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Agency Develops Emergency Policy

TALLAHASSEE, FL - The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) today issued an emergency Personal Care Assistance (PCA) policy to increase services for those who have the most extreme health needs.

The new procedure allows APD to extend PCA services beyond the legislatively mandated 180 hour limit when a person's health is in jeopardy. The legislature approved the 180 hour limit to PCA services in the spring. The 180 hour limit requirement takes effect on October 1 for those with intensive needs. APD began sending out notices about the limits in May so individuals could adjust their care plans to use community and family supports or other Medicaid waiver services in place of PCA services.

APD Director Jane Johnson said, "Our agency is committed to protecting the health and safety of the people we serve. The law allows for additional hours when a customer's circumstances change creating a need for more than 180 hours of PCA. The agency felt it important to assure the opportunity for additional hours was available. APD's policy allows people a month to get the services they need in place."

The policy outlines the emergency process for the agency to pay for eligible people to receive up to 300 hours of PCA for 30 days while they work to have their care plans adjusted. While APD can only pay for up to 300 hours a month of PCA through the Medicaid Waiver, individuals and families have the option of purchasing additional hours with other resources.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities currently serves more than 35,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities of mental retardation, autism, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and Prader-Willi syndrome. For more information on the agency, call **1-866-APD-CARES** or visit www.apd.myflorida.com.

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