

## Questions To Ask A Provider

### **How do we ensure your health and safety?**

Your health and safety is our primary concern. We carefully interview and screen all new staff by completing Background check, a driving record check and checking references. Staff are required to be current in CPR and First Aid. Most staff have completed a fourteen hour training on medications. Each staff is required to complete a minimum of 8 hours of on-going training annually and attend mandatory staff meetings. Staff have 24-hour emergency access to their supervisor as well as other staff in the company through beepers and cell phones.

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### **What if I don't like the staff working with me?**

If you have a problem with staff, you can call the staff's supervisor, the district manager, or the office to discuss your concerns. We want to know as soon as possible if you are having any problems with staff. We will work with you to resolve your concerns.

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### **What credentials do the staff need for the job?**

Staff have a high school diploma or a G.E.D, a valid driver's license with proof of insurance, CPR certificate, and First Aid certificate. Many staff have completed a 14-hour Medication Administration course and have a State issued Level One Certificate. When needed, some staff have completed additional medication administration training and certification requirements to assist with people who have g-tubes or are diabetic and dependent on insulin injections. Staff are required to complete a minimum of 8 hours of training annually on a variety of topics which relate to their job.

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### **Who decides which staff work with me?**

You assist in that decision. The IHS staff person who is responsible for coordinating your support services will schedule a time for you to meet any new person. If things go well, the new person will be scheduled to come in and observe an experienced staff person working with you. We call this "job shadowing," and every person who works with you is required to complete this process before they actually start providing services.

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### **Will staff have a 24-hour beeper or cell phone?**

IHS does require all staff who supervise a site to carry a 24-hour beeper or cell phone. District Managers and State Director all carry pagers and/or cell phones. The offices have 24-hour voice mail available for non-emergency communication.

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### **If I get sick at work, will staff be able to pick me up?**

Phone numbers are provided so that arrangements can be made to respond to such emergencies.

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### **Do staff have 24-hour access to their supervisors?**

All staff have access to emergency numbers for their supervisors. All supervisory staff carry a beeper and/or a cell phone.

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### **What is your staff retention?**

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IHS retention rate exceeds the average of agencies in our field. We believe this in part due to the fact that IHS strives to create as many full-time positions as possible. Staff working part time are usually doing so by their own preference. The majority of staff work full time. We feel this enhances our ability to provide continuity of support. Our staff retention rate is far below the nation wide industry standard of over 55%. In 2008 our retention rate was 84%. In 2006 and again in 2007, our staff retention rate was 85%. Only 25% of the staff have been with IHS 1 year or less, 19% of the staff have 2-6 years of service, and 56% of the staff have provided 7-15 years of service with IHS. IHS Services, Inc. has been providing support services since February of 1993. Our management team has the following experience with IHS : our State Director, 15 years; our District Managers average 10.6 years; our site coordinators called Support Services Coordinators average 8.4 years; our Payee Specialist has 12 years; our Office Managers average 13 years. Our Program Specialist has been with IHS for 5 years in various capacities. A couple of years ago we restructured the company and asked a longtime employee to accept the position of Consumer Support Specialist who has 14 years.

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#### **How do we recruit staff?**

Many of our staff have come to us through personal recommendations. Historically, this has been through family and current staff who recommend someone they know. Additionally, we have recruited through local colleges as well as newspaper advertisement.

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#### **What is the average tenure of our staff?**

IHS has staff that has been with the company since 1993. The average tenure of the staff is 5 years.

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#### **What is your table of organization?**

IHS Services, Inc. is a owned company by David and Gail Bloom. We have a State Director who oversees the services provided throughout the state by providing support and training to the District Managers. The state is divided into Districts and each with a District Manager. Each District Manager provides support and training to the staff working as Support Service Coordinators and/or Support Specialists in their district. The Support Service Coordinator is assigned to locations where 24-hour service is required. They provide supervision and training to the Support Specialists working with the consumers as well as direct support to the consumers.

As an agency, IHS has 2 offices. The Worthington office is responsible for all personnel files, payroll and billing for services provided to the consumer. The office in Lima handles all paperwork required to document consumer services.

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#### **What kind of training is required? How much of it is individualized?**

All staff who provide direct support services are required to have a high school or G.E.D., reliable transportation including insurance, CPR certificate, First Aid certificate, training in Client Rights, and unusual incident reporting,

Before working with a consumer, all staff are required to complete job shadowing which includes observing experienced staff working with the consumer, documentation, and training both general and specific provided to the individual consumer. As a part of job shadowing, staff are required to review the consumer's ISP and observe an experienced staff providing services.

Each month, staff are required to attend staff meetings which will provide additional training which may be on general or specific consumer related topics. Staff working with consumers who require

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assistance with medication must successfully complete a 14-hour course and hold a state certificate for Medication Administration. Annually, certified staff must complete ongoing 2-hour update. Staff working with consumers who have insulin dependent diabetes or require feeding through a g-tube must also complete a 4-hour course to be certified to provide this support. If the consumer receives specialized services from ancillary professionals such as a Speech Therapist, Physical Therapist, or Occupational Therapist, staff working with those individuals receives training in implementing carry-over programs.

**Do we have access to a nurse?**

Yes, IHS does contract with a nurse who is available for staff consultation and support of the consumer. She monitors all health related services provided to consumers and directly to any consumer who require specialized medical support due to having insulin dependent diabetes or who require g-tube feeding. The nurse provides training in Medication Administration.

