

# Vista Policies and Procedures

Policy Name: Individual Health  
Policy Number: CS 504  
Responsible Authority: Executive Director of Clinical Programs  
Original Effective Date: August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
Revision Date: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

Vista is committed to providing support to individuals Autism who may have co-morbid medical, physical, and emotional needs. To ensure individuals in various Vista adult service programs are in the best possible health, Vista abides by all health appointment needs as regulated by Chapter 5100, 2380, and 6400 regulations as well as advice from physicians. Program Specialists, Behavior Consultants, Supervisors, and Direct care staff monitor appointment schedules, individual health needs, and implement any follow up instructions from physicians to ensure appropriate health related monitoring and care is provided to the individuals in our care.

## **Annual Physical Examination**

Upon intake and annually thereafter individuals across all Vista adult service programs must have an annual physical exam. The examination may be completed, signed, and dated by a licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner, or licensed physician's assistant. The examination includes a review of previous medical history, vaccination history and recommendations, current conditions or complaints, and a general physical exam meeting specifications as required in the regulations per the assigned program. All completed physical forms are monitored by Program Directors, Program Specialists, and members of the operations team to ensure completeness of the examination and report per program requirements.

Recommendations and any potential health implications (e.g. communicable disease) must be documented on the physical form to inform staff action. Assigned Program specialists ensure the necessary support, programming, and precautions are in place to implement the recommendations to ensure the health and safety of the individual and staff.

As part of annual physical examinations, individuals may need to receive updated immunizations. Immunizations required for program participation and inclusion are as follows:

- All adult (for ages 19 years or older) immunizations as recommended by the United States Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta, Georgia 303331 and additional immunizations as recommended by a physician, and
- Tuberculin skin testing (Tb test) by Mantoux method with negative results, completed every 2 years. Should a positive result be obtained a chest x-ray must be completed, and

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- For individuals 18 and older, Tdap immunizations must be given at least once every 10 years, and
- Upon intake in Vista's adult services program, the full series of Hepatitis B immunizations is required. Annual immunization is not required.

Physicians may recommend additional vaccinations for individuals as they age, as indicated by the Centers for Disease control (CDC), or a booster for previously administered vaccinations. For individuals without a court appointed medical decision maker (i.e. guardianship) staff will adhere to the advice of the physician and immunizations will be acquired as recommended. For individuals who do have a guardian with court appointed medical decision making authority, it is the decision of the adult assigned guardianship to make the determination regarding additional immunizations (i.e. outside of those mandated in the regulations governing the program and this policy).

Vista adheres to the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control as a step to protect against communicable illnesses, thus decreasing individuals' vulnerability and risk of contracting such illnesses. Failure to comply with Vista's individual health policy will result in discharge from the Vista Adult services program(s) the individual is enrolled or delay in admission to Vista.

## **Medical contraindications**

In the event an individual has a medically compromising condition, Vista will require and maintain documentation from a physician indicating the condition, complications, and restrictions associated with the condition, and the date the physician produced the documentation. All received documentation from a physician will be verified by a Vista nursing staff.

Should the physician note document a reason that is not a medically compromising condition, as indicated by the CDC, the nurse will inform the physician of the discrepancy in the documentation and the physician's note will not meet standards for any exemptions for procedures outlined in this policy. The individual shall remain subject to the requirement of this policy. Should a medically compromising condition and physician note be verified, Vista will maintain the documentation on file and ensure the necessary provisions are in place to meet the needs of the individual.

## **Dental**

Maintaining good dental health through routine dental checks/visits can prevent and/or minimize the impact of painful dental complications. For all individuals in Vista's residential program routine

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semi-annual dental checks must be completed. In addition, recommendations provided by dental personnel such as an increased frequency of appointments or dental hygiene practices are implemented by staff.

For individuals in licensed and unlicensed service programs dental exams are not a mandatory requirement to participate in the program. Vista, does strongly recommend routine checks to ensure dental health and to prevent any potential health complications.

