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Needs Assessment

What role have/will individuals and self-advocates play in discussions regarding the assessment tool?

A draft version of the New York State OPWDD Coordinated Assessment System (CAS) will be released shortly. The CAS is based on the interRAI Integrated Assessment Suite and is the tool OPWDD developed with the interRAI assessment consortium for use with individuals with developmental disabilities in New York State. Individuals and self-advocates are welcome to provide feedback and/or questions related to the assessment tool through the People First Waiver email address, People.First@OPWDD.ny.gov, or comment online. Individuals and self-advocates participating in the People First Waiver case studies will also have an opportunity to provide necessary feedback on the needs assessment process and on the accuracy and effectiveness of the CAS in identifying individual strengths, needs and interests for person-centered care planning.

With regard to the appeals process relative to the assessment tool, can you provide more specific information on the content of the appeals process?

The appeals process afforded individuals enrolled in DISCOs will essentially follow the process that is currently established in state law for managed long-term care (MLTC) organizations (Article 44 of the Public Health Law and associated regulations NYCRR 98-1). In this process, as in OPWDD's system today, the individual or family member does not appeal the results of a needs assessment, but rather, can appeal a decision about services. Thus, if a member of a DISCO feels the results of a needs assessment have limited the individual's access to a requested service, an individual, family or advocate may appeal the service plan. The DISCO will review all grievances and appeals and make a decision within required timeframes. If the DISCO is unable to resolve the issue or an individual finds the appeal result unsatisfactory, individuals also have recourse to outside review through a Medicaid Fair Hearing and/or an external review. The first step of any appeals process, however, involves both parties making an effort to address the complaint informally and avoid the need for filing a grievance or appeal. OPWDD anticipates that the DISCOs' care coordinators will work closely with individuals to minimize the need for formal appeals.

Targeted Work Teams

Is OPWDD planning to have local government at the table in discussions that drive change in the service delivery system under the People First Waiver?

OPWDD is well aware of the pivotal statutory, fiscal, policymaking and oversight roles local governmental units play in the design of local mental hygiene services, including those for individuals with developmental disabilities. To this end, Michael Orth, Second Deputy Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health, was chosen to participate in the Access, Enrollment and Advocacy Work Team. The focus of this work group is to prepare for the implementation of the pilot DISCOs by specifically exploring policy and procedural matters relating to DISCO enrollment, member rights once enrolled and the concept of independent advocacy for members. Additionally, as the work teams add

clarity to system reforms, there will be other opportunities for local government representatives to provide input on the specifics of the People First Waiver.

How will we keep informed on the activities of the three targeted work groups? Will there be a final summary of their recommendations?

OPWDD will post the charters and final recommendations of the work teams on the People First web page. Moving forward, key elements of the work teams' recommendations will be incorporated into revisions to the draft "Request for Applications" (RFA) that will ultimately be submitted to the federal CMS as part of OPWDD's 1915 b & c People First Waiver applications. To help service providers better prepare for system reforms, OPWDD posted on its [Web page](#) a **draft** of OPWDD's RFA for pilot managed care organizations known as DISCOs (Developmental Disability Individual Support and Care Coordination Organizations) for **informational purposes only**. OPWDD expects to submit its applications to CMS this fall and hopes to receive final approval by April 2013.

Benefits and Services

How will Environmental Modifications be handled with the new waiver? Will DISCO rates include this service or would it be separate for those who need it?

Environmental modifications will be a component included in the capitation payment to the DISCO. As such, the DISCO will be expected to provide necessary environmental modifications in accordance with a person's service plan.

How will children who qualify for OPWDD services get waiver services with the People First Waiver? Will the criteria remain the same or will every region have the same access to the new waiver as the rest of the state?

Children will be enrolled in the People First Waiver the same way they are currently enrolled in the HCBS Waiver today. They will apply for waiver enrollment through the OPWDD Regional Office. Once enrolled in the waiver, a care coordinator and care coordination team will work with the family and others in the child's life to develop a person-centered plan of supports and services. They will choose their service providers from within the DISCO's network of providers.

If I didn't want a day service long-term, would OPWDD and DISCOs pay for a mentor for going back to school instead of a day service?

An individual's care coordination team will determine the appropriate plan of services and supports. If a person wants a different kind of support instead of a traditional day service, he or she will be able to voice these desires to the care coordinator and his or her care coordination team. Under the People First Waiver, DISCOs will access and coordinate a wider variety of long-term support services than OPWDD currently offers, including an expanded menu of habilitative supports that can be more responsive to individuals' needs. Although these changes in capacity will be phased in slowly over time and are not determined today, there may be ways DISCOs can accommodate desires for a mentor through personal non-OPWDD services and/or vocational supports once expanded options are available.