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I. N., et al. v. Kent, et al; Case No.: 3:18-cv-3099 WHA FIRST AMENDED COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE AND DECLARATORY RELIEF

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I. INTRODUCTION

- 1. This class action lawsuit seeks declaratory and injunctive relief requiring Defendants California Department of Health Care Services and its Director, Jennifer Kent, to arrange for in-home skilled nursing care necessary to meet the undisputed needs of medically fragile Medi-Cal eligible children under the age of 21 in the most integrated setting appropriate. Defendants have determined that in-home shift nursing services are medically necessary for the named Plaintiffs and other Medi-Cal eligible children like them, but Defendants have failed to arrange for these services as required by federal law. Defendants' systemic failures have placed Plaintiffs and members of the proposed Class at serious risk of injury, hospitalization, or institutionalization and, in some instances, have even resulted in the institutionalization of Class members.
- 2. Plaintiffs I. N. and J. B. and Class members are children under the age of 21 residing in California who are beneficiaries of Medi-Cal, California's Medicaid program, a state and federally-funded health insurance program for individuals with limited income and resources. The two named Plaintiffs are dependent on medical technologies for survival. They cannot feed, dress, bathe, or otherwise take care of themselves. Plaintiffs are incontinent. Each of them needs care to engage in activities of daily life. Plaintiffs require in-home skilled nursing services, also known as in-home shift nursing or private duty nursing, to live safely in their homes and with their families in the community.
- 3. Defendants are responsible for administering the Medi-Cal program, and are required by federal law to ensure that Plaintiffs and Class members receive all medically necessary care covered by the Medicaid Act and that they receive this care in the most integrated setting appropriate.
- 4. The Medicaid Act expressly requires that Defendants provide case management services and to "arrang[e] for (directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals) corrective treatment" covered by the Early and

¹ Plaintiffs and their *Guardians ad Litem* are proceeding pseudonymously as set forth in the Court Order dated July 6, 2018. ECF No. 33.

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- 5. Defendants have approved and authorized coverage for in-home skilled nursing services for Plaintiffs, but Plaintiffs have not been able to receive this medically necessary care because Defendants have systemically failed to arrange for these nursing services as mandated by federal law.
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- 6. The Medicaid Act also requires that medically necessary medical assistance be provided with reasonable promptness. 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(8). However, due to systemic deficiencies in their policies, practices, and procedures, Defendants have failed to fulfill these legal obligations; therefore, Plaintiffs and Class members have not received medically necessary services in a timely manner.
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7. Defendants' deficient policies, practices, and procedures related to arrangement of in-home skilled nursing services violate not only these provisions of the Medicaid Act, but also provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12132, and Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794(a). These violations have left Plaintiffs and Class members without medically necessary services, placing Plaintiffs at a serious risk of injury, hospitalization, and institutionalization.

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8. This class action lawsuit asks the Court to order Defendants to take all steps necessary to arrange for previously-approved, medically necessary in-home shift nursing services for Plaintiffs and Class members.

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II. JURISDICTION, VENUE, AND INTRADISTRICT ASSIGNMENT

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9. This is an action for declaratory and injunctive relief to enforce Plaintiffs' rights under the EPSDT and reasonable promptness mandate of Title XIX of the Social Security Act (Medicaid Act); the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C.

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§ 12132; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), 29 U.S.C.

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§ 794(a).

- Jurisdiction is based on 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343 for a violation of 42U.S.C. § 1983, Title II of the ADA, and Section 504.
- 11. At all times relevant to this action, Defendants have acted under color of state law.
- 12. This Court is authorized to award Plaintiffs' requested declaratory, preliminary, and permanent injunctive relief under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201-2202, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, and Fed. R. Civ. P. 65.
- 13. Venue is proper in the Northern District of California pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because the Defendants operate and perform their official duties therein and thus reside therein for purposes of venue, and because a substantial part of the events and omissions giving rise to the claims herein occur in counties that are part of the Northern District of California.
- 14. <u>Intradistrict Assignment</u>: Pursuant to Local Rule 3-2(d), this action shall be assigned to the San Francisco Division or the Oakland Division because a substantial part of the events or omissions which give rise to the claims occurred in Alameda County.

III. THE PARTIES

- 15. Plaintiff I. N. is seven years old and is a Medi-Cal beneficiary. As a result of her medical conditions, her physician has recommended 63 hours per week of Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) skilled nursing at home, and Defendants have authorized 56 hours per week of LVN skilled nursing at home. Because of missed nursing shifts, I. N. often receives less than 56 hours per week of in-home shift nursing services. She resides at home with her adoptive parents, two siblings, and two cousins in Castro Valley, California. Pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 17(c), I. N. brings this action through her mother.
- 16. Plaintiff J. B. is five years old and is a Medi-Cal beneficiary. As a result of his medical conditions, Defendants have authorized 135 hours per week of LVN skilled nursing at home. J. B. only receives about 50-60 hours per week of in-home nursing services. He resides at home with his parents, older brother, and younger sister in Orange

under the age of 21 being unable to obtain the levels of Medicaid-covered, medically necessary in-home shift nursing services they have been approved by Defendants to receive. The legal questions common to Plaintiffs and all Class members include:

