

RECOGNIZING CHANGES IN HEALTH STATUS

NEBRASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Division of Developmental Disabilities



Liberty Healthcare Corporation
THE FREEDOM TO SUCCEED™

WE LEARNED THROUGH THE DATA

Q2 of 2022 35% of unexpected deaths experienced a delay in emergent care

48.26% of people who died last FY experienced falls 6 months prior

Q2 of 2022 65% of unexpected deaths experienced delays in care

THE ROLE OF
THE DIRECT
SERVICE
PROVIDER

The vital role of Direct Service Providers:

- The “eyes and ears” of the division in monitoring supports needs of those you support
- You know people better than most and can see changes

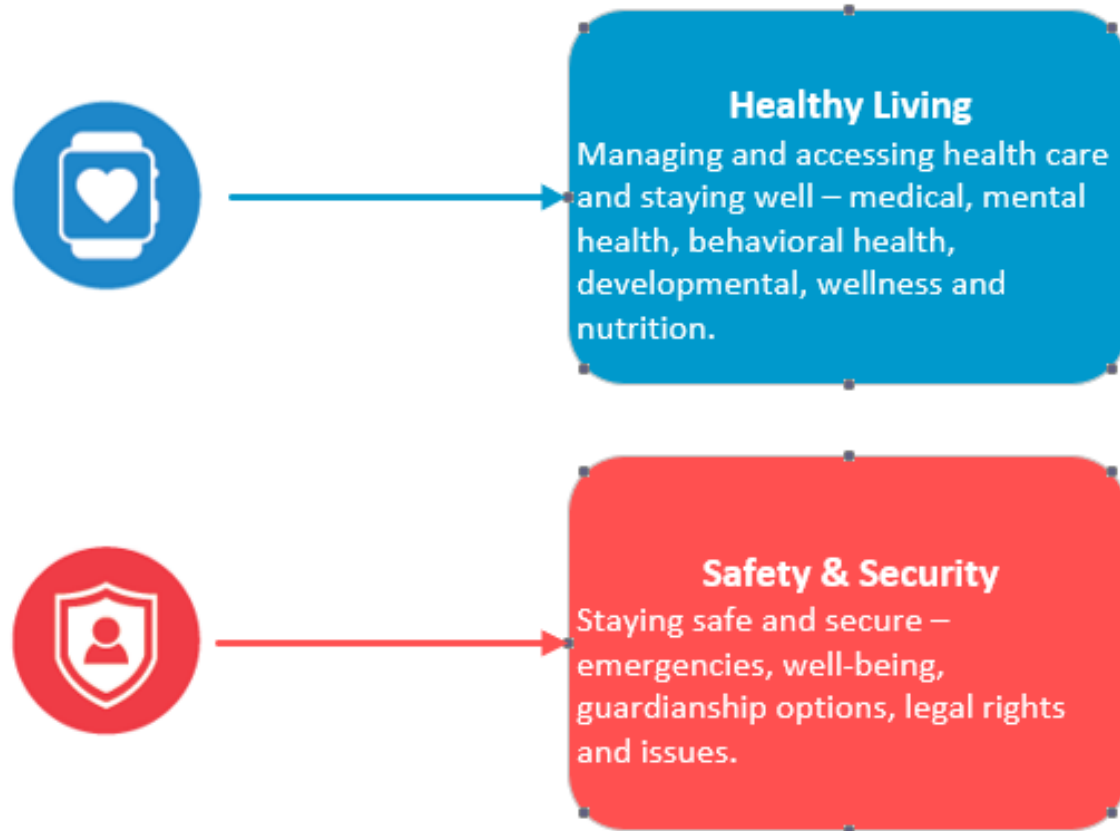
SUPPORTING A VULNERABLE POPULATION

Many of our participants are medically fragile with multiple diagnoses and illnesses.

Many of our participants cannot advocate for themselves to receive the supports and services they need.

We cannot rely solely on people receiving services to alert us to changing health.

CHARTING THE LIFECOURSE: SUPPORTING THE WHOLE PERSON



- Managing and accessing health care and staying well are part of the Healthy Living domain.
- Staying safe and maintaining wellbeing are part of the Safety & Security domain.

