

Coastal Health Practitioners P.C.

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Daniel J. Sheridan Southwest Women Working Together 3201 West 63rd Street Chicago, Illinois 60629

Dear Mr. Sheridan,

I am a Family Nurse Practitioner and am on the Board of Directors of the Lincoln County Shelter and Services, the Shelter Home for the Lincoln County area. There is no inshelter nursing care provided at the Shelter Home. The women who stay at the Shelter are evaluated regarding their health care needs when appropriate, either through a private physician's office in town or through the emergency room. Usually the members are given three health care representative names and addresses and they are given a choice of contacting the individual at their office or going to the emergency room to see the individual on call. The women and children are hospitalized when necessary otherwise they are usually followed as outpatients. The Shelter provides ingroup counselling for acute emotional and support group situations. If nursing care is required, this is performed in the health care person's office setting rather than at the home. One of the reasons for this is that the location of the home is confidential in nature and women are encouraged to take responsibility for their care. Oftentimes the initial contact with the Shelter is the woman's first step toward independence and she is encouraged in every way possible to maintain responsibility for all dimensions of her life, including health care for herself and the children. We frequently see the women in our office if we know the individual has been battered, is quite ill, and/or does not wish to wait in the waiting room, we will show them into an examining room as soon as they present to the office.

We try and provide appropriate care through the office setting. Members of our staff have been involved in group counselling and will go to the Home or an independent location for counselling of all family members when necessary. We are not adverse to making house calls at the home, but again the emphasis is on having the women get out of the home and independently make choices and decisions regarding her care. I hope this information is helpful to you. Good luck in your attempt to set up the nursing care programs within the shelters.

In peace,

Meg Portwood, FNP