

NYS Office of Children and Family Services
CONNECTIONS Case Management

Impact Analysis

Subject: Family Services Stage

Functional Area: Progress Notes – Build 18

Brief Description of Current Function/Process:

Workers are responsible for documenting case activities in a narrative form.

What Remains the Same:

1. The nature and purpose of progress notes does not change. Progress notes need not include daily logs, clinical notes or other written material created by service providers who act in roles other than Caseworker, CPS Monitor, Case Planner and Case Manager.
2. Workers will continue to document all contacts and case activities in progress notes.
3. Workers may still paste notes from Quick Pads or Alpha Smart into CONNECTIONS.

What is New or Changes:

1. Progress notes will be recorded in CONNECTIONS.
2. Progress notes will be entered individually for each casework event.
3. Each progress note will have data fields with drop down boxes. Some are required, some are conditionally required, and some are optional.
4. There are two levels of system edits for required data fields. Local districts will opt for either the standard or higher level edits. The edit matrix of the Case Manager's district will be employed.
5. The narrative field will have a text tool control, which provides workers with some Microsoft Word-like functionality, such as spell check, bolding, bulleting, etc.
6. Progress notes will be searchable in a variety of ways (e.g. date, type, purpose, participant).
7. Progress notes may be 'saved as draft' and subsequently 'saved as final' for up to 15 calendar days. Any notes remaining in draft within this timeframe will be saved as final by the system on the 15th day from the date it was first saved as draft. Notes 'saved as final' by the worker or by the system will be "frozen," i.e., not modifiable.
8. Workers may write an "addendum" for comments or corrections after a note has been frozen.
9. Progress notes can be copied from the FSS to a concurrently open Investigation stage in the same case.
10. The Business Function, "Enter Progress Notes" will allow on-call, clerical and other workers or supervisors, who do not have a role in the stage to add progress notes.

Implications/Considerations:

System:

1. Changes to the Progress Notes tab will enhance functionality over the life of a stage because of the new search functions.

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2. As Voluntary Agencies will use the edit matrix of the Case Manager's district, staff may need to use different edit levels if they are assigned to cases of more than one local district.

Program:

1. All workers on a case will have view access to all progress notes entered by any worker assigned to the case. This will keep workers up-to-the minute on case events and activities.
2. The required data fields will add greater accuracy and specificity to the contents of a progress note.
3. The new "Enter Progress Note" Business Function will give districts and agencies the ability to have on-call and other clerical/support staff enter progress notes on a case in which they do not have a role. Users given this business function will have the ability to enter a progress note in any open Investigation or Family Service stage in that district or agency. This will require supervision, procedural directives and training for those given that business function.
4. The ability to create a To Do for a specific worker/supervisor to enter a progress note in a specific stage/case will give that person access to only the Progress Notes tab and detail for that stage.
5. The improved functionality to search progress notes in a number of different ways will help staff in preparing reports and will help supervisors fulfill monitoring responsibilities.
6. Up to 200 progress notes at a time can be sorted and printed in chronological order.

Recommendations/Next Steps:

1. Amend/develop local district policies on the supervisory approval process in light of the fact that progress notes will freeze 15 days after being entered in draft form.
2. Districts need to determine if they will require the higher level of system edits for entry of progress note data values.
3. Supervisors should become familiar with using search/sort functionality as a monitoring tool.
4. Develop appropriate policies and procedures on when addendums should be entered.
5. Develop procedures for assigning the "Enter Progress Notes" Business Function to agency staff.
6. Advise agency legal and Family Court personnel of changes to progress notes format.