HEALTH NEEDS CAN CHANGE

Sometimes these changes
can happen quickly

Sometimes the onset of
health status changes is
gradual

Direct Service Providers
are in a unique position
to recognize changes in
health needs:

They know the
participant

They know the plan of
care

They see the participant
the most

SOMETIMES THE
INDIVIDUAL CAN'T
VERBALLY ARTICULATE
AN ILLNESS OR
WORSENING HEALTH
CONDITION

- Makes it more difficult to recognize a changing health status
- We need to rely on observations or behavioral clues



SUDDEN DECLINE IN HEALTH STATUS

Sudden decline in mobility

- Inability to move from a sitting to a standing position
- Inability to walk safely without risk of falling

Abrupt Mental Status Changes

- Sudden onset of confusion or disorientation (delirium)
- Sudden onset of psychotic symptoms (hallucinations or paranoia)
- Sudden decrease in alertness, inability to carry on a conversation or answer questions

Abrupt Onset of Behavioral Issues

- Sudden withdrawal from others, refusal to participate in usual activities
- Sudden onset of aggressive behavior or self-injury

These may be signs/symptoms of ACUTE ILLNESS!

GRADUAL DECLINE IN HEALTH STATUS

Dementia-related issues

- Dementia is progressive with gradual loss of executive function & short-term memory

Gradual decline in mobility

- Unsteadiness on feet - Onset of falls
- Risks for pressure sores

Gradual decline in ADLs

- Failure to bathe, lack of food prep ability, medication non-compliance

Watch for the tipping point to Safety Risk

Watch for inability to provide for Basic Needs

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEALTH STATUS DECLINE

Mobility Changes

- Falls or near falls
- Reluctance to get out of bed or the recliner
- Unsteadiness on feet, weakness, difficulty standing
- Cannot manage stairs
- Can't get in and out of the bathtub





SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEALTH STATUS DECLINE

Mental Status Changes

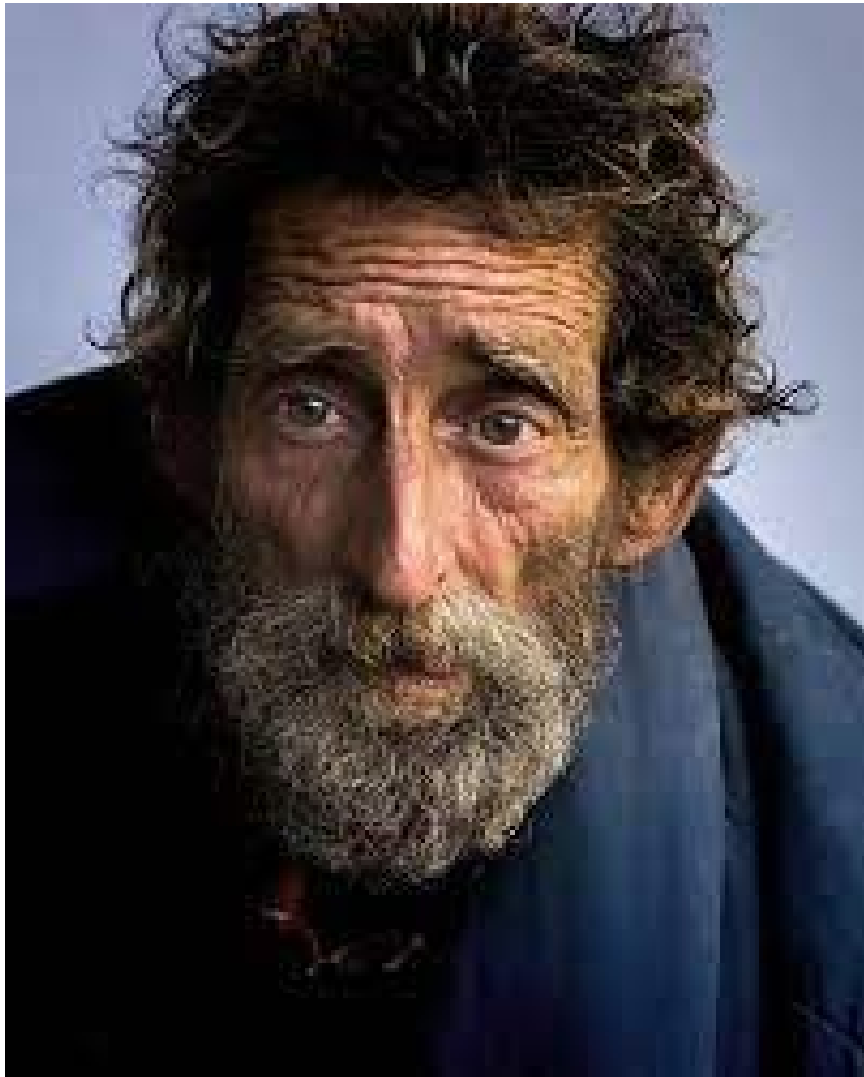
- Inability to organize thoughts
- Repeats questions and can't remember a conversation 10 minutes ago
- Difficulty figuring out how to do simple tasks
- Increase anxiety (usually related to memory loss or loss of orientation)
- Decreased ability to focus or pay attention
- Intermittent confusion or disorientation
- New onset of hallucinations or paranoia