## Health Care

**What records of medication are maintained for continuity from staff to staff?**

If you require assistance with medication, staff will be certified by completing a 14-hour Medication Administration course. They are required to follow a medication protocol to assist with medication and to document all routine and prn. medications given on a Medication Administration Record.

**Will staff make doctor, dental, and other appointments and take me to them?**

If your ISP identifies this as a support services, staff will make these appointments and provide transportation. If you require 24-hour services, this will usually be completed by the Support Service Specialist who will accompany you and assist you in communicating any concerns with the professional. This assures services are consistent from one appointment to the next. If you require less than 24-hour services, this may be completed by a Support Specialist, usually the staff who provides most of the support to you. Documentation of all your medical appointments will be completed so all interested parties can be aware of your health status and medical needs.

**Will staff inform parents/guardians of unusual concerns, and on what frequency?**

If you are not 18 or have a court appointed guardian, your District Manager or a staff person identified will provide this information to your guardian usually within 24-hours of becoming aware of unusual concerns. Staff are required to report any unusual incidents within 24-hours to the county board and their supervisor. District Managers review documentation on a weekly basis and may discover something significant, At that point in time, they will notify your parents/guardians as soon as possible of unusual concerns.

**What procedures will be followed to assure medications are given to the right person?**

Staff who assist with you with medications are state certified after completing an initial 14-hour medication administration course with yearly ongoing training. They are required to follow a specific protocol to assist with the administration of medication. All medications are given following doctor's orders.

**Who will assure that prescriptions are filled/refilled as needed?**

This issue is usually addressed in your ISP. If so designated, staff can assure that prescriptions

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are filled/refilled as needed. In most places we use a pharmacy that will package medications in dosages. This makes medication administration easier and facilitates monitoring that medication is being taken correctly consistently.

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**If I contract a medical condition that requires special care, how will you find trained medical staff to take care of me properly?**

This is often completed by physician referral of course. However, by networking within and outside the company, staff can often make a recommendations to physicians regarding a specific professional who has demonstrated ability to work with consumers effectively.

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**How would you make sure that staff is trained to care for me? Staff substitutes?**

All staff have current CPR and First Aid training. Many staff have been certified to assist with Medication Administration. No staff is assigned to provide support with any consumer where they have not completed job shadowing. We do a lot of cross-training of staff who may not work with you consistently to ensure staff who are substituting in an emergency have been properly trained and are aware of your needs.

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**If I don't have 24-hour staff but need to be reminded to take my meds, who will be responsible?**

This issue will be addressed by your individual team in your ISP. This may be accomplished by arranging support services during times you need to take medication. If this is not possible, other options will be explored such as timers or alarms to remind you of medication times.

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**Will you be able to provide in-home nursing?**

No, IHS does not provide in-home nursing. The nurse may make scheduled visits to monitor services or to provide training to staff.

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**How are your services monitored?**

All routine documentation is reviewed weekly by your Support Services Coordinator and/or District Manager. Your SSA may also review documentation. Depending on the county, monthly and/or quarterly documentation reviews are often conducted. Quality Assurance Survey are conducted by your county board. Every 5 years, the State conducts a Provider Compliance Review of a sample of people we serve in each county. From time to time, a Quality Assurance review by the nurse from your County Board may be conducted on the medical services you receive.

All unusual occurrences are documented and reports turned in to your SSA. Your District Manager, the Consumer Specialist, and the State Director all review these reports. These reports are monitored and reviewed on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, and annually to determine if there are any trends or patterns that would indicate a need for your support services to be adjusted or changed.

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**Who do you report major unusual incidents to?**

As required by state law, all major unusual incidents are reported to the County Board of DD within 24 hours of the occurrence or if on a weekend or holiday, by 3:00 p.m. on the next business day.

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**How are they investigated?**

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In most counties, the county has a MUI investigator either on staff or this function is contracted by the county to their Counsel of Governments (COG). Our primary concern is maintaining your health and safety. If a MUI occurs, the District Manager in addition to cooperating with the MUI investigator will also conduct an internal investigation by reviewing the Incident Report, talking to staff and others who have relevant information, and reviewing documentation to determine if the MUI could have been avoided and to develop a plan of prevention to prevent a reoccurrence, if possible.

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## General

### **What provisions do you make for continuity when a substitute is required?**

You will have regular staff who routinely provide your support services. However, we will also introduce you to other staff who have also been trained. They will only be asked to provide services when your regular staff are unavailable. This cross training enable us to always have trained staff available to provide your services.

- **Are records kept so that the substitute know the requirements of the household?**
    - Yes, a notebook is kept for each consumer. This notebook has all pertinent information a substitute as well as regular staff need to provide support services to you. Information such as emergency contact phone numbers, your ISP, medical information, special instructions, weekly documentation.
  - **How often can I expect a substitute staff member?**
    - This varies depending on number of factors such as: how many hours you receive, staff's vacation schedule, and other unforeseen emergencies.
  - **Do you try to use the same substitute? Are they trained from my ISP?**
    - Substitute staff will always be someone you have met, who has job shadowed with experience staff to provide your services based on your ISP
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### **What if we as house mates have a conflict? How do you deal with it?**

Staff will deal with each situation to strive resolution of conflicts respecting the dignity of all involved.

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