



News Updates:

Waiver Reform Agreements with CMS are Progressing

OPWDD continues to work with the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to further define the nature of service system reforms within the People First Waiver initiative. The transition from a fee-for-service system to a managed care system is still on track for a November 2013 launch of pilot managed care organizations known as DISCOs (Developmental Disabilities Individual Support and Care Coordination Organizations). In the weeks ahead and based on these discussions, OPWDD will create several key documents related to the waiver agreements and the coming managed care pilot process and make them available publicly as they are finalized: the Request for Applications for pilot DISCOs, the model Contract between New York State and DISCOs, a Communications/Outreach Plan regarding the system transition, and the final Waiver agreements (1915 b and 1915c) that will authorize NYS to operate the Medicaid-funded service system.

OPWDD is hosting Discussions on Managed Care

To support the transition of the developmental disabilities service system from today's fee-for-service operation to a managed care operation under the People First Waiver, OPWDD has begun facilitating discussions among OPWDD providers, individuals with developmental disabilities and their families; advocates; and outside organizations with expertise in managed care, behavioral health care, and health care. The conversations provide an opportunity for providers to explore the requirements that will apply to DISCOs, to hear from existing organizations that successfully operate in a managed care system, and to discuss with other OPWDD providers the potential for collaborating to form DISCOs or be part of a DISCO's network of providers in the new service system. As opportunities arise, OPWDD will facilitate a variety of meetings around the state to enhance a broad understanding of managed care and the reforms within the People First Waiver among providers and potential partner organizations. Information shared at these meetings will be posted on the [People First webpage](#).

Innovative Ideas Workshops Update

On December 4, 2012, OPWDD held the fourth in a series of statewide videoconference workshops showcasing some of the innovative ideas collaborating groups of nonprofit agencies are developing as they seek ways to support people with developmental disabilities under the People First Waiver. Two presentations were provided for videoconference participants. Hillside Family of Agencies, a provider in western New York, described its Family Finding program which, based on a new national model, seeks to reconnect individuals it serves with family members. According to Hillside presenters, the initiative has the potential to transform the way we find and engage natural supports for persons in the developmental disabilities services system. In addition, NYSARC, the statewide provider association which represents local chapters of the ARC, offered insight into the creation of its statewide coordinated care program for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Currently, NYSARC is in the process of developing a statewide Developmental Disabilities Individual Support and Care Coordination Organization (DISCO) with an emphasis on a habilitative model of care, increased person centeredness and satisfaction, enhanced family-based natural supports, employment opportunities, uniform quality standards, and the reinvestment of any accrued savings into system improvement and increased capacity to meet unmet needs. NYSARC plans to implement its managed care operation on a regional basis as partners and networks are established. A fifth workshop is



tentatively scheduled for February 2013. Information on the December 4th videoconference, including copies of Power Point presentations and video footage, can be found on OPWDD’s People First Waiver web page at [Innovative Ideas Workshop](#).

Data Books to Assist Provider Planning

OPWDD is preparing data books containing summarized Medicaid data organized by county for individuals with developmental disabilities across New York State. OPWDD is also working with the NYS Department of Health to obtain Medicare data for individuals with developmental disabilities. OPWDD will make this information available to the public and providers on its website in the near future.

Frequently asked Questions

Q: A Consolidated Supports and Services (CSS) Plan can usually support an individual at a much lower cost than traditional services. Why, when “traditional dollars” get freed up, doesn’t some portion of those dollars get allocated to CSS?

A: OPWDD recognizes that a CSS plan can usually support an individual with a high degree of individual satisfaction at a lower cost than traditional services. Additionally, it is felt that CSS is philosophically close to the stated objectives of the People First Waiver in its focus on person-centered planning, individual responsibility, self-determination, and fiscal accountability. To that end, Phase 3 of the Individual and Community Supports initiative will examine how OPWDD can work with voluntary agencies and individuals in the community and in certified residential settings who are seeking individualized services plans to make it easier for dollars currently committed to “traditional” services, both in certified settings and in the community, to be used to support individualized services plans, including CSS Plans.

Q: How does the OPWDD People First Waiver relate to the NYS MRT Waiver being implemented by the Department of Health?

A: The People First Waiver is a separate waiver initiative to support broad service system reforms that will improve supports and services specifically for individuals with developmental disabilities. It is a combination of 1915 b and 1915c waiver agreements that will initiate a transition from a fee-for-service system of long-term supports and services to a system of comprehensive care coordinated through a managed care infrastructure. It will also support greater person-centeredness, expand community-based services, and increase efficiency and accountability for the effective support of individuals. The NYS MRT Waiver is an amendment to New York’s existing 1115 Research and Demonstration Waiver known as the Partnership Plan Demonstration which has improved the quality of and expanded access to New York’s Medicaid managed care health care program. It is being proposed to support implementation of New York’s Medicaid Redesign Team’s action plan to restructure the New York State Medicaid health care system and lower health care costs. It includes proposals to reinvest Medicaid savings generated by MRT initiatives in important lower cost and preventive services for New Yorkers often referred to as the Safety Net. While both initiatives are before federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for approval, they are separate initiatives with distinct purposes.

People First Waiver Information:

Webpage: www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/people_first_waiver/home

Email: People.First@opwdd.ny.gov

Comment Line: 1-866-946-9733 or TTY: 1-866-933-4889