

## ASSISTIVE SUPPORTS AND THERAPIES

### “Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS)”

*BQIS/Outreach Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life.*

#### Objectives

To provide general information about personal emergency response systems (PERS).

To describe how PERS can be used by some persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

#### Definitions

**Personal Emergency Response System:** An electronic communication device that allows an individual to communicate the need for immediate assistance in case of an emergency.

#### Facts

##### Typical equipment configuration:

- **Help Button** is a pendant or wristband (the wristband resembles a watch and is more attractive to males who are reluctant to wear the pendant).
- **Communicator** is a hands-free two way console plugged into the wall telephone outlet, allows you to talk with an operator who can dispatch assistance.
- **Landline** telephone line is needed for the service.

##### How it works:

- During an emergency event when assistance is needed, the Individual pushes the personal help button to activate the system.
- A professional emergency dispatcher announces themselves on the hands-free two way console speakerphone and speaks directly to the consumer to find out what kind of help is needed.
- The emergency dispatcher has a specified emergency “call list” of up to three people, made up of local family, friends and neighbors who are readily available to go assist the consumer. The dispatcher contacts someone on the list and explains the need for assistance.

- In the event of an emergency, or if the emergency dispatcher cannot establish 2 way voice communications (they respond to the button being pushed and the consumer does not answer) - they immediately notify paramedics.

**Funding:**

This service is available under each of Indiana's 1915 (c) HCBS Medicaid Waivers

**Costs:**

The cost of installation and monthly maintenance is covered under the waiver.

Currently, a maximum of \$54.41 may be billed for installation and testing of the equipment.

A maximum of \$54.41 may be billed for the monthly maintenance service fee (most providers bill less than the max)

**Additional Information:**

The coverage range includes any location in the home and possibly a short distance outside the home.

## Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. The individual, guardian, and other team members consider the use of personal emergency response systems for someone who lives alone, or has less than 24-hour staffing, and has a potential for needing to call for assistance when not being able to get to a phone.
2. Provide clear and concise use information to anyone using a personal emergency response system.
3. Recognize the limitations of personal emergency response systems and consider individual needs and abilities when determining if the system is right for the person.

## Learning Assessment

Questions that can be used to verify a person's competency in the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. A Personal Emergency Response System is:
  - A. Uses an electronic device on the person.
  - B. The same thing as a telephone.
  - C. An emergency communication system.
  - D. Both A and C.
2. During an emergency call on a personal emergency response system:
  - A. A dispatcher can speak to the person in need through a speaker phone.
  - B. The dispatcher will call 911 *only* after they have spoken with the person who pressed their call button.
  - C. The personal emergency response system is activated when the person makes a *phone* call to the service.
3. Which statement is not true of personal emergency response systems?
  - A. A landline phone is needed for the service.
  - B. The cost of installation and monthly service fees are covered by Medicaid.
  - C. Coverage range includes only the inside of the person's home.
  - D. Users are encouraged to check in every week to test the system.

4. Personal Emergency Response systems are appropriate for:
  - A. Everyone
  - B. Everyone who lives alone.
  - C. Some persons who live alone.
  - D. Persons with 24 hour staffing.

## References

Waiver Service Definition of Personal Emergency Response System

## Related Resources

For Questions, Comments, or Suggestions, please contact Outreach Services at [outreach@fssa.in.gov](mailto:outreach@fssa.in.gov)

## Learning Assessment Answers

1. D
2. A
3. C
4. C

## Outreach Services

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As a service for persons supporting individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, Outreach and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community developed the Outreach Fact Sheet Library. The information provided is designed to enhance the understanding of the topic and does not replace other professional or medical instructions or individually developed plans. For more fact sheets and information, please visit [DDRSOutreach.IN.gov](http://DDRSOutreach.IN.gov) and [www.iidc.indiana.edu/training](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/training).



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