- (a) Whether Defendants have failed to "arrange for (directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals) corrective treatment [in-home shift nursing services]" to Plaintiffs and Class members as mandated by the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(43)(C) and 42 U.S.C. § 1396d(r)(5);
- (b) Whether Defendants have failed to furnish medical assistance with reasonable promptness to Plaintiffs and Class members pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(8);
- (c) Whether Defendants have violated the ADA and/or Rehabilitation Act by failing to arrange for Medicaid-covered, medically necessary in-home shift nursing services thereby placing them at risk of unnecessary institutionalization;
- (d) Whether Defendants have violated the ADA and/or Rehabilitation Act by failing to ensure that all medically necessary in-home shift nursing services are administered to Plaintiffs and Class members in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs;
- (e) Whether Defendants have violated the ADA and/or the Rehabilitation Act by failing to make reasonable modifications to their programs and policies, which would result in the availability of all medically necessary in-home shift nursing services; and
- (f) Whether Defendants have violated the ADA and/or Rehabilitation Act by utilizing criteria or methods of administration that have the effect of subjecting Plaintiffs and Class Members to discrimination on the basis of disability, or defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of Defendants' program.
- 24. Plaintiffs' claims are typical of the Class members' claims. None of the Plaintiffs and Class members are receiving in-home shift nursing services at the level that Defendants found to be medically necessary to correct or ameliorate their conditions.

V. IN-HOME SHIFT NURSING STATUTORY AND REGULATORY 2 **FRAMEWORK**

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The Medicaid Act and EPSDT

- 32. The Medicaid Act, Title XIX of the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396-1396w-5, establishes a medical assistance program cooperatively funded by federal and state governments. The purpose of the Medicaid program is to enable states to furnish, as far as practicable, "medical assistance on behalf of . . . aged, blind or disabled individuals, whose income and resources are insufficient to meet the costs of necessary medical services," and "to help such families and individuals to attain or retain capability for independence or self-care " 42 U.S.C. § 1396-1.
- 33. Participation by states in this program is voluntary; however, once a state elects to participate, it must comply with all requirements of the federal Medicaid Act and its implementing regulations.
- 34. California has elected to participate in and receive federal funding through the Medicaid program. Its Medicaid program, Medi-Cal, is codified at California Welfare & Institutions Code §§ 14000 et seq. with implementing regulations found in 22 California Code of Regulations §§ 51000 et seq.
- 35. States participating in the Medicaid program must designate a single state agency to administer or supervise the administration of the Medicaid program and ensure the program complies with all relevant laws and regulations. See 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(5); see also 42 C.F.R. § 431.10 (2013).
- 36. Defendant DHCS is the single state agency that administers Medi-Cal. See Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 14100.1. As its Director, Defendant Kent "shall have those powers and duties necessary to conform to requirements for securing approval of a state [Medicaid] plan under the provisions of the applicable federal law." Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 14100.1; see also Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 14154(d) (the "department is responsible for the Medi-Cal program in accordance with state and federal law"). These duties are non-delegable. See, e.g., 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(5); 42 C.F.R. § 431.10 (2013).

- 37. Medi-Cal does not itself provide health care services to beneficiaries, nor does Medi-Cal provide those beneficiaries with money to purchase health care services directly. Rather, Medi-Cal is a vendor payment program, wherein DHCS, or managed health care organizations with whom DHCS contracts, reimburse participating providers—including in-home shift nursing providers—for the services they provide to Medi-Cal recipients.
- 38. Each state's Medicaid program must make medical assistance available "with reasonable promptness to all eligible individuals." 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(8). "The term 'medical assistance' means payment of part or all of the cost of the . . . care and services or the care and services themselves, or both." 42 U.S.C. § 1396d(a).
- 39. States must assure that Medicaid services will be administered and provided consistent with the best interests of recipients. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(19).
- 40. Federal law requires states participating in Medicaid to cover certain mandatory services. One mandatory service is EPSDT for children under age 21. *See* 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a(a)(10)(A), 1396a(a)(43), 1396d(a)(4)(B), 1396d(r).
- 41. EPSDT requires that any of the services that are covered under 42 U.S.C. § 1396d(a) must be provided if they are "necessary health care, diagnostic services, treatment and other measures . . . to correct or ameliorate defects and physical and mental illnesses and conditions . . . regardless of whether or not such services are covered" for adults. 42 U.S.C. § 1396d(r)(5). Services must be covered if they correct, compensate for, improve a condition, or prevent a condition from worsening, even if the condition cannot be prevented or cured. U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs., Ctrs. for Medicare & Medicaid Servs. (CMS), *EPSDT: A Guide for States: Coverage in the Medicaid Benefit for Children and Adolescents* at 10 (June 2014), https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/downloads/epsdt_coverage_guide.pdf.
- 42. Private duty nursing is a service category listed under Section 1396d(a); accordingly, the EPSDT benefit includes in-home shift nursing necessary to ameliorate, correct, or maintain a child's condition. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1396d(a)(8).