## **Specialty Health Services**

At times individuals may require more specialized care and treatment for complex medical conditions and/or for the management of prescribed medication. With all such medical professionals Vista staff work collaboratively and maintain open communication to ensure the physicians have accurate objective information to inform their decisions regarding treatment.

When individuals in Vista's adult services program(s) are under the care of a psychiatrist or specialist, appointments will be scheduled as recommended by the physician and/or as needed as concerns arise. Those with decision-making authority (i.e. individuals we support, parents with guardianship, Program Directors, Program Specialists, and House Supervisors) are responsible for scheduling and maintaining the appointments, for health maintenance. The assigned Program Specialist or Behavior Consultant may attend appointments (as requested or needed) to provide updated information relevant to the course of treatment and as means of transparency for follow up communication and action with Vista staff providing support.

## **Individual Refusal of Health Appointments**

It is the right of any individual to refuse treatment. When this occurs it is the responsibility of Vista adult service staff to document the refused health appointment and to provide training and counseling to the individual on the importance of attending health appointments. In circumstances in which the refusal to attend a health appointment is due to an aversion or fear, the Program Specialist and/or Behavior consultant will develop desensitization plans to address successful attendance at health appointments.

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Court appointed legal guardians are permitted to refuse routine medical treatment for an individual. When the lack of treatment is serious or life threatening, a legal guardian should be consulted and involved, but will not have legal authority to refuse treatment.

## **Lifetime medical history**

Information regarding individuals past and current health related events and treatments is valuable information that informs ongoing programmatic approaches and treatments. All updates to health related events (doctor appointments, medications, immunizations, allergies, special diets, emergency medical plans, recent psychological evaluations, etc) that occur throughout each year are captured and new information reflected on a cumulative record of individuals' medical history. At the time of the annual ISP meeting the updates to the lifetime medical history are finalized, filed in individuals' records, and shared with Supports Coordination.

## **Emergency Medical plans**

In the event of a medical emergency, immediate medical attention for individuals is of the utmost importance. In preparation for such events, each licensed Vista site has documented emergency medical plans outlining the hospital or source of health care to be used in the event of an emergency, the method of transportation to be used, and the emergency staffing pattern.

When emergency medical events occur and legal guardians are not available staff will accompany individuals to the respective medical facility and provide support as needed until the appropriate decision making authority is present to make health related decisions on behalf of the individual. Vista staff will not make health related decisions on behalf of the individual and will act merely as a support to the individual and provide factual information to health professionals regarding the individual. In cases where the individual maintains decision making power over their own health decisions and they experience a serious medical or dental condition, reasonable efforts will be made to obtain consent from the individual or substitute consent in accordance with applicable law.

When individuals require immediate medical attention for a minor injury or illness, a Vista staff member with the individual will seek immediate medical attention. In all such instances, those with decision-making authority for health maintenance will be contacted. Vista staff will attend the medical appointment if no legal guardian is available with the individual to share relevant information and as means of transparency for follow up communication and action with Vista staff providing support. As previously indicated, Vista staff will not offer any opinion or make any health related decisions for the individual they are supporting.

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## Documentation

Information about all health related activities and events are a valuable piece to each individuals' record. The information may inform programmatic recommendations, hypothesis formulation, supervision recommendations, and staff training. Documentation practices may vary across programs due to the intensity and support within each program service type. All received health related documentation will be reviewed for completeness, physician recommendations, and stored in individuals' records. Program Specialists, House supervisors, VASO nursing, and members of the operational team will monitor documentation receipt, completeness, recommendations, addition to lifetime medical history documentation, and filing.

## Continued Participation in Program

Health related appointments, immunizations, and documentation requirements are specified per program type, in line with regulatory expectations. Vista programs monitor the status of each requirement on a regular basis to ensure compliance with licensing and regulatory expectations. Failure, of individuals or guardians, to maintain health appointments, recommended and regulated immunizations, or adherence to medical advice resulting in significant health related impacts affecting participation in programs may result in termination of services. To ensure continued support and participation in the assigned program individuals and/or guardians are to work collaboratively with the assigned Program specialist and Behavior Consultant to remediate variables impacting continuation of services.

Executive Director of Clinical Programs Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Approval: \_\_\_\_\_