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEALTH STATUS DECLINE

Bowel or Bladder Changes

- New onset of bowel or bladder incontinence
- Failure to have a bowel movement in 3 days
- Clothing or body that smells of urine or feces





SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEALTH STATUS DECLINE

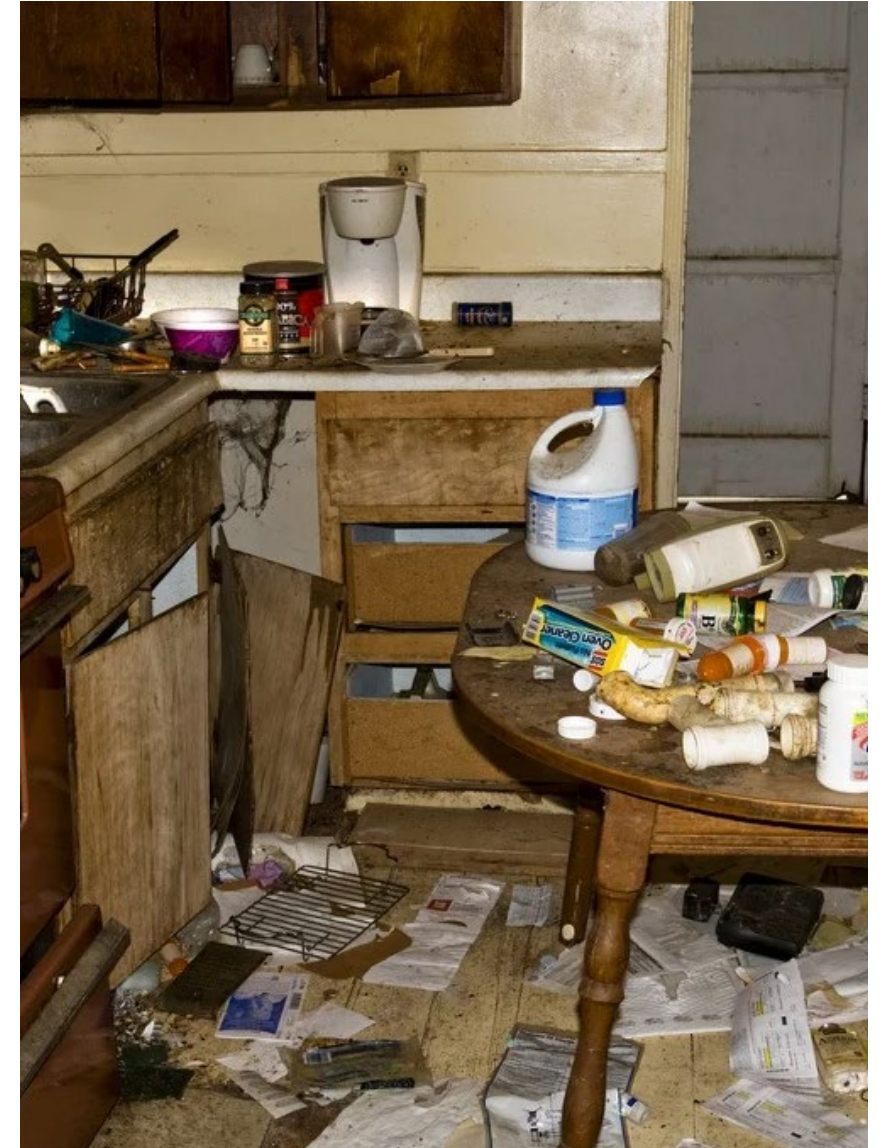
Inattention to or inability to complete ADLs

- Chronically soiled or odorous clothing
- Strong body odor – evidence of failure to bathe
- Evidence of failure to perform dental hygiene
- Unkempt hair and nails
- Unkempt home environment – food remnants, dirty dishes piled up, persistent messes & spills, excessive clutter
- Evidence of medication non-compliance

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEALTH STATUS DECLINE

Failure to attend to basic needs

- No food in the home
- Significant weight loss
- Loss of home utilities (electricity, heating/AC, water)
- Failure to access needed healthcare and health supplies
- Inability to utilize healthcare equipment or adaptive equipment



KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT LEVEL OF SERVICES



- Does the participant need a higher level of care to be safe?
- Can the individual provide for own ADLs if living alone?
- Is there a need for additional adaptive equipment?
- Is there a need for additional medical equipment?
- Is there a need for evaluation by a healthcare provider?
- Does the current setting and level of service meet the basic and safety needs of the individual?



NEXT STEPS

After you recognize a change of health status for someone you support you must

REPORT IT



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