PEOPLE FIRST
1115 DEMONSTRATION WAIVER
44 Holland Avenue
Albany, NY 12229-0001

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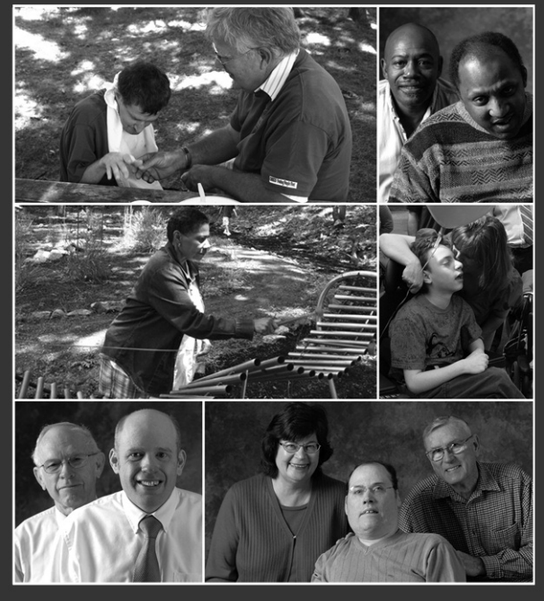


Information for Individuals and Families

Comment Line: 1-866-946-9733
E-mail: people.first@opwdd.ny.gov

Courtney Burke
Commissioner

Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor

Nirav R. Shah, M.D.
Commissioner

A Message from Commissioner Courtney Burke

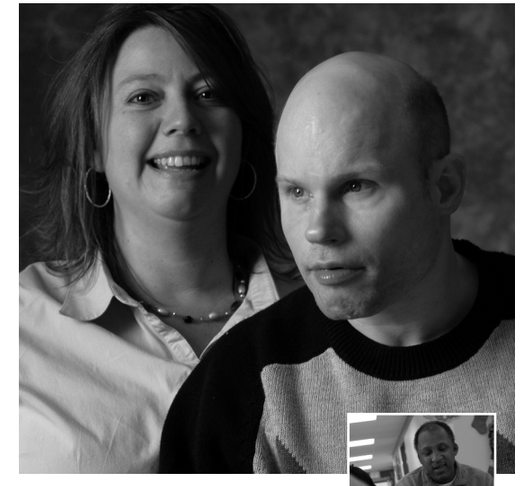
Today, OPWDD provides services using a framework established more than three decades ago in response to an urgent need to create community alternatives to the State's developmental centers. While that framework was effective then, our goal today is to ensure the service system provides services of the highest quality and remains sustainable for future generations. To that end, New York State is requesting federal government support to improve the developmental disabilities service system through what we are calling the "People First Waiver."

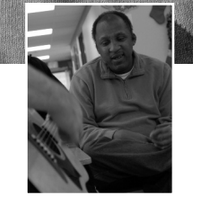
This is a major undertaking, but one that will deliver improved quality, greater personal choice, financial transparency and efficiency, and most importantly, richer lives for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. Designing these improvements will require the energy and ideas of many people. I invite you to join me in making the People First Waiver all we want it to be.

Courtney Burke, Commissioner

A Federal and State Partnership for Change

New York's People First Waiver will be an agreement with the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) that will "waive" certain Medicaid rules so that New York can continue to receive federal Medicaid funding for services while it develops and tests system improvements that would not be possible under traditional Medicaid rules. Demonstrating the effectiveness of the planned improvements will be an important part of the People First Waiver.





What the People First Waiver Is and Is Not...

- **The People First Waiver is <u>not</u> a means to reduce services and cut budgets.** Rather, it is a way to deliver supports and services to individuals with transparent accountability. It will tie New York State resources and federal Medicaid funds not to programs, but directly to services that maximize personal outcomes and support individuals' lives.
- **The People First Waiver is <u>not</u> a means to restrict or expand service eligibility.** Rather, it is a means to improve how we manage service access and ensure that the services people receive respond to their individual needs with the most effective and appropriate level of support. People receiving services will no longer need to accept "one size fits all."
- **The People First Waiver is <u>not</u> a Medicaid Block Grant.** Rather, it is an agreement with the federal government to operate a comprehensive system of supports and services for individuals with developmental disabilities. As with the current service system, supports and services under the People First Waiver will be available and accessible, within available resources, to people who meet eligibility requirements.

