

**County of Orange Social Services Agency  
Family Self-Sufficiency**

**Program/Area:** CalWORKs/Welfare-to-Work  
**Title:** CalWORKs Public Health Nurse Services  
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**PURPOSE** This policy contains guidelines to be used when referring a CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work (WTW) participant for Public Health Nurse (PHN) services.

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**POLICY** The Social Services Agency (SSA) maintains an agreement with the Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) to provide public health nursing services to various SSA programs. PHNs are registered nurses with a bachelor's degree and a public health nurse certificate. For CalWORKs (CW), PHNs are co-located at each regional office and work collaboratively with CW regional staff, HCA Behavioral Health Services staff, and other SSA partners to meet the needs of WTW participants. Open dialogue between all parties provides the best opportunity to proactively identify and resolve barriers that may prevent an individual from successfully participating in assigned WTW activities.

PHN services are a collaborative effort to provide in-person and/or telephonic health related assessments and case management services to WTW participants clients and/or their families to:

- Assess health needs and provide health resources to assist participants and their families in overcoming medical barriers that may prevent their ability to participate in WTW services.
- Promote healthy lifestyles and facilitate access to health services to help participants and their families prevent disease and disability and become self-sufficient.

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**REFERRALS**

- Acceptance of PHN services is voluntary.
- Most referrals are assigned to the regional PHN where the referral was generated; however, depending on coverage, workload, and/or language, referrals may be assigned to PHNs at another regional office.
- Typically, an initial client contact by the PHN will be made within 5-7 business days from the date of the referral.
  - **NOTE:** For referrals requiring more urgent action, urgency level should be communicated via phone and/or email directly to the Supervising Public Health Nurse (SPHN).
- PHN referrals will only be accepted on behalf of mandatory or voluntary WTW participants, except under Extraordinary Client Circumstances (refer to [Policy 405 Extraordinary Client Circumstances](#) for additional information).

- Referrals may be made for WTW participants who have been sanctioned or for those who are at risk of sanction, as PHN intervention may provide critical support necessary to re-engage the individual in WTW activities.
- PHNs may assist participants in accessing a child's immunization status or current immunization records through the California Immunization Registry (CAIR) after obtaining the participants' authorization to release information.
- PHN referrals completed for this purpose should state "immunization record" in the "Reason for Referral" section, and include the following:
  - Child's complete name and date of birth, and
  - Mother's complete name.
- Staff are encouraged to consult with co-located regional PHNs when advice is needed regarding possible health-related issues that may interfere with an individual's successful participation in WTW activities.

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## REGIONAL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Intake/Continuing staff and Case Managers (CM) (whom will be referred to as regional staff for the remainder of this document) should evaluate the appropriateness of a PHN referral at Appraisal, or at any other point during participation in WTW activities to ensure appropriate support and resources are offered to the participant and/or their family.

- The HCA [Public Health Nursing CalWORKs/WTW Flyer](#) provides general information about PHN services and should be offered to all WTW participants and their families who are interested in, or who may benefit from, PHN services.
- To make a PHN referral, regional staff must complete the CalWORKs Public Health Nursing Referral [F063-30-251](#) and submit it to the SPHN email box at [sphn@ssa.ocgov.com](mailto:sphn@ssa.ocgov.com). Staff are highly encouraged to use the comment section on the referral form to provide as much information as possible about the participant or family member's known health issue(s) and/or PHN needs. If you are referring a family member such as a child in the home, please include the child's name and Date of Birth (DOB).
- WTW participants can also self-refer for PHN services by following instructions on the [Public Health Nursing CalWORKs/WTW Flyer](#). When a self-referral is generated, the PHN will notify the assigned regional staff to inform them of the referral.
- If a PHN referral is opened for PHN case management services, the PHN will complete a confidential CalWORKS PHN Report upon completion of their initial PHN assessment. This report will communicate the PHN's plan of care and be sent to the regional staff who generated the referral.
  - **NOTE:** A CalWORKs PHN Report may not be generated for every PHN referral depending on the nature of the referral, only referrals opened for case management services.
  - **NOTE:** This report may not be released to third parties without the participant's authorization.
- Upon receipt of the report, regional staff will review and virtually print it into OnBase under the **Document Type-PHN** and delete the email to protect

the participant's personal identifying information.

