may be necessary.

Employees MUST protect themselves from direct exposure to blood or bodily fluids that are visibly contaminated with blood to prevent exposure to HIV, HVB, and other infectious agents. However, many potentially serious communicable diseases, such as cytomegalovirus or hepatitis A virus are transmitted by bodily fluids such as saliva, urine, feces, in the absence of contamination with blood. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that the precautions be taken to prevent direct contact with all bodily fluids of all persons, whether or not the bodily fluids are visibly contaminated with blood.

### **Procedures to Implement Universal Precautions:**

1. Hand washing is mandatory, BEFORE AND AFTER, contact with clients. Hands should be washed thoroughly and immediately if they become contaminated with blood. This precaution should be observed regardless of whether gloves are worn! Frequent hand washing is a must. Hands should be washed thoroughly before and after personal care, before meal preparations, before assisting with medications and after handling any soiled clothing. Hand washing is the most effective way of preventing the spread of disease and infections, and is for you and your client's protection.
2. Disposable gloves must be worn when touching/handling blood specimens, blood-soiled items, bodily fluids, excretions, and secretions, as well as surfaces, materials, and objects exposed to them. Remove and discard after each use.
3. The use of gowns is recommended only if soiling of clothing with blood or bodily fluids is anticipated.
4. The use of protective eyewear, such as goggles, is recommended in situations in which the spattering of blood, bloody secretions, or bodily fluids is possible.
5. Visitor Precautions: Masks should be worn by visitors who have direct and sustained contact with a coughing client in the home or when a client needs to be suctioned.
6. General Household: Soiled linen should be washed separately in very hot water and standard detergent. No special precautions are necessary; either reusable or disposable dishes may be used. Blood spills should be cleaned up promptly with a solution of 5.25% sodium hydrochloride (household bleach), diluted 1:10 with water (prepared daily), or 70% Isopropyl Alcohol.
7. Trash Disposal: Articles contaminated with blood or bodily fluids should be placed in a leak proof plastic bag and disposed of in the normal manner.
8. Venipuncture & Injections: Extraordinary care should be taken to avoid accidental wounds to nurses from needles and other sharp instruments. Parenteral injections and blood draws should be planned to minimize invasive procedures and should be carried out by experienced personnel. The "click-lock" or needleless extension tubing should be used for all types of intravenous therapy when available. Blood and other specimens should be labeled prominently with a warning, such as "bloody/bodily fluid precaution". The label should accompany the specimen through all phases of processing until its ultimate disposal. If the outside of the specimen

container is visibly contaminated with blood, it should be cleaned immediately with disinfectant, such as freshly prepared (once daily) 1:10 solution of sodium hydrochloride (household bleach) or 70% isopropyl alcohol. Specimens should be placed in a second bag (impervious) for transport. This container or bag should be examined carefully for leaks or cracks. Environmental surfaces contaminated with blood or other bodily fluids should be cleaned in the same manner. NEEDLES SHOULD NEVER BE RECAPPED, BENT, OR BROKEN. USED NEEDLES ARE TO BE DISPOSED OF IN A RIGID, PUNCTURE RESISTANT CONTAINER.

9. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation in the Home: Disposable "Ambu bag" devices are to be available at the bedside to prevent mouth to mouth contact between the resuscitator and the client. If resuscitation is needed by a client and the resuscitation bag is not available, the decision to withhold or provide direct mouth to mouth resuscitation rests solely on the judgment of the individual employee.
10. Health care practitioners who hold a current Maryland license in the profession which is authorized to draw blood, may use their judgment as to whether or not gloves are necessary when performing phlebotomy. However, if a practitioner chooses to wear gloves, appropriate gloves shall be furnished by the employer for use by licensed employees, and members of the medical staff.
11. Workers with weeping or exudative lesions or dermatitis, which cannot be securely covered, shall refrain from both direct client care and from handling clean or soiled client equipment.
12. Linen, clothing or other materials that are visibly contaminated with blood or bodily fluids shall be placed in bags or containers that are impervious to moisture before transport for cleaning. Gloves shall be worn, when handling these materials.
13. If a client's diagnosis, laboratory analysis, or medical condition as determined by a physician's order, requires additional contamination control or isolation, those specific measures apply in addition to this rule.