- 43. Private duty nursing is defined as "nursing services for recipients who require more individual and continuous care than is available from a visiting nurse or routinely provided by the nursing staff of the hospital or skilled nursing facility" 42 C.F.R. § 440.80 (2012).
- 44. Private duty nursing must be provided by a registered nurse (RN) or a licensed practical nurse (LPN). *See* 42 C.F.R. § 440.80 (2012). LPNs are also referred to as LVNs. RNs and LVNs are licensed to provide skilled nursing care in many settings including hospitals. *See* 42 C.F.R. § 409.31(a) (2005); *see also* 22 C.C.R. §§ 70055(a)(16) & 70217(a).
- 45. Case management, including Targeted Case Management, is a service category listed in the federal Medicaid Act. 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396d(a)(19), 1396n(g), 1396n(c)(4)(B); 42 C.F.R. § 440.169(a), (b) (2009). Federal Medicaid regulations define case management, *inter alia*, as the development of a specific plan of care, referral to services, scheduling appointments, and monitoring and follow-up. 42 C.F.R. § 440.169(d)(1)-(4) (2009). Monitoring and follow-up activities are meant to ensure that the plan of care is implemented and services are being furnished in accordance with the care plan. 42 C.F.R. § 440.169(d)(4) (2009).
- 46. The EPSDT mandate requires Defendants to "provide for . . . arranging for (directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals) corrective treatment the need for which is disclosed by such child health screening services." 42 U.S.C. § 1396a(a)(43)(C).
- 47. Defendants "must set standards for the timely provision of EPSDT services which meet reasonable standards of medical and dental practice. . . and must employ processes to ensure timely initiation of treatment, if required, generally within an outer limit of six months after the request for screening services." 42 C.F.R. § 441.56(e) (2012).
- 48. DHCS is obligated to "design and employ methods to assure that children receive . . . treatment for all conditions identified as a result of examination or diagnosis." CMS, *State Medicaid Manual* § 5310.

49. Defendants must "make available a variety of individual and group providers qualified and willing to provide EPSDT services." 42 C.F.R. § 441.61(b) (2012).

B. Anti-Discrimination Laws

- 50. Qualified individuals with disabilities are protected from disability discrimination, including segregation in institutions, by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504).
- 51. In enacting the ADA, Congress found that, "[i]ndividuals with disabilities continually encounter various forms of discrimination, including . . . segregation"
 42 U.S.C. § 12101(a)(5). Title II of the ADA provides that "no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities of a public entity or be subjected to discrimination by such entity." 42 U.S.C. § 12132. Section 504 imposes the same prohibition on programs or activities that receive federal funds. *See* Section 504, 29 U.S.C. §§ 794-794a.
- 52. Regulations implementing Title II of the ADA provide: "[a] public entity shall administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities." *See* 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(d) (2016); *see also* Section 504, 29 U.S.C. §§ 794-794a; 28 C.F.R. § 41.51(d) (1981). Further, "[t]he most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of a qualified individual with a disability means a setting that enables individuals with disabilities to interact with non-disabled persons to the fullest extent possible." 28 C.F.R. part 35, App. A (2010).
- 53. The United States Supreme Court in *Olmstead v. L.C. ex rel. Zimring*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999) held that the unnecessary institutionalization of individuals with disabilities is a form of discrimination under Title II of the ADA. In doing so, the Court interpreted the ADA's "integration mandate" as requiring persons with disabilities to be served in the community when: (1) the state determines that community-based treatment

1	is appropriate; (2) the individual does not oppose community placement; and (3)
2	community placement can be reasonably accommodated. <i>Id.</i> at 607.

- 54. Regulations implementing Title II of the ADA and Section 504 also provide: "[a] public entity may not, directly or through contractual or other arrangements, utilize criteria or other methods of administration: (i) That have the effect of subjecting qualified individuals with disabilities to discrimination on the basis of disability; [or] (ii) That have the purpose or effect of defeating or substantially impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the entity's program with respect to individuals with disabilities" *See* 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(3) (2016); *see also* 28 C.F.R. § 41.51(b)(3)(I) (1978); 45 C.F.R. § 84.4(b)(4) (2005).
- 55. ADA regulations further provide: "[a] public entity shall not impose or apply eligibility criteria that screen out or tend to screen out an individual with a disability or any class of individuals with disabilities from fully and equally enjoying any service, program, or activity, unless such criteria can be shown to be necessary for the provision of the service, program, or activity being offered." *See* 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(8) (2016); *see also* 45 C.F.R. § 84.4(b)(1)(iv) (2005).
- 56. As set forth in federal regulations: "[a] public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the public entity can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity." *See* 28 C.F.R. § 35.130(b)(7) (2005).

VI. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- A. DHCS' Methods of Administering In-Home Nursing for Children1. EPSDT
- 57. Oversight and responsibility for administering the EPSDT benefit in California, including in-home shift nursing, rests with Defendants.
- 58. The Medi-Cal program provides health care to beneficiaries either on a Fee-for-Service (FFS) basis or through a Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan (MCP).

- 59. With FFS, the beneficiary seeks care from any provider who is participating in the Medi-Cal program, willing to treat the particular beneficiary, and willing to accept reimbursement at a set amount from DHCS for the medical services provided. *See, e.g.*, Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 14016.5. With a MCP model, DHCS contracts with health plans to provide health care to Medi-Cal beneficiaries within a managed care system. *See* Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code §§ 14087.3, 14089.
- 60. California Children's Services (CCS) is a state program administered by DHCS for Medi-Cal eligible children who have certain diseases or health problems. CCS is responsible for, *inter alia*, authorizing in-home shift nursing and providing case management for Medi-Cal eligible children enrolled in that program. Medi-Cal eligible children who do not qualify for CCS receive authorization for in-home shift nursing directly through DHCS if they are receiving Medi-Cal on a FFS basis or through their MCP if they are enrolled in one.

