



Division of Safety and Permanence

Child Welfare Licensing Memo Series 2023-09-lic

May 22, 2023

To: Group Home Providers
Residential Care Center Providers

From: Wendy Henderson
Administrator

Re: *eWiSACWIS Functionality Upgrade for Referring Youth to Group Care Settings*

PURPOSE

This memo describes the new functionality to allow for the secure transmittal of referral information for youth involved in the Wisconsin child welfare and youth justice systems to licensed residential care centers (RCCs) and group homes via Wisconsin’s electronic statewide automated child welfare information system (eWiSACWIS).

BACKGROUND

Currently, child welfare and youth justice professionals manually document referrals to licensed RCCs and group homes, which may contain varied information, typically submitted via email or fax. To increase efficiency, consistency, and security, a group consisting of DCF staff, county eWiSACWIS users, and licensed RCC and group home professionals collaborated and provided recommendations for changes that resulted in expanded eWiSACWIS functionality that will facilitate referrals directly through the case management system. Commonly referred to as a “provider portal” during early phases of development and stakeholder engagement, this has culminated in the development of a technology platform named Supporting Youth and Children (SYNC) that can automatically exchange electronic information with eWiSACWIS.

INFORMATION SUMMARY

Beginning July 1, 2023, local agency child welfare professionals who have full access to eWiSACWIS will be able to transmit all referrals for placement and treatment services electronically to licensed residential care centers (RCC) and group homes in Wisconsin via eWiSACWIS to SYNC. This includes transmittal of specific documentation including Information for Out-of-Home Care Providers Parts A & B, and other relevant information to assist facilities in their assessment of whether to accept or decline referrals for placement and treatment service intervention. The local child welfare agency is responsible for proper disclosure of records through eWiSACWIS and SYNC, for ensuring that there is a legal basis for the transmittal, and for complying with applicable state and federal confidentiality laws. The referral process and documents will be automatically documented in eWiSACWIS.

Licensed RCCs and group homes in Wisconsin will be provided credentials to securely access the SYNC website, where the electronic referral information will be located. Requests for additional information and a determination on admission and placement can also be





communicated through this website. Facilities can document whether a referred child has been accepted, denied, or will be on a waiting list for placement, and this information will be documented in eWiSACWIS. Upon placement, a facility and child welfare professional will have the ability to exchange information related to the referral and other pertinent services. This information will then be documented in the child's eWiSACWIS record, and in SYNC for the provider's records. The information and documents in SYNC are confidential, and facilities are required to comply with applicable state and federal confidentiality laws in accessing and using SYNC content. It is an expectation that licensed RCCs and group homes utilize SYNC in the capacity described above.

Each licensed facility must designate a SYNC Administrator. This individual will determine who, within each facility, will have access to SYNC and what level of access will be delegated to each employee. For example, access and delegation may range from review only, to the ability to accept or decline referrals. All staff who are responsible for reviewing and responding to placement referrals of youth to receive placement services by the facility should be given access.

To request access to SYNC and assign a SYNC Administrator, group care facilities must complete and sign the External Agency Agreement on Access to SYNC ([DCF-F-5618-E](#)) with the Department of Children and Families. Once the External Agency Agreement on Access to SYNC has been completed, the SYNC Administrator should upload this document into the corresponding folder on the Provider Information Exchange (PIE) website.

Each SYNC user must create a My Wisconsin ID account to gain access to SYNC. The email address that is used to create the MyWisconsin ID account must be the same email address that is used to create the SYNC account. This should be an email address associated with the group care facility or that you are able to access in your capacity as an employee of the group care facility. A My Wisconsin ID account can be created by going to <https://apps.Wisconsin.gov>. For step-by-step instructions on creating an account, visit the [My Wisconsin ID Self-Registration](#) page.

Training and communication materials are available for all group care providers; please see the attachments for more information.

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MEMO WEB SITE: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cwportal/policy>

ATTACHMENTS: [DCF SYNC Project Website](#)
[SYNC FAQs](#)
[SYNC: A Guide for Group Care Facilities](#)
[External Agency Agreement on Access to SYNC \(DCF-F-5618-E\)](#)
[MyWisconsin ID Registration](#)
[MyWisconsin ID Self-Registration Directions](#)