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**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**  
HEALTH CARE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE (HCPCFC)  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS)

**HCPCFC**  
**DCFS**

**Policy/Procedure**

**SUBJECT:** Coverage and Backup System for the Health care Program (HCPCFC) and Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Public Health Nurses (PHNs)

**PURPOSE:**

To assure coverage and create a backup system for the HCPCFC & DCFS PHNs co-located within the DCFS offices for children's issues that require immediate attention and not for routine work when the assigned PHN and respective PHN Program colleague is not in the office to assist.

**SCOPE:**

Responsibilities of the Public Health Nurse Supervisor (PHNS) and the Public Health Nurse (PHN) when providing coverage for PHNs within DCFS offices.

**POLICY:**

All PHNS are responsible for providing coverage for their designated staff in their assigned offices.

All PHNS will make every effort to provide coverage for their assigned offices with their designated staff prior to requesting assistance from the partner program staff.

All PHNS will develop a backup system for their designated PHN staff.

All PHNS and PHNs will post their backup information on their desk prior to leaving for field visit, meeting, day off, vacation or leave.

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**PROCEDURE:**

**Public Health Nurse Supervisors (PHNS) for both Programs will:**

1. Assign a primary and secondary backup for their respective PHNs.
2. Be available for coverage by telephone or cell phone at all times during regular working hours
3. Have a backup PHNS or designee when unavailable on vacation or on leave.
4. Redistribute PHN assignment when assigned PHN staff will be on a planned leave longer than 30 days. If the planned leave is less than 30 days, assign temporary PHN coverage.
5. Post their coverage information at their desk to make staff aware of their coverage while they are away from their office.
6. Notify nurse manager and staff they supervise of any staff shortage at any of their offices.
7. Request assistance from the appropriate partnering program regional office PHNS when assistance is needed.
8. If PHNS is not clear when partnering program coverage should be provided, PHNS will consult with their respective nurse manager.
9. Provide PHN assistance in emergency situations, such as when a child is in the office and:
  - a. Appears to be ill, or
  - b. Has health problems such as asthma, diabetes or,
  - c. Has an injury that may require immediate attention.
10. Notify the appropriate partnering program PHNS(s) when all staff will be out of the office at the same time such as for Regional or General PHN meeting. The notification will include the date and time of the meeting and when staff is expected to return to the office.

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**Public Health Nurses (PHNs) from both programs will:**

1. Notify respective PHNS when they will be away from the office for field visits or meetings.
2. Post their coverage information including estimated time of return and supervisor contact information at their desk.
3. Post backup coverage and supervisor contact information on voice mail and e-mail when on vacation or leave.
4. Inform backup PHN when they will be away from the office for field visits and meetings and provide the estimated time of return.
5. Update backup PHN with their caseload information when they will be on vacation or on leave.
6. Provide partnering program coverage when a child in the office requires immediate attention and/or their respective PHNS (or designee) instructs them to do so for example a child:
  - a. Appears to be ill, or
  - b. Has health problems such as asthma, diabetes or,
  - c. Has an injury that may require immediate attention.
7. Notify PHNS when partnering PHN Program coverage is provided.
8. Complete a nurse-to-nurse report and forward it immediately to their PHNS and to the appropriate partner Program PHN and PHNS.
9. When a backup PHN is not in the same office as the primary PHN and there is a child who requires immediate PHN attention, any available PHN in the office will assist in assessing the child's immediate health needs.

APPROVED BY :

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nurse Manager

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/10/12  
REVISED DATE

APPROVED BY :

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Nurse Manager

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/10/12  
REVISED DATE :