



**Ongoing Dialogue with CMS Elicits Greater Detail:**

Leadership from OPWDD, the Governor’s office and DOH have held several recent meetings with representatives from federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), focusing on issues related to the operations of enhanced quality oversight, system financing, the managed care structure, and system integration. OPWDD has prepared extensive written answers to many questions posed by CMS and expects to post this information on the waiver Web page after OPWDD and CMS have been able to discuss these documents.

**Comprehensive Needs Assessment Tool Selected:**

In February, OPWDD announced that it had selected the interRAI Integrated Assessment Suite to serve as the core of the needs assessment process within the People First Waiver. OPWDD made this selection based on the important features of needs assessment identified by the Access and Choice waiver design team and after consideration of several alternative assessment tools. The interRAI will support comprehensive assessment of individuals’ needs and abilities and allow OPWDD to work effectively with other service systems to coordinate holistic care and supports. It will provide valid, consistent information to inform care planning and support greater equity of access throughout OPWDD’s new service system.

OPWDD is currently working with developers of the interRAI Intellectual Disability tool to adapt it to fully meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities in New York State and will share with stakeholders a draft version of the adapted tool later this spring. Statewide needs assessment will be an incremental process and a function carried out by state assessors to ensure objectivity and equitable distribution of supports, services and resources. Provider agencies can continue to use additional screening and assessment tools to augment clinical services and person-centered care planning processes as appropriate. For more information on the interRAI, visit the People First Waiver Web page ([http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/2011\\_waiver/index.jsp](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/2011_waiver/index.jsp)) or [www.interrai.org](http://www.interrai.org).

**Request for Information Update:**

The Request for Information (RFI) solicited input from interested stakeholders regarding the concepts and recommendations that were described within the OPWDD’s Statewide Comprehensive Plan (5.07 plan). The RFI analyses will be available this month on the waiver web page. They will inform the development of pilot projects that will test and demonstrate different care management models.

**Waiver Discussion Board Update:**

**Next VC:** *March 13, 2012, 11 am – 1 pm*    **Topic:** *Comprehensive Needs Assessment*

Regional People First Waiver Discussion Boards are groups of individuals and family members who meet monthly via videoconference with OPWDD leadership to discuss key aspects of waiver reforms. Discussion Board members also serve as ambassadors of information to others within the service system who are not able to attend the videoconferences. Contact your DDSO’s People First Waiver Liaison ([http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/2011\\_waiver/images/ddso\\_waiver\\_liaisons.pdf](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/2011_waiver/images/ddso_waiver_liaisons.pdf)) for a list of Waiver Discussion Board members in your region. The PowerPoint and a video of each monthly presentation are posted on the People First Waiver Web page.



## Frequently Asked Questions:

### ***How will OPWDD ensure that DISCOs (i.e., the managed care organizations) do not have a conflict of interest that encourages them to refer individuals to their own services?***

OPWDD will design several system components to address the issue of self-referral. First, an independent, fair and equitable needs assessment process is essential to ensuring that people in all parts of New York State have access to the services they need. To keep this foundational aspect of the new system separate from care planning and service delivery, OPWDD will retain responsibility for conducting the comprehensive needs assessment that will inform the DISCO's person-centered planning. Second, clear and readily available information regarding service providers' performance will allow individuals and families to make an informed choice of service providers. Third, the person-centered planning process will actively engage individuals and their family members, advocates and direct care staff in decision-making. There will also be individual advocacy provided outside the DISCO, through OPWDD or independent providers of that function. And finally, there will continue to be a due process appeals mechanism for individuals and families who do not agree with service planning recommendations.

### ***Who will decide how much money a person is allowed and how many services a person can have? Who sets the limits? What is the appeals process?***

For people who opt to self-direct, there will be a discrete budget amount and a mechanism for appeals if there are concerns about the budget amount. For others in managed care, the payment to the DISCO will be based on the needs and current services of the people for whom it coordinates services. The rates will accommodate the full range of service needs within the DISCO's service population, recognizing that some individuals will require more intensive services that exceed the payment rate, while others will require less. As they do today, each individual and family will continue to have due process rights to appeal service planning decisions.

### ***Will services that some people need be rationed and limited as is done in other Medicaid Managed Care plans? Who will hold the DISCOs accountable?***

Services will not be rationed or limited. OPWDD's contracts with DISCOs will require the DISCO to meet the identified needs of the individuals it serves. Needs assessment will be conducted by OPWDD and will inform a thorough person-centered planning process that actively engages individuals, their family members and advocates. To ensure DISCO accountability, enhanced OPWDD oversight activities will measure the effectiveness of DISCO operations and services, measure individual and family satisfaction with the DISCO and its network of service providers, and report DISCO performance publicly.

## ***People First Waiver Information:***

**Web Page:** [www.opwdd.ny.gov/2011\\_waiver/index.jsp](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/2011_waiver/index.jsp)  
**E-mail:** [People.First@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:People.First@opwdd.ny.gov)  
**Comment Line:** 1-866-946-9733 or TTY: 1-866-933-4889