

Flexible Use Option

Consumer Toolkit – Revised 11/03/06



This toolkit is designed to help you manage flexible use of your PCA service hours. Use of the toolkit is optional.

Tools in the toolkit include the following:

- **PCA Flexbook** (Use this like a checkbook to track flexible use hours as you use them)
- **PCA Hours Budgeting Tool** (Use this to budget your PCA hours every month)
- **Frequently Asked Questions about Flexible Use**



PCA Flexbook Keeping Track of Your Flexible PCA Hours

If you choose the Flexible Use Option, you are able to use your PCA hours when you need them. Your service plan year is divided into two six-month periods.

You may use the PCA Flexbook to track your PCA hours in the same way as you would balance a checkbook. Each flexbook worksheet keeps track of PCA hours used and remaining for a six-month period. Your PCA provider will also track the hours you use.

Important

When the number of hours in the Hours Left column reaches zero, you have used your maximum number of PCA hours. You **may not** use more PCA hours until the next six-month period starts. PCA hours do **not** carry over from one six-month period to the next.

Instructions

Pick a time that works for you, *for example, at the end of the month or when you sign a PCA's time sheet*, and 'balance' the worksheet as you would balance your checkbook. Using the Service Agreement, locate the line item for the first or second six-month period. Using the appropriate worksheet, either first or second six-month:

Enter the Start and End Dates.

Enter the **Maximum Number of PCA Hours/Units** taken from the corresponding line item that matches the Start or End Date that you are using. The line items on the Service Agreements identify units of PCA service for billing purposes. Four PCA units equal one hour of PCA service. If you find it easier to track use by hours, take the number of PCA units on a line item and divide by four to find your Maximum Number of PCA Hours. If you would rather track in units, no changes are needed. Remember to use hours or units all the way through the tracking process. They are not interchangeable.

To balance your Flexbook:

Enter the Date you received PCA services.

Enter Notes. *This might include the name of your PCA or provider if you have more than one, or a note on how or why you used your PCA hours as you did for the date you received PCA services, or a reminder that hours were provided in intervals during the course of the day..*

Enter the Hours/Units Used. This is the amount of hours the PCA will be reimbursed.

Subtract the Hours/Units Used from the hours you have left. Use the amount of PCA hours you have recorded in the previous Hours Left column.

When the number of hours reaches zero, you have used your Maximum Number of PCA Hours. You may **not** use more PCA hours until the next six-month period starts.

Print as many worksheets as you need for each six-month period.

PCA Hours Budgeting Tool



Use this tool with your provider to budget how to use your PCA hours for the service plan year. If you plan to use more hours during some months, *for example, during summer vacation*, you need to use less hours in other months. Your provider is required to let you know every month how many hours you are using and have remaining. Periodically check your numbers with theirs. If you see that the number do not match, talk about it with your provider.

Instructions

Once you have your Maximum Number of PCA Hours/Units for a six-month period, enter the six consecutive months on the tool. Among the six months, divide the Maximum Number of PCA Hours/Units as you feel they can best meet your needs. Periodically enter the number of hours/units used. The total of hours/units used may never exceed the Maximum Number of PCA Hours.

Maximum Number of PCA Hours/Units _____				
	Month	Hours/Units Planned	Hours/Units Used	Notes
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Maximum Number of PCA Hours/Units _____				
	Month	Hours/Units Planned	Hours/Units Used	Notes
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Frequently Asked Questions about Flexible Use



Q. What is the Flexible Use Option for PCA Services?

A. With flexible use, you have the option of using your PCA hours/units when you need them, within some limitations (see other Frequently Asked Questions). You are not limited to using the same amount of hours/units every day. *For example, if you are assessed to have four hours of PCA per day, you could use six hours on one day, and two hours the next day.*

Q. What is changing about the Flexible Use Option?

A. In the past, you had one year to use your PCA hours/units. Beginning April 15, 2006, at your next PCA assessment or reassessment, your service agreement will have at least two line times. Each line item will be for no longer than six months. Unused PCA hours/units do not carry over from one six-month period to the next.

Q. I use more PCA hours/units during the summer. Can I still do that with the Flexible Use Option?

A. Yes. People can ask their public health nurse or case manager to put more PCA in one six-month period. Six-month periods do not have to be divided evenly. *For example, if you receive 800 total service units in a year, you could receive 500 units of service in the first six months of the year and 300 units the second six months of the service agreement.*

Please note: If you use the maximum number of PCA hours before the end of a six-month period you will **not** be given additional hours/units. You will have to wait until the next six-month period or when the next service agreement starts to begin using PCA again.

Q. Is the Flexible Use Option right for me?

A. The public health nurse or case manager (if you have one) can help you decide if flexible use is right for you. This is usually done at the PCA assessment/reassessment or shortly after. The decision is based on your needs, preferences, abilities and past use of PCA hours/units.

Q. How do I get the Flexible Use Option for my PCA services?

A. The public health nurse or case manager will request the Flexible Use Option at your next assessment/reassessment. You need to decide to use your PCA hours flexibly before PCA services start and tell the PHN how you would like your PCA hours divided for the six-month periods. This **cannot** be changed later.

Q. What if I use all of my PCA hours/units?

A. Monitoring your Maximum Number of PCA Hours under the Flexible Use Option is your responsibility. Your provider can help you track how many service hours you are using and have left. DHS will send you, your provider and your county case manager (if you have one), a letter telling you if you are using hours too quickly. Once you use all of your hours in a six-month period, you **cannot** begin to use more hours until the next six-month period or Service Agreement starts.

Q. What if my needs for PCA change before my next reassessment?

A. If your needs have changed, your public health nurse can submit an authorization for a 45-day temporary increase in PCA service. If this need for increase in services will extend beyond 45 days, a new assessment needs to be conducted. In addition, your provider must get a new Statement of Need signed by your physician documenting the need for an increase in PCA hours.

Frequently Asked Questions about Flexible Use (continued)

Q. Can everyone use the Flexible Use Option?

A. No. If someone has a history of using their PCA hours/units too quickly, DHS may restrict them from using this option.

Q. What if I do not use all of my Flexible Use Option PCA hours/units?

A. Beginning April 15 2006, you are **not** able to carry unused PCA hours/units from one six-month period to the next.

Q. If I do not use all of my PCA hours/units, will my service go down in the future?

A. No. PCA hour/units are based on your assessed needs.

Q. Do I have to do anything right now?

A. No. The public health nurse or your case manager will discuss the Flexible Use Option with you at the next PCA reassessment on or after April 15, 2006. If you want to participate in this, you will need to decide at that time how many PCA hours/units you would like each six-month period.