



## News Updates:

### **New Information on OPWDD’s Dialogue with federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services:**

Negotiations between New York State and the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on the People First waiver agreement continue to move forward. In April, OPWDD posted on the waiver Web page written answers to the questions posed by CMS over the course of the last several months ([http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd\\_services\\_supports/people\\_first\\_waiver/news/new\\_york\\_responds](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/people_first_waiver/news/new_york_responds)). That document describes the current status of discussions with CMS regarding the People First Waiver.

### **Will it be an 1115 waiver or a 1915 b and c waiver?**

During discussions with CMS, OPWDD has learned that the important reforms planned to occur within the People First Waiver could be achieved through either an 1115 Research and Demonstration Waiver OR a combination of a 1915 b and 1915 c waiver. Continued discussions with CMS will determine which waiver authority will best achieve the outlined goals and objectives. Regardless of which type of waiver is ultimately selected, the purposes and specific reform initiatives within the People First Waiver will move us to a managed care system that provides integrated, person-centered supports, establishes greater equity in the system, and improves outcomes for people with developmental disabilities. These concepts and goals are outlined in the People First Waiver Overview Fact Sheet ([http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/overview\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/overview_fact_sheet.pdf)).

### **Implementation Planning**

The next important step in preparing for the People First Waiver is a full year of implementation planning with OPWDD stakeholders – individuals, family members, not-for-profit agencies, advocates and OPWDD staff from across the state. This phase will involve several work groups that will plan the operational details of the many changes in administrative functions and processes that are needed to fulfill the system improvements of the waiver. The work of these groups will be reported to the public for review and comment throughout the first year of the waiver and will result in a People First Waiver Implementation Plan that will be submitted to the federal CMS. The final implementation plan will guide the activities of the OPWDD and its thoughtful and staged transition to managed care over the next four years of waiver implementation. The Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council which has standing authority to advise OPWDD regarding its mission and system operations will monitor and advise the implementation planning process and ongoing waiver implementation.

### **Request for Information Update:**

The Request for Information (RFI) solicited input from interested stakeholders regarding the recommendations described in OPWDD’s October 2011 Statewide Comprehensive Plan (5.07 plan). OPWDD staff are now preparing detailed analyses of the responses received which will be posted on the waiver web page as soon as they are available. These analyses will inform development of the People First Waiver Pilot projects that will demonstrate effective models of providing long-term supports and services to individuals with developmental disabilities through managed care.



**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**Who will conduct the needs assessments? Will it be State staff or voluntary agency staff? Will today’s Medicaid Service Coordinators be able to conduct needs assessments?**

It is anticipated that needs assessments will be conducted by state employees working under the new title of Assessment Specialists. These Assessment Specialists will be expected to have at least one year of experience working with individuals with developmental disabilities, a broad knowledge of the types of supports and services available to individuals in New York State, and experience conducting interviews or assessments with individuals and their families. Medicaid Service Coordinators (MSCs) are well equipped to serve in the Assessment Specialist role as they possess a multitude of the skills required of this position.

**What will the needs assessment process be like for an individual?**

The individual will be the central focus of the needs assessment. The needs assessment process is, in essence, a conversation with individuals, their family members and others which results in a good understanding of each person’s abilities, strengths, interests and needs. Getting this kind of understanding for each person who receives OPWDD services will ensure equity in how the agency responds to need as each person’s unique strengths and needs will determine their plan of support. The assessment process will engage the individual, his or her closest advocates, family members, caregivers, direct support professionals and clinicians and be coordinated by an OPWDD Assessment Specialist. The Assessment Specialist will interview the individual face-to-face and, in some cases, directly observe an individual’s daily routine to gather additional information. Assessment Specialists will draw on input from the individual and those who know him or her best, gathering previously documented information about the individual and all relevant information needed to understand the whole person – his or her abilities, needs, strengths, ambitions, preferences and unique life circumstances. The interRAI ID/DD needs assessment typically takes approximately two hours to complete. Although this assessment is very comprehensive, it is structured to minimize time spent on redundant questioning and documentation.

**Is the timeline for system reforms changing now that OPWDD may not be receiving an 1115 waiver?**

At the time of this waiver update, the timeline for developing and implementing the People First Waiver has not changed. If New York State does decide to pursue a waiver authority other than the 1115, the timeline for waiver development could change.

<b>Tentative People First Waiver Timeline</b>	
2011-2012	Design Team Process, Case Study Planning & Implementation
2013-2014	Pilot DISCOs & Implementation Planning
2015 +	Staged Roll-out of DISCOs Statewide

**People First Waiver Information:**

**Web Page:** [www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd\\_services\\_supports/people\\_first\\_waiver/home](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/people_first_waiver/home)

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