- Regional staff should notify the PHN immediately when an individual becomes exempt from, or is otherwise no longer participating in, the WTW program.
- All actions and participant contacts by regional staff related to the PHN referral staff must make a journal entry for the case.

### **Extraordinary Circumstances (EC)**

If a PHN referral is warranted for a CW client who falls under EC (Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Zero Parent, Safety Net, and Timed Out cases), refer to [Policy 405 Extraordinary Client Circumstances](#) for directives on initiating a PHN referral.

Per the EC policy, an EC referral must also be referred for a [Family Support Team \(FST\)](#) meeting.

- **NOTE:** If the urgency eliminates the possibility of an immediate FST meeting, EC services may be authorized until an FST meeting can be convened by following the EC process.

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### **PUBLIC HEALTH NURSE (PHN) RESPONSIBILITIES AND SERVICES**

PHNs act as a resource to CalWORKs staff and assists WTW clients and families by providing resources and linking clients to appropriate services for a variety of health-related issues. Services provided by PHNs include, but are not limited to:

- Whole-family health assessments completed during office, home, or telephonic visits
- Assistance with accessing primary health care through CalOptima and/or Medi-Cal
- Coordination of care, including referrals and linkages to community resources
- Family outreach and health education
- Assistance and advocacy with the medical exemption process, including SSI applications
- Referrals to appropriate resources for early detection of developmental disabilities in young children (age 0-5), and assessment of potential physical and neurodevelopment disabilities in children of all ages
- Attendance at the Family Support Team (FST) meetings to provide professional consultation, identify health and medical needs, provide resources, and make recommendations as needed. Refer to the [408 - Family Support Assessment Process](#).
  - This includes FST invitations for cases with exempt individuals who become WTW mandatory, exempt volunteers, and/or sanctioned individuals who wish to cure the sanction.

Upon receiving a referral, the PHN will:

- The Supervising PHN (SPHN) will assign the referral to the regional PHN;

however, referrals may be assigned to PHNs at another regional office depending on coverage, workload, and/or language need.

- Make initial contact with the participant within 5-7 business days from the date referral received.
  - **NOTE:** Regional staff have been directed to contact the SPHN or regional PHN via telephone and/or email on referrals requiring urgent PHN attention and/or services.
- Conduct participant visit via in-person (home or SSA Office) or telephone to assess the health needs of the participant and their family.
  - **NOTE:** If you are unable to contact the participant after three attempts, notify the referring regional staff via email. If the family's file is subsequently closed because the PHN was unable to complete an initial nursing assessment, documentation of outreach efforts will be documented in the journal.
- Communicate with regional staff as needed to exchange case information and coordinate delivery of services.
- Document all participant contacts/attempted contacts in the journal.
- Complete the CalWORKs PHN Report providing plan of care and/or recommendations and send via email to the assigned regional staff.
  - **NOTE:** This report may not be released to third parties without the participant's authorization.

**Extraordinary Circumstances (EC):**

If a PHN referral is generated for a CW client who falls under EC (Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), Zero Parent, Safety Net, and Timed Out cases), per [Policy 405 Extraordinary Client Circumstances](#), the referring regional staff must first initiate an [FST](#) meeting and indicate the need for PHN participation.

- **NOTE:** If the urgency eliminates the possibility of an immediate FST meeting, EC services may be authorized until an FST meeting can be convened.
  - For this to happen, the referring regional staff must obtain approval by the regional Administrative Manager II who then will communicate the case details to the FSS-AS Policy and Quality Assurance Manager overseeing the EC assignment.

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**REFERENCES**

[Policy 405 Extraordinary Client Circumstances](#)  
[Policy 408 Family Support Assessment Process](#)

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**ATTACHMENTS**

[Public Health Nursing CalWORKs/WTW Flyer](#)  
[Public Health Nurse Regional Contacts](#)  
CalWORKs Public Health Nursing Referral ([F063-30-251](#))