## **What To Do If Exposure Occurs**

EXPOSURE is defined as direct contact with blood or bodily fluids of one person with the skin or mucous membranes of another person. Scientific evidence indicates that only direct contact with semen, vaginal secretions, blood, or visibly blood contaminated bodily fluids carries a potential risk for HIV transmission. Moreover, only direct contact with blood has been implicated in occupational acquisition of HIV infection.

1. The employee should wash the affected area immediately and thoroughly. If an eye or mucous membrane (mouth) is contaminated, rinse with water for fifteen (15) minutes.
2. The incident should be immediately reported to the CarePlus office. While vomitus, saliva, urine, tears, and feces have not been implicated in the transmission of HIV or HBV infections (with the exception that human bites have transmitted HBV), other communicable diseases may be transmitted by these fluids and reporting of the incident to the office is required.
3. An incident report should be completed within 24 hours. The report should include the circumstances of the incident, blood or bodily fluid source's name, and what protective clothing and precautions were used at the time of the exposure.
4. The Nurse will perform an evaluation and follow up of the employee. Exposed employees will be counseled about the risk of acquisition of HIV and other relevant communicable diseases, receive information about prevention of transmission, and be offered voluntary serologic testing.
5. All persons will be informed of their test results and should receive appropriate counseling; seropositive persons will be referred for further medical assistance.

6. If a person is exposed to bodily fluids or blood of an employee, that person should be informed of the exposure (without identification of the employee) and procedures similar to those outlined above should be followed.

### **Handling Spills of Blood or Bodily Fluids**

The following precautions contain the necessary elements for handling spills of blood or other bodily fluids. In the event of a spill of blood, bodily fluids, or body tissues, the employee will:

1. Wear impermeable gloves.
2. Remove visible material with disposable absorbent towels.
3. If cleaning a hard surface, flood with a solution of one part household bleach to ten parts water, or use an approved household disinfectant.
4. Re-clean area with fresh towels.
5. If cleaning a rug or carpet, use a sanitary absorbent agent according to the directions.
6. Place all soiled towels and gloves in a leak-proof bag or container and dispose of in the usual manner.\*
7. Wash hands!
8. Notify the CarePlus office staff of the spill.

\*Items used in handling spills that are contaminated with small amounts of blood, such as paper towels, cotton balls, bandages, and gloves, are not considered infectious waste unless they are co-mingled with infectious waste. Items so saturated with blood that they could be considered "liquid" or "semi-liquid", must be considered infectious waste and handled according to Infectious Waste Policy.

For all healthcare workers (HCWs) who have reason to believe that they are at risk of HIV infection, it is strongly recommended by the Maryland State Department of Health that they know their HIV status.

It is also recommended that all healthcare workers that meet the following requirements (A&B), know their HbsAg status and if it is positive, that they know their HbeAg status (HBSAg and HbeAg are both indicators of Hepatitis B infectivity):

1. Health care workers who perform procedures during which there is a recognized risk of percutaneous injury to the health care worker, and, if such injury occurs the health care worker's blood may contact the client's body cavity, subcutaneous tissue, and mucous membrane; and
2. Health care workers who do not have serological evidence of immunity to Hepatitis B virus from vaccination or previous infection.



## **OFFICE INFORMATION**

### **Main Headquarters**

19390 Montgomery Village, MD 20886

### **CarePlus Flex Care Offices are in the following locations:**

#### **Kentlands Manor**

217 Booth Street, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

221 Booth Street, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

#### **Arbor Crest**

12801 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

#### **Friends House Retirement Community**

17340 Quaker Ln, Sandy Spring, MD 20860

**Caregiver Line: 240-396-5892**

**Main Phone Line: 301-740-8870**

**Fax Number: 301-740-8871**