2. Home and Community Based Alternatives (HCBA) Waiver

- 61. California also includes Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) "waivers" as part of its Medi-Cal program. These programs provide an expanded array of Medi-Cal home and community-based services to individuals who would otherwise be eligible for placement in an institution, including nursing homes and hospitals. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 1396n(c)(1). Thus, waiver enrollees have very high medical needs and serious disabilities.
- 62. These programs are called waivers because they allow California to disregard certain Medicaid requirements that would otherwise apply to Medi-Cal services, which allows the state to have different eligibility requirements and provide a different scope of services to different categories of beneficiaries.
- 63. In California, one HCBS waiver program is called the Home and Community Based Alternatives (HCBA) Waiver (formerly known as the Nursing Facility/Acute Hospital Waiver). The HCBA Waiver provides case management services and authorization of in-home nursing and attendant care to persons at risk for nursing home or

other institutional placement. The HCBA Waiver also provides for "institutional deeming" Medi-Cal eligibility, which enables children, whose families' income is too high to otherwise qualify for Medi-Cal, to receive benefits under EPSDT. The In-Home Operations (IHO) Branch of Defendant DHCS administers the HCBA Waiver.

- 64. Under the HCBA Waiver, DHCS is responsible for providing case management, ensuring that medically necessary services are provided in accordance with approved plans of treatment, and monitoring delivery of Waiver services, including inhome nursing.
- 65. Regardless of the service delivery model, Defendants authorize Medi-Cal inhome shift nursing services only after a finding, with the support of treating physicians, that the services are medically necessary. The treating physician signs a plan of treatment which supports the medical necessity of the services.
- 66. Once approved, in-home shift nursing services may be provided by a home health agency or by an Independent Nurse Practitioner (INP).
- 67. A home health agency is a private organization licensed by the State which recruits, hires, and trains health professionals to provide services such as private duty nursing; arranges scheduling of nurses; and ensures that staff are in compliance with licensing and certification requirements. Home health agencies also develop plans of treatment for review and approval by patients' physicians and provide services in accordance with approved plans of treatment.
- 68. An INP is an independent contractor or self-employed LVN or RN who provides private duty nursing services in the home to Medi-Cal beneficiaries.

 Beneficiaries or their families recruit INPs, who then must become approved by DHCS to provide services—a process which can take several months. INP case managers are responsible for developing plans of treatment for review and approval by physicians.

B. DHCS' Systemic Failure to Arrange for In-Home Shift Nursing

69. Although Defendants have approved all Plaintiffs and Class members for inhome shift nursing services, Defendants have failed to meet their obligation to arrange for these services with reasonable promptness by failing to establish and implement meaningful and effective policies, practices, and procedures to administer this benefit.

- 70. Defendants fail at a systematic level to provide effective case management and otherwise arrange for the medically necessary in-home nursing services they have approved, thereby placing the burden on families to find medically necessary in-home nursing services and navigate a complex system with little to no support in obtaining necessary services for their children.
- 71. Rather than assisting families with securing needed nurses, when DHCS has been informed that a child is not receiving authorized in-home shift nursing hours, it has instead: provided outdated and geographically irrelevant referral lists of home health agencies, independent nurse providers, and pediatric day health care centers, some of whom do not accept Medi-Cal; encouraged families to search online for nurses; and referred families to other programs that do not offer nursing services.
- 72. In some instances, case managers are reassigned without notice to families, are not responsive to requests for assistance, and/or do not assist with recruitment or retention of nurses.
- 73. Defendants have actual or constructive knowledge of the number of weekly hours of in-home shift nursing services they have found to be medically necessary for each Plaintiff and putative Class Member.
- 74. Defendants have knowledge of the monthly billing for each Plaintiff's and Class Members' in-home shift nursing services. Therefore, Defendants are or should be aware of their failure to arrange medically necessary in-home shift nursing services when Defendants are not billed for the full amount of in-home shift nursing services.
- 75. In December of 2016, DHCS prepared a written study to evaluate access to Medi-Cal private duty nursing services. This study was based on data from calendar year 2015. The study identified a 29 percent state-wide gap between the number of hours of services authorized and actually provided across nearly 3,600 eligible beneficiaries under

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- 76. Upon information and belief, DHCS has instructed home health agencies, or otherwise led them to understand that, when seeking to recertify a treatment authorization for in-home nursing, the home health agency can only request nursing hours the agency is able to provide, rather than the number of hours the primary care provider determined to be
- medically necessary. As a result, the statewide gap between authorized and rendered services is likely significantly larger than 29 percent.
- 77. Upon information and belief, DHCS does not monitor, on a systemic basis, when home health agencies are unable to fulfill authorized nursing hours to Medi-Calenrolled children, place such children on a waitlist, or reject them altogether as patients based on their inability to staff the in-home nursing shifts.
- 78. Defendants fail at a systemic level to identify and authorize children who are in need of in-home nursing services but are not receiving those services.
- 79. Defendants fail at a systemic level to effectively track and monitor children who are institutionalized, placed on waiting lists by home health agencies, or who have a shortfall between authorized and staffed nursing hours.
- 80. Upon information and belief, Defendants fail to take any action reasonably calculated to arrange for in-home shift nursing services for children whose requests for in-home nursing services they have approved beyond providing referral lists to families.
- 81. Defendants have claimed that they arrange for nursing by allowing two nursing agencies to staff individual cases, using certified nursing assistants rather than licensed nurses when the caregiver is in the home, offering individual nurse provider RNs, recruiting and certifying out-of-state providers to help children living in border areas, and working with community college and nursing agencies to encourage nurses to work with children who require in-home shift nursing.

