



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT of CHILD SAFETY

September 03, 2021

DCS Specialist Roles and Actions:

Medical Consultation with DCS CHP is available at any stage of a case. If this is required the consultation will occur with DCS CHP clinical staff under the direction of a DCS CHP medical director or a Chief Medical Officer.

This review is not a forensic review. It is an informal consultation done as a courtesy and as a resource for the DCS Specialist. It cannot be used in court or to uphold a petition made to the court. It is to further the understanding of the department as to the medical needs and conditions of the child and assist in navigating the health care system.

The DCS Specialist and Program Supervisor will decide whether and how recommendations made through Medical Consultation will be implemented.

Description of Service:

DCS CHP Medical Consultations assist DCS Specialists, Program Supervisors, and Program Managers by:

- providing guidance regarding healthcare issues, including children currently in DCS care, and
- increasing staff knowledge and skills in assessing and serving children and families.

DCS Comprehensive Health Plan (DCS CHP) Medical Consultation

Goals of the Medical Consultation Process

DCS CHP Medical Consultation is available to provide insight for DCS on the complexity of the child's healthcare needs.

Medical Consultation is provided by DCS CHP clinical staff.

The goal is to ensure that physical health* issues of children are identified and addressed when assessing safety threats, planning for permanency, and selecting and supporting the child's living arrangement.

DCS CHP Medical Consultation can be requested by sending an email to the CHP Nurse mailbox CHPNurse@azdcs.gov.

DCS CHP Medical Consultation Practice Principles

DCS CHP Medical Consultations are not forensic or child abuse reviews.

Unlike Unit Consultations, DCS CHP clinical staff will not see the child or provide clinical services to them.

These consultations will not hold authority in court.

They are for the benefit of the DCS Specialist to understand the nuances of healthcare conditions and the impact of these conditions on the care of the child.

It takes time for a case to evolve. Safety threats and the way they occur in the family may change over time. Obtaining correct and complete information through consultation is a dynamic process.

DCS CHP Medical Consultations can be requested for DCS cases as early as the Family Functioning Assessment – Investigation is being conducted if there are concerns for the caregivers ability to address the child(ren)'s health, and well before the case plan has been finalized.

- DCS CHP Medical Consultations are not clinical services
- DCS CHP clinical staff do not see the child to provide services
- As such the most accurate portrayal of the child's health care status is by the clinician who is the healthcare provider for the child.
- The accuracy of the advice provided is directly correlated to the completeness of the information provided.
- DCS CHP Medical consultations can provide information regarding children's healthcare status and impact on living arrangement, paying special attention to the age and developmental needs of the child(ren), any health issues and how they can be addressed.

Early utilization of DCS CHP consultation leads to an effective Case Plan:

- Early utilization of DCS CHP consultation helps to ensure that the assessment of family functioning is based on correct and complete information.
- At all stages of a DCS case, the DCS CHP clinical staff are a resource for DCS Specialists and Program Supervisors to understand and avoid factors that contribute to delays in case resolution.

- Guidance to support case management:
 - ▶ Assist the DCS Specialist to understand evaluation results and related clinical issues, this may entail contacting the evaluator to help interpret the results (developmental screening, IEP etc.).
 - ▶ Provide DCS with guidance about clinical issues that might be discussed in court.
 - ▶ Determine if a staffing with a team of professionals is needed.
 - ▶ Provide support to DCS staff following a critical incident.
 - ▶ Offer educational meetings to DCS staff to increase working knowledge of health issues that impact case decision-making.
- DCS CHP Medical Consultation Hours via Teams:
 - ▶ DCS CHP Medical Consultation staff consult with DCS Specialists and Program Supervisors.
 - ▶ The consultation is an internal staffing for the benefit of DCS.
 - ▶ The consultation meeting is a screening tool to aid DCS and is not a diagnostic tool. However, it may provide suggestions to further clarify clinical impressions. (It is not a meeting with the child)
 - ▶ The consultation may occur when the DCS Specialist needs guidance because the child(ren)'s health is complex.
- Records review-based tasks:
 - ▶ As part of the consultation DCS CHP clinical staff may review hospitals, doctors, and other records in order to understand clinical issues related to physical health*.
 - ▶ DCS CHP Clinical Staff may review records to determine if an updated evaluation may be necessary.
 - ▶ These reviews require significant time and must be provided in a timely manner.

*At this time we are focusing on creating a physical health resource for DCS specialists.

For Behavioral Health consultation contact the DCS CHP System of Care team member assigned to your office or outreach CHP System of Care chpsystemofcare@azdcs.gov.

DCS CHP Medical Consultations Do Not:

- Make child safety determinations – Safety determinations are DCS' role and responsibility. DCS CHP Medical Consultation may provide insight into circumstances related to medical diagnosis that may impact assessment of a safety threat. This may be considered by DCS in determining child safety.
- Develop case plans – The case plan is determined by DCS.
- Make legal conclusions – DCS, legal counsel, and the Juvenile Court provide guidance and make conclusions about whether grounds for dependency or termination of parental rights exist.
- Diagnoses can only be made by the child(ren)'s treating providers.
- Approve or disapprove of mental health services – DCS decides what services are to be provided.
- Provide direct services to DCS clients - Direct Services are not provided by the Medical Consultation Clinical staff.

Accessing DCS CHP Medical Consultation and Next Steps

- To schedule a Medical Consultation, email CHPNurse@azdcs.gov. Whenever possible, the same CHP clinical staff will be assigned throughout the life of the case. This ensures familiarity with the family and other participants, provides continuity of services and support, and prevents differing guidance that could potentially interfere with case progress. Please provide relevant documents and the preferred timeline needed for review or consultation.
- Documents provided and reviewed during a DCS CHP Medical Consultation may include the following:
 - ▶ All prior health assessments and treatment records.
 - ▶ All prior psychological, psychiatric or other mental health assessments and treatment records.
 - ▶ Drug test results.