



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
P.O. BOX 2675
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17105-2675

JUL 16 2003

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (717) 787-3700
FAX: (717) 787-6583

KEVIN T. CASEY

Deputy Secretary for Mental Retardation

Dear County MH/MR Administrators:

As you are all aware, the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) process is used to assess the need of individuals waiting for services. The PUNS process is designed to be a collaborative effort undertaken by supports coordinators, consumers, and families. It is also designed to be a dynamic process; the PUNS form should be completed each time the individual's needs change and reviewed at least annually.

To ensure that consumers and families are actively engaged in the PUNS process, the Office of Mental Retardation is requiring that every supports coordinator and individual or guardian acknowledge their agreement to the information collected on the PUNS form. In order to demonstrate this agreement, all parties engaged in the completion or review should sign the PUNS form. This can be accomplished by printing the completed form from HCSIS and signing the last page of the hard copy. The individual and/or guardian should be given a copy of the PUNS form with the signatures and the date completed included. If the PUNS form is not signed by all involved parties, it will not be considered valid. This policy is effective immediately and applies to all PUNS completed after receipt of this letter.

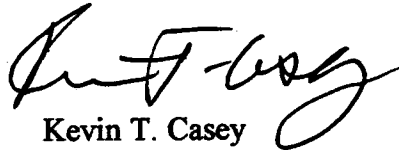
The supports coordinator should include information about the completion of the PUNS form, including a notation that the required signatures were collected and the date completed, in a case comment. If the individual or guardian chooses to complete the PUNS process by phone for their convenience, the signature requirement can be waived. The decision to complete the PUNS form over the phone should be made only by the individual or guardian. This decision is not at the discretion of the support coordinator. The supports coordinator should note this preference in the case comment and send a hard copy of the PUNS form to the individual or guardian. In the future, a notice will be generated by HCSIS each time a PUNS is completed. This notice will be sent from supports coordinators to individuals and families to inform them of their PUNS status. Until this notice is operational, the procedure outlined above should be followed.

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In order to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of this policy, a HCSIS bit will be sent and information will be posted on the HCSIS banner page. Also, the signature requirement will be included in the PUNS section of the OMR webpage.

If you have any questions about this policy, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin T. Casey", written in a cursive style.

Kevin T. Casey

c: Mr. Michael Chambers