- 82. The methods Defendants claim to employ fall short of Defendants' obligations to arrange for in-home shift nursing services and, to the extent they are actually implemented, these practices are unsuccessful.
- 83. None of the above methods Defendants claim to employ have been offered or provided to Plaintiffs, except providing them with ineffective lists of individual nurse providers.

C. Plaintiff I. N.

- 84. Plaintiff I. N. is a seven-year-old girl diagnosed with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy, epilepsy, cortical visual impairment, dysphagia (problems with feeding, swallowing, and drooling), hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy (brain damage due to oxygen deprivation) and is incontinent. I. N. has resided with her adoptive family since she was an infant, first as a foster child. The State was unable to locate a home for I. N. and considered placing her in a facility, but I. N.'s parents accepted her into their family and later adopted her.
- 85. I. N.'s father is a firefighter and I. N.'s mother is the primary caregiver for I. N. along with her four other children. Two of her other children are the biological children of her niece. I. N.'s mother accepted responsibility for them approximately three years ago because the children had been placed in the foster care system and placed in different homes. The foster children also have disabilities and require therapy and special education services. I. N.'s mother is also diagnosed with Lupus, an autoimmune disease that causes chronic fatigue and pain in the nerves and joints.
- 86. I. N. is non-verbal and uses a wheelchair for mobility and transfers. She requires total assistance for all activities of daily living. She receives nutrition, hydration, and medication through her gastronomy tube (G-tube).
- 87. As set forth in her Plan of Treatment provided by her physician, I. N. has frequent, ongoing, and unpredictable skilled care needs that must be addressed by a licensed nurse. Since September 2015 and through to the present, her physician has determined that she needs 63 hours per week of in-home nursing.

- 88. I. N.'s physician has ordered one-on-one skilled nursing services because her care requires the exercise of judgment informed by experience and expertise in addressing the care needs of persons with severe disabilities and chronic illnesses.
- 89. Until August, 2016, Defendants approved I. N. for 63 hours per week of Medi-Cal LVN in-home shift nursing based on medical necessity.
- 90. Beginning in August 2016, DHCS has approved Treatment Authorization Requests for only 56 hours per week of in-home nursing for I. N.
- 91. Upon information and belief, in the months before August 2016, I. N.'s home health agency had not been able to staff many of I. N.'s authorized hours and therefore decreased the number of hours requested in the Treatment Authorization Request to 56 hours because they had been instructed or led to understand that they were not permitted to submit a Treatment Authorization Request or Plan of Treatment for hours they are unable to staff.
- 92. There are qualified in-home shift nursing care providers in I. N.'s geographic area.
- 93. Currently, I. N. is authorized for 56 hours per week of in-home nursing services; however, nurses frequently and unpredictably miss shifts due to illness, vacation, or because they are assigned to multiple cases at one time. As a result, the amount of nursing I. N. receives is often less than 56 hours per week. For example, between January 1, 2017 and June 16, 2018, I. N. faced an average weekly shortfall of approximately 6 hours per week.
- 94. I. N. is a recipient of HCBA Waiver services through Defendant DHCS. By definition, she is at serious risk of institutionalization if she does not receive the Medi-Cal services she needs.
- 95. I. N.'s mother has posted advertisements online and regularly contacted their home health agency and I. N.'s DHCS case manager. I. N.'s mother called home health agencies and INPs on referral lists provided by DHCS; however, the referral lists did not help I. N.'s mother secure more nursing for her daughter. The lists contained nurses who

were not in her geographic area, some located hundreds of miles away; phone numbers on the list were disconnected or were a wrong number; and some agencies placed her on a waiting list. Despite her efforts, she has been unable to find nursing to staff all of I. N.'s authorized hours. Some of the reasons she could not find nurses include: available nurses were unable to assist a child with I. N.'s personal care and/or nursing needs or available nurses did not accept Medi-Cal.

