



News Updates:

Waiver Applications to be Submitted to CMS This Month

OPWDD staff are putting the finishing touches on the following People First Waiver applications for submission to the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in November:

Waiver Application	Purpose
1915 c waiver	To marry the new managed care service system structure (proposed in the 1915 b waiver application) to the existing HCBS
1915 b waiver	To establish a managed care service system structure

OPWDD recently posted the [final recommendations](#) of the three targeted work teams —access, enrollment and advocacy; care coordination; and modernizing the fiscal platform—on the People First Waiver webpage. The input received from these groups, which were tasked with exploring and refining the specific aspects of system reform, is being incorporated into revisions to the draft [request for applications](#) (RFA) that is posted on the People First webpage and will be included as part of the waiver submission package to CMS. Moving forward, the draft RFA will describe the structure and operation of pilot DISCOs. When the draft RFA is finalized, it will be used to solicit applications for pilot developmental disability individual support and care coordination organizations (DISCOs).

Looking Ahead, OPWDD Begins Waiver Implementation Planning

OPWDD leaders and managers have begun examining the ways OPWDD’s administrative functions will change with the initiation of pilot DISCOs and the eventual statewide rollout of managed care beginning in 2015. Transitioning from fee-for-service operations to managed care will impact current central office processes and functions, like Medicaid billing, and require amending and adapting administrative functions related to overseeing managed care operations. For example, OPWDD will have an oversight function related to DISCOs’ provision of care coordination; management of the provider networks and services; data analysis; and financial reporting. OPWDD will also develop systems and processes for interacting with new integrated health information systems. To prepare for these new functions, OPWDD is currently assessing the agency’s capabilities and gaps and will use this information to help plan for future workforce needs. OPWDD is committed to redesigning needed workplace functions gradually with attention to ensuring appropriate and effective system oversight and a smooth transition for agency staff.

Data Books to Assist Provider Planning

OPWDD will prepare data books containing Medicaid data for individuals with developmental disabilities across New York State that it will share with providers prior to the request for applications for pilot DISCOs. OPWDD will also be working with the NYS Department of Health to obtain Medicare data for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Coordinated Assessment System (CAS) Now Available Online

OPWDD recently unveiled its coordinated assessment system (CAS), a new draft tool that has been specifically tailored to capture the unique health and support needs of individuals with developmental disabilities in New York State. The draft tool will be evaluated through case studies before it is used broadly throughout New York State. It is designed to be used by trained assessment specialists who will work closely with individuals, families, support, and clinical staff, and others to use the CAS to gain a thorough understanding of individuals’ strengths, needs, and desires for their life. Information about the CAS, including how to request a copy, is now available on



the [People First Waiver webpage](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/people_first_waiver/home)
(http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/people_first_waiver/home).

Provider Rate Restructuring Underway

During the pilot DISCO phase, the current fee-for-service delivery system will continue to support individuals who choose not to enroll in DISCOs. OPWDD's current rates for many of its services have been developed over a period of time with a variety of historical anomalies. The differences that exist among rates between like agencies providing services will be difficult to translate into the managed care world. As a result, OPWDD and stakeholders are developing a new rate reimbursement system for providers that will promote equity and sustainability, and align financial reimbursement with desired program outcomes for the service system. The Modernizing the Fiscal Platform work team that recently completed its work recommended that OPWDD's reformed rate structure should follow a component-based approach that examines cost patterns for various elements (i.e., program support, general, and administrative costs) as they relate to the wage paid to direct support professionals, and use this information to establish the total cost of a direct care staff hour.

OPWDD can then establish standard fees according to the number of staff hours required to support individuals at various levels of care. CMS has approved use of this method in other states, and OPWDD has engaged consultants who are experienced in this approach both for long-term care programs and for disabilities services. OPWDD is now undertaking an analysis of operating costs with a sample of provider agencies and will develop draft reimbursement rates using this model by next spring. When the rates are finalized, OPWDD will use the new rate structure in both the fee-for-service operations and the new DISCOs; however, **OPWDD recognizes that to be successful and sustainable, provider agencies may need to transition slowly, over a period of years, to the new rate structure.**

Innovative Ideas Workshops Update

On December 4, 2012, from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm, OPWDD will hold 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. These workshops, which have been held via statewide videoconference, have presented general information on collaborative initiatives under way by groups of providers that have joined together independent of OPWDD in anticipation of service delivery changes. Information on the December 4 workshop, including the names of presenting agencies, the focus of their presentations, and how to register to attend the videoconference, will be posted in the coming weeks on the People First webpage at www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/people_first_waiver/innovative_ideas_workshops.

Statewide 5.07 Plan Hearing Postponed until December

The statewide videoconference scheduled for Thursday, November 15 to elicit public input on the current update to OPWDD's Comprehensive State Plan 2012-2016 (5.07 plan) has been postponed and will now occur in December. Please watch [OPWDD's home page](#) for further information.

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