Building a Sustainable, People First Service System

The People First Waiver will prepare New York State's system of services for people with developmental disabilities to effectively serve individuals for years to come. Working together to develop the waiver application, many parties—people with developmental disabilities, family members, service providers, State agency leaders, and health care and long-term care experts—will design system improvements that reflect current policy developments in health care management and financing. These timely improvements will result in a system that will endure and operate effectively for both the agencies that provide services and the people and families who receive them. New methods of coordinating services will ensure easy access to comprehensive care—acute, preventive, and behavioral health care and the long-term services that define the OPWDD service system. What's more, the People First Waiver will personalize New York's approach to providing services, targeting individualized services to meet the needs of each person rather than offering each one the same "one-size-fits-all" service.

New Methods for Care Coordination and Managed Care

The People First Waiver is a timely opportunity for New York State to carefully align its developmental disability service system with Medicaid reform occurring in the State and with the larger health care reform at the federal level. The improvements that result will ensure that the system is sustainable and prepared to deliver quality services in the years ahead. As OPWDD and stakeholders work together to develop the People First Waiver application, they will examine specialized managed care models that integrate acute medical and long-term care services to achieve improved outcomes and quality of care, while lowering costs. OPWDD is committed to this process and to making the People First Waiver structure one that provides each enrollee with a comprehensive plan of care, care coordination and case management services appropriate to his or her unique needs and circumstances.

Reduce Reliance on Institutions

With the flexibility and innovation supported by an 1115 waiver, New York State will examine barriers to community living for people with high levels of behavioral need and recommend ways to deliver responsive community services that offer greater choice and control and result in enhanced personal outcomes. With an enhanced system of community services, there will be reduced need in the future for long-term institutional services. OPWDD's remaining institutional capacity will be used on a temporary basis for individuals who have needs that cannot be met in a community setting.

Reimbursement Reform

The People First Waiver will ensure that services are funded in a simple and rational way that reflects the level of care provided to each individual. New reimbursement methods will reduce administrative burdens for service providers, while ensuring increased accountability and transparency in the funding of provided services.

Quality Improvement

Through the People First Waiver, New York will develop a comprehensive method to measure service outcomes for individuals with developmental disabilities. Metrics will be used to confirm how the individual is doing, as well as how responsive the system is as a whole. Quality metrics will be used to:

- Guide policy and fiscal decisions;
- Promote and reward excellence in service delivery;
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of State quality management resources; and
- Guide enforcement actions when program and/or fiscal compliance is breached.

"No Wrong Door"

Through the People First Waiver, New York will explore new ways to organize assessment and eligibility determinations so that individuals with developmental disabilities who need access to Medicaid services from multiple State agencies will face "no wrong door." Allowing people to approach any agency for comprehensive services will make the system more people and family friendly.

We Want to Hear from You

In a state as large and complex as New York, it will take time to design and implement more organized and accountable approaches to a comprehensive delivery of needed Medicaid services for people with developmental disabilities. In the weeks and months ahead, OPWDD staff will work with all stakeholders so that the waiver application submitted to CMS is a collaborative product. We look forward to your input into the development of OPWDD's waiver application, in person and online. Your input makes a difference. It will shape the future for thousands of New Yorkers.

Please use the contacts below to learn about the People First Waiver, ask questions and make recommendations.

Visit the People First Waiver Web page:
www.opwdd.ny.gov/2011_waiver/

Use the People First email address for submitting comments or questions:
People.First@opwdd.ny.gov

Phone the People First comment line:
1-866-946-9733 or TTY: 1-866-933-4889

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