- 96. When I. N. does not have nursing services, her mother assumes the duties of providing her care all day and all night.
- 97. Because of the family circumstances, which include I. N.'s father's long work hours, her mother's health issues, and the special needs of the other children, the shortfall in hours and nurses missing shifts on a regular basis puts I. N.'s health and safety at risk and creates a great deal of stress on I. N.'s family. The shortage in reliable nursing hours has impeded the family's ability to take a vacation or enjoy their time together.
- 98. On or about November 17, 2017, I. N.'s mother sent Defendant Kent a letter notifying her of I. N.'s shortage of in-home shift nursing hours and requesting Defendant Kent's immediate assistance in arranging for all authorized nursing hours for I. N.
- 99. In late December 2017, I. N.'s mother received a call from a representative of Defendant DHCS named Georgina "Mimie" Silver inquiring about I. N.'s lack of nursing. No other assistance to find nurses was offered or provided at that time.
- 100. Since December 2017, I. N.'s mother has received several calls from Ms. Silver. During those conversations, Ms. Silver inquired about I. N.'s lack of nursing and the family's efforts to find nursing. Other than providing a referral list for independent nurse providers, some of whom were located hundreds of miles away, no other assistance to find nurses was offered or provided. I. N.'s mother attempted to contact the local nurses on the referral list but each number she called was either a wrong number or disconnected.
- 101. Although Defendants claim to make efforts to find nursing beyond providing referral lists to families, none of those efforts were offered or provided to I. N.'s mother.

 As a result, despite sending a letter to Defendant Kent in November 2017 and several calls

with Defendants' representative since, I. N. continues to experience a shortfall in staffed nursing hours.

- 102. I. N.'s family has received little to no case management from Defendants.
- Defendants have failed to provide meaningful access to services, oversee the implementation of services, or assist with locating, coordinating, and monitoring services for I. N.
- I. N.'s parents strongly desire that she continue to live at home with appropriate nursing services.
- If Defendants fail to arrange for the in-home shift nursing services at the level they approved, then I. N. may be forced to go into an institution, or, if she remains at home and receives in-home shift nursing at a level which is less than what is medically necessary, then she faces a strong possibility of a life-threatening episode.
- Defendants' failure to arrange for medically necessary nursing services puts I. N. at serious risk of institutionalization or injury.

D. Plaintiff J. B.

- Plaintiff J. B. is a five-year-old boy, weighing around 26 pounds, with Hereditary Motor and Sensory Neuropathy, Neuromuscular Scoliosis, Dysphagia, constipation, milk protein intolerance, and is incontinent. J. B. has a seven-year-old brother with a potential learning disability and a three-year-old sister. His mother was an Engineer Corps Officer in the Navy before J. B. was born, but has been forced to stay home to care for J. B. because they do not have all of the nursing support they need. J. B.'s father is a project manager/engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers.
- J. B. is ventilator dependent and unable to breathe on his own. He has a 108. tracheostomy. He receives nutrition and medication through his G-tube. He uses a motorized pediatric wheelchair, stander, a thoracic spine brace, leg braces, ankle-foot orthotics, and wrist splints. He requires assistance with all activities of daily living.

	109.	As set forth in his Plan of Treatment provided by his physician, J. B. has
freque	ent, ong	going, and unpredictable skilled care needs that must be addressed by a
icens	ed nurs	ae.

- 110. Defendants have approved J. B. for 135 hours per week of Medi-Cal LVN in-home shift nursing based on medical necessity. J. B. is also authorized for two hours monthly of RN case management through the HCBA Waiver. J. B.'s physician has ordered one-on-one skilled nursing services because J. B.'s care requires the exercise of judgment informed by experience and expertise in addressing the care needs of persons with severe disabilities and chronic illnesses.
- 111. There are qualified in-home shift nursing care providers in J. B.'s geographic area.
- 112. From October 2014 to the present, J. B. has not had all of his authorized nursing hours fully staffed with the exception of two weeks. The amount of nursing services that J. B. receives changes from week to week or sometimes month to month. J. B. receives only 50-60 hours per week of staffed in-home nursing.
- 113. J. B. is a recipient of HCBA Waiver services through Defendant DHCS. By definition, he is at serious risk of institutionalization if he does not receive the Medi-Cal services he needs.
- authorized nursing hours have not been fully staffed. In response, Defendant DHCS sent J. B.'s family two identical lists of home health agencies and independent nurse providers in early 2016 and again in March 2017. J. B.'s father called all of the nursing agencies and nurses on that list and spoke to approximately 30 agencies and nurses. None would accept J. B. as a patient. Despite their efforts, they have been unable to find nursing to staff all of J. B.'s authorized hours.
- 115. J. B.'s mother has advertised online for nurses and have also called their home health agency on a regular basis since 2013. Despite these efforts, she has been unable to find nursing to staff all of J. B.'s authorized hours.

- 116. When J. B. does not have nursing services, his parents must provide all of his medically necessary care. His parents take turns caring for J. B. at night, and at least one parent must remain in the room with him. The parent who cares for J. B. at night wakes up approximately every three hours to empty the water build-up in his ventilator, or ventilate his G-tube so that gas does not build up, which could cause him to vomit in his tracheostomy and suffocate.
- 117. J.B.'s mother takes medication for depression and anxiety due to the stress of caring for a child with high medical needs, and his parents' relationship with their other children has suffered.
- 118. On or about October 26, 2017, J. B.'s family sent Defendant Kent a letter notifying her of J. B.'s shortage of in-home shift nursing hours and requesting Defendant Kent's immediate assistance in arranging for all authorized nursing hours for J. B.
- 119. In late December 2017, DHCS representative Mimie Silver contacted J. B.'s father. J. B.'s father informed Ms. Silver that J. B.'s hours were not fully staffed. Although Ms. Silver inquired about the family's efforts to find nursing, no other assistance to find nurses was offered or provided at that time.
- 120. J. B.'s mother received one additional call from Ms. Silver on or around February 2018. During that conversation, Ms. Silver inquired about whether there had been any changes to J. B.'s nursing services. No other assistance to find nurses was offered or provided at that time.
- 121. In or around March 2018, J. B. had an annual home assessment by a nurse from Defendant DHCS who inquired about J. B.'s condition and his care over the past year, but she did not assist in finding additional nurses to staff J. B.'s hours.
- 122. Although Defendants claim to make efforts to find nursing beyond providing referral lists to families, none of those efforts were offered or provided to J. B.'s family. As a result, despite sending a letter to Defendant Kent in October 2017 and a few encounters with Defendants' representatives since, J. B. continues to experience a significant shortfall in staffed nursing hours.

