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Home and Community Based Settings

As the mother of a 23-year old man with Down Syndrome, I fully support person-centered planning, but am worried that his choices may not be honored if they do not meet the current definition of integration. He has chosen to live in an uncertified house, on a lovely suburban street with the friends that he chose. We have heard that more than four people living together is unacceptable. He very clearly chose to leave his parents' house to live with his friends. Will he be able to continue to live as he chooses or have to conform to a "one size fits all" paradigm of no more than four people living together?

The limit of four beds you reference applies to the Money Follows the Person (MFP) funding. For the MFP funding, a person must live in an allowable setting. These settings are a family home or apartment, his or her own home or apartment either alone or with room mates, or if the person lives in a group home the group home must have four (4) beds or less.

The choice made by a person to live in a uncertified setting with friends of his or her choice meets home and community based standards as defined and described in the requirements for such settings appropriate for the provision of the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) under section 1915(c) HCBS waivers, section 1915(i) State Plan HCBS; and section 1915(k) (Community First Choice) authorities.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the final rule on Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) that details the characteristics of appropriate community settings. The final rule requires that all home and community-based settings meet certain qualifications. These include:

- The setting is integrated in and supports full access to the greater community;
- Is selected by the individual from among setting options;
- Ensures individual rights of privacy, dignity and respect, and freedom from coercion and restraint;
- Optimizes autonomy and independence in making life choices; and,
- Facilitates choice regarding services and who provides them.

Links to several important items regarding the new rule defining HCBS settings are available at <http://www.medicaid.gov/hcbs>, including the text of the Final Rule and an Information Bulletin on the Final Rule.

We have 3 family members in IRA's, would you help us purchase a private home so we could live together? Also assist with Direct Care Aides?

OPWDD's Home of Your Own (HOYO) Program does not assist individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and families to purchase a private home. HOYO is a program for 1st time homebuyers and is governed primarily by the requirements set forth by the State of New York Mortgage Agency (SONYMA), USDA Rural Development Section 502, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Counseling Program. OPWDD's primary role in the home buying process is to assist the applicant with becoming eligible to apply for a mortgage and meet the requirements of SONYMA, USDA and HUD. The eligibility process consists of a variety of housing counseling sessions in a group and/or on a one-on-one basis. These counseling sessions, include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Getting Started
- Pros and Cons of purchasing a home
- Understanding a Mortgage
- HUD-Approved Pre-and-Post Homebuying Counseling
- Credit Counseling
- Managing your finances
- Understanding the Closing Process.

To obtain an application for the HOYO program, please call (518) 473-1973, or you may download an application from the OPWDD website: www.opwdd.ny.gov. All applicants for the HOYO program are assigned a housing counselor to work with and complete all of the program requirements. After the program requirements are completed and, the applicant is ready to apply for a mortgage – OPWDD will forward the entire application package to an assigned loan originator to complete the process and make the final decision regarding the applicant's qualification to obtain a mortgage.

OPWDD's HOYO program does not assist with hiring Direct Care Aides. However, Direct Care Aides are eligible to participate in the HOYO program under a specialized workforce category.

Employment

What is the retention rate of employment for a person that is non-ambulatory, has no skills, and has psychosis episodes that affect them going to work? Would the employer hold open their spot?

OPWDD is not tracking employment data by diagnosis. In the example given, the individual would be able to receive Pathway to Employment services in order to identify their employment skills and interests. This service includes discovery, job readiness training, volunteering, and paid and unpaid internships to assist the person in identifying and developing employable skills. Other services such as self direction or community habilitation could be utilized to address clinical or personal care supports. Given that a business independently chooses to employ an individual, OPWDD would be unable to ensure a "hold" on a position; however, job development for a new position could be available to assist an individual if he or she is unable to continue to work in an existing job.

How does a person with no skills get a job when it is hard for a “normal” person to get a job?

All people, but especially people with intellectual and developmental disabilities need employment planning and supports to assist them in achieving competitive or self-employment. Pathway to Employment as described in OPWDD’s “Draft Plan to Increase Competitive Employment Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities” will be available to individuals who express an interest in community employment, including individuals who are currently receiving day habilitation, workshop, prevocational and supported employment services. This service will also be available to students graduating from high school. The draft plan can be accessed at the following link:

http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/employment_for_people_with_disabilities/draft-plan-increase-employment-ops

Will skill training be provided for an individual with a developmental disability to get a job?

Skills training is encompassed in the wide variety of services provided under Pathway to Employment. Pathway to Employment is a person-centered, comprehensive employment planning and support service designed to assist participants in achieving competitive employment or self-employment. Services provided under Pathway to Employment may include, but not be limited to: vocational assessment; situational assessments; job readiness training, including individualized and appropriate work-related behaviors; community experiences; pre-employment skills, including tasks necessary to obtain employment based on the individualized needs of the participant; job-related discovery; travel training; experiential learning in career exploration and vocational discovery; experiential learning to achieve a specific vocational outcome; education and counseling around benefits management and employment; assessment for use of assistive technology to increase independence in the workplace; and, person-centered career planning which includes a defined and extensive vocational plan completed by the end of the Pathway to Employment service.

If a person with a disability goes to work, can the person also receive services such as Day Habilitation?

Yes. There are several OPWDD services that are available to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are interested in employment or other community inclusion activities including: prevocational services, supported employment, community habilitation, and day habilitation services. All of these services can assist a person in active participation in their community.

If a person works part-time what do they do with the rest of their day?

Again, there are several OPWDD services that are available to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are interested in employment or other community inclusion activities including: prevocational services, supported employment, community habilitation, and self directed services. All of these services can assist a person in active participation in their community. The individual and their family/advocate should be working closely with the individual’s service coordinator

to ensure that their appropriate needs and valued outcomes are met integrating the variety of services available.

Front Door

Of the 8,000 individuals through the front door, how many have received the services that they requested? What is the breakdown by region/DDRO?

People who are seeking information as well as supports and services have engaged with OPWDD's new front door processes. The 8,000 people referenced could be at differing points in a process of accessing services. Some may only be learning about the next steps toward an eligibility process, while others may already be eligible and seeking a specific service. At this time, specific data in response to the question is not available; however, through maintaining a consistent data system which focuses on identifying interests, needs and authorization of services data, OPWDD's system will be able to more comprehensively evaluate access to supports for individuals.

Needs Assessment

Is the CAS available for review at this time?

For summary information on the CAS, please see the Coordinated Assessment System (CAS) Brochure available at the following link:

http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/people_first_waiver/coordinated_assessment_system/brochure. To receive a draft version of the CAS, please send an email to coordinated.assessment@opwdd.gov.

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