

decision regarding the appropriate number of hours is based on the tasks necessary to meet the specific needs of the individual and the hours necessary to complete those tasks. The regulations provide that PCA services are only warranted when the beneficiaries is “in need of moderate, or greater, hands-on assistance in at least one activity of daily living (ADL), or, minimal assistance or greater in three different ADLs, one of which must require hands-on assistance.” N.J.A.C. 10:60-3.1(c). Additionally, instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) “such as meal preparation, laundry, housekeeping/cleaning, shopping, or other non-hands-on personal care tasks shall not be permitted as a stand-alone PCA service.” N.J.A.C. 10:60-3.1(c)1. The assessments use the State-approved PCA Nursing Assessment Tool (PCA Tool) to calculate the hours.

At the hearing, Issac Adzaho, a Registered Nurse for Horizon, testified regarding the assessment he conducted using the PCA Tool. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the assessment was done over the phone using the assistance of a Spanish translator. Petitioner was interviewed with regard to his need for PCA services. Petitioner is an adult male with a history of unspecified osteoarthritis. ID at 2. Petitioner reports that he has painful arthritis in his knees and he is schizophrenic. Ibid. He resides alone in an apartment. Ibid.

Mr. Adzaho testified that Petitioner’s decision-making was unimpaired; he has modified mobility, but ambulates without any personal assistance while using a cane or walker; he needed no personal assistance when transferring from one stationary position to another; he toilets and bathes unassisted, and he is not incontinent; Petitioner needed no assistance with eating; he needed no assistance with personal hygiene, washing, grooming, combing hair, shaving, brushing teeth, or nail care; he needed no assistance with dressing or changing linens; he is able to do his own laundry and shop for groceries on his own. ID at 3. Petitioner did not receive a score other than zero for any ADLs on the PCA Tool. R-2.

Based upon Mr. Adzaho’s assessment using the PCA Tool, it was determined that Petitioner did not qualify for PCA services. By letter, dated November 4, 2021, Horizon

advised Petitioner that

you do not need hands-on assistance with activities of daily living like walking, getting dressed and grooming. You are able to prepare your own meals. Personal care assistance is for people who need hands-on assistance with activities of daily living such as walking, bathing, eating, dressing, going to the bathroom or getting out of bed without someone physically helping them.

R-3. Following a Stage 1, internal appeal, Horizon upheld their determination that Petitioner did not qualify for PCA hours, advising that Petitioner

do[es] not have problems with at least 3 activities of daily living . . . to get this service. You have not had any falls or been hospitalized in the last 3 months. You are able to feed yourself. You are able to transfer and change positions on your own. You are able to bathe, use the toilet, transfer, and dress yourself without assistance. You are able to walk on your own. You can prepare meals for yourself. You do not have trouble with thinking and remembering to get this service. Supervision does not meet for personal care assistance.”

R-4.

Petitioner appealed the determination, stating “I am requesting a PCA because I don’t know how to cook and also because I am sick of my back and don’t be able to do chores around the house. I take medications to several problems like hypertension and schizophrenia [sic] amount others.”

At the hearing in this matter, Petitioner agreed with almost the entire assessment and noted that he is restricted in the way he is able to dress himself because he cannot stand for a long period of time. ID at 3. He complained about his inability to cook his own food because he never learned how, but he participates in a program where he is provided breakfast and lunch several times per week. Ibid. He admitted that he can feed himself unassisted and does his own laundry twice per week. Ibid.

The Initial Decision upholds the denial of Petitioner’s request for PCA Services. I concur. Petitioner has not demonstrated that he is in need of moderate hands-on assistance in at least one ADL or minimal assistance in three ADLs, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 10:60-3.1(c).

Petitioner admitted that he does not need assistance with eating, dressing, toileting, bathing, or transferring. Although he suffers from chronic pain, he is able to perform all of his ADLs independently and without assistance. Accordingly, and based on my review of the record, I hereby ADOPT the Initial Decision and FIND that Petitioner does not qualify for PCA services at this time.

THEREFORE, it is on this 23rd day of AUGUST 2022,

ORDERED:

That the Initial Decision is hereby ADOPTED.



Jennifer Langer Jacobs, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services