1	123. J. B.'s family has received little to no case management from Defendants.
2	124. Defendants have failed to provide meaningful access to services, oversee the
3	implementation of services, or assist with locating, coordinating, and monitoring services
4	for J. B.
5	125. J. B.'s parents strongly desire that he continue living at home with
6	appropriate nursing services.
7	126. If Defendants fail to arrange for J. B. to receive in-home shift nursing
8	services at the level they approved, then J. B. may be forced to be either institutionalized in
9	a hospital or, if he remains at home and receives in-home shift nursing at a level which is
10	substantially less than what is medically necessary, then he faces a strong possibility of a
11	life threatening episode.
12	127. Defendants' failure to arrange for medically necessary nursing services puts
13	J. B. at serious risk of institutionalization or injury.
14	FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF
15	(Against Defendant Director Jennifer Kent)
16	Violation of the Federal Medicaid Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and
17	Treatment (EPSDT) Mandate
18	128. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate herein by reference each and every
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	allegation and paragraph set forth previously.
20	129. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, 42 U.S.C.
2021	
21	129. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, 42 U.S.C.
21	129. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a(a)(10)(A), 1396d(a)(4)(B), and 1396a(a)(43)(C), Defendant Kent, while acting
21 22	129. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a(a)(10)(A), 1396d(a)(4)(B), and 1396a(a)(43)(C), Defendant Kent, while acting under the color of law, has failed to provide Plaintiffs and Class members with in-home
21 22 23	129. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a(a)(10)(A), 1396d(a)(4)(B), and 1396a(a)(43)(C), Defendant Kent, while acting under the color of law, has failed to provide Plaintiffs and Class members with in-home shift nursing services necessary to correct or ameliorate their conditions.
21 22 23 24	129. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a(a)(10)(A), 1396d(a)(4)(B), and 1396a(a)(43)(C), Defendant Kent, while acting under the color of law, has failed to provide Plaintiffs and Class members with in-home shift nursing services necessary to correct or ameliorate their conditions. 130. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, Defendant Kent,
21 22 23 24 25	129. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a(a)(10)(A), 1396d(a)(4)(B), and 1396a(a)(43)(C), Defendant Kent, while acting under the color of law, has failed to provide Plaintiffs and Class members with in-home shift nursing services necessary to correct or ameliorate their conditions. 130. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, Defendant Kent, while acting under the color of law, has failed to "arrange for (directly or through referral
21 22 23 24 25 26	129. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 1396a(a)(10)(A), 1396d(a)(4)(B), and 1396a(a)(43)(C), Defendant Kent, while acting under the color of law, has failed to provide Plaintiffs and Class members with in-home shift nursing services necessary to correct or ameliorate their conditions. 130. In violation of the EPSDT provisions of the Medicaid Act, Defendant Kent, while acting under the color of law, has failed to "arrange for (directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals) corrective treatment [in-home shift]

1	131. Defendant Kent's violations have been repeated and knowing, and entitle
2	Plaintiffs and Class members to relief under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
3	SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF
4	(Against Defendant Director Jennifer Kent)
5	Violation of the Federal Medicaid Reasonable Promptness Requirement
6	132. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate herein by reference each and every
7	allegation and paragraph set forth previously.
8	133. Defendant Kent is engaged in the repeated, ongoing failure to arrange for
9	(directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals)
10	corrective treatment, despite Defendant's acknowledgment that in-home shift nursing
11	services are medically necessary for all named Plaintiffs and Class members.
12	134. Defendant Kent has acted under color of law in failing to provide in-home
13	shift nursing services to Plaintiffs with "reasonable promptness," in violation of 42 U.S.C.
14	§ 1396a(a)(8).
15	135. Defendant Kent's violations have been repeated and knowing, and entitle
16	Plaintiffs to relief under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.
17	THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF
18	(Against Defendant Director Jennifer Kent)
19	Violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131 et seq.
20	136. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate herein by reference each and every
21	allegation and paragraph set forth previously.
22	137. Title II of the ADA provides that no qualified person with a disability shall
23	be subjected to discrimination by a public entity. 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131-32. It requires
24	public entities to administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting
25	appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities. See 28 C.F.R.
26	§ 35.130(d) (2016).
27	138. Plaintiffs and Class members are "qualified individuals with a disability"
28	within the meaning of the ADA in that they have physical and/or mental impairments that
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substantially limit one or more major life activities, including their ability to live independently without support.

- 139. Plaintiffs and Class members meet the essential eligibility requirements for Medi-Cal services, including by requiring services necessary to maintain them in their homes in the community.
- 140. Defendant Kent is the Director of Defendant DHCS, which is responsible for administering California's Medicaid program in accordance with state and federal law, and is therefore a government entity subject to Title II of the ADA. 42 U.S.C. §§ 12131(1)(A) and (B) (1990).
- 141. Defendant Kent is obligated under the ADA to administer DHCS' programs in a manner that enables qualified individuals with disabilities to live in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. Defendant's failure to arrange for (directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals) corrective treatment (inhome shift nursing services) for qualified individuals with disabilities such as Plaintiffs and Class members has placed them at risk of institutionalization in violation of the ADA's integration mandate.
- 142. Defendant Kent has discriminated against qualified individuals with disabilities such as Plaintiffs and Class members by failing to provide reasonable modifications to programs and services in order to arrange for medically necessary inhome shift nursing.
- 143. Defendant Kent has utilized criteria and methods of administration that subject Plaintiffs, Class members, and other qualified individuals with disabilities to discrimination on the basis of disability, including risk of unnecessary institutionalization, in ways that include failing to take the necessary steps to arrange for medically necessary in-home shift nursing.
 - 144. Defendant Kent's actions are in violation of Title II of the ADA.

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145. Plaintiffs and Class members are entitled to declaratory and injunctive relief, and reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in bringing this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12133.

FOURTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF

(Against Defendants DHCS and Director Jennifer Kent)

Violation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794 et seq.

- 146. Plaintiffs re-allege and incorporate herein by reference each and every allegation and paragraph set forth previously.
- 147. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794, prohibits public entities and recipients of federal funds from discriminating against any individual by reason of disability. Public and federally-funded entities must provide programs and activities "in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the qualified individual with a disability." *See* 28 C.F.R. § 41.51(d) (1981). Policies, practices, and procedures that have the effects of unjustifiably segregating persons with disabilities in institutions constitute prohibited discrimination under Section 504.
- 148. Plaintiffs and Class members are "qualified individuals with a disability" under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in that they have physical and/or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities, including their ability to live independently without support.
- 149. Plaintiffs and Class members meet the essential eligibility requirements for Medi-Cal services, including services necessary to maintain them in their homes in the community.
- 150. Defendant DHCS is a recipient of federal funds under the Rehabilitation Act and is therefore a government entity subject to Section 504. 29 U.S.C. § 794(b) (2014).
- 151. Defendants' failure to arrange for (directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals) corrective treatment (in-home shift nursing services) to Plaintiffs and Class members places them at risk of institutionalization in violation of Section 504's integration mandate.

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- 152. Defendants have utilized criteria and methods of administration that subject qualified individuals with disabilities such as Plaintiffs and Class members to discrimination on the basis of disability, including risk of unnecessary institutionalization, by Defendants failure to arrange for (directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals) corrective treatment (in-home shift nursing services) to Plaintiffs and Class members.
 - 153. Defendants' actions violate Section 504.

VII. PRAYER FOR RELIEF

- 154. WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray that the Court order the following relief and remedies on behalf of themselves and all others similarly situated:
 - 155. Certify the proposed Class;
- 156. Issue a declaratory judgment in favor of the Plaintiffs and the Class that Defendants are failing to comply with the requirements of the Medicaid Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Rehabilitation Act;
- 157. Declare unlawful Defendants' failure to arrange directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals, corrective treatment (in-home shift nursing services) to Plaintiffs and Class members;
- 158. Issue preliminary and permanent injunctive relief enjoining Defendants from subjecting Plaintiffs and Class members to practices that continue to violate their rights under the Medicaid Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act;
- 159. Issue preliminary and permanent injunctive relief requiring Defendants to arrange directly or through referral to appropriate agencies, organizations, or individuals, corrective treatment (in-home shift nursing services) to Plaintiffs and Class members;
- 160. Retain jurisdiction over the Defendants until such time as the Court is satisfied that Defendants' unlawful policies, practices, and acts complained of herein cannot recur;

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1	161. Award Plaintiffs their costs and reasonable attorneys' fees pursuant to 42
2	U.S.C. §§ 1988, 12133 and 12205; and any other applicable law or regulation; and
3	162. Grant such other and further relief as the Court deems to be just and
4	equitable.
5	DATED: August 8, 2018 Respectfully submitted,
6	DISABILITY RIGHTS CALIFORNIA
7	
8	By: <u>/s/ William Leiner</u> William Leiner
9	WEGGEDN GENGED ON LAW AND
10	WESTERN CENTER ON LAW AND POVERTY
11	
12	By: <u>/s/ Robert Newman</u> Robert Newman
13	NATIONAL HEALTH LAW PROGRAM
14	D / / C / C
15	By: /s/ Sarah Somers Sarah Somers
16	
17	By: /s/ Allen L. Lanstra Allen L. Lanstra
18	Richard A. Schwartz Rachael Schiffman
19	
20	Attorneys for Plaintiffs
21	<u>ATTORNEY ATTESTATION</u>
22	I hereby attest, pursuant to Local Rule 5-1(i)(3), that I obtained the concurrence in
23	the filing of this document from the signatories indicated by the conformed (/s/) of Robert
24	Newman, Sarah Somers, and Allen L. Lanstra.
25	/s/ William Leiner
26	William Leiner
27	
28	
	28