



State of New Jersey
Department of Human Services
Division of Medical Assistance & Health Services

NEWSLETTER

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TO: All Providers - For Action
Health Maintenance Organizations - For Information Only

SUBJECT: New Division of Disability Services

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2001

PURPOSE: To notify all providers of the new Division of Disability Services (DDS), and of the transfer of certain Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS) functions to the DDS.

ACTION: Providers should use the DDS as a resource for all inquiries regarding disabilities and should refer issues related to the services listed below to the DDS.

BACKGROUND: The State Office of Disability Services (ODS) expanded significantly when it became the Division of Disability Services and took on added responsibilities within the New Jersey Department of Human Services, including seven programs previously administered by DMAHS.

The new Division of Disability Services will continue to be responsible for all ODS activities, including responding to as many as 5,000 inquiries and requests for information or assistance on disability-related issues each year. Many of these inquiries come in through the toll free information line (1-888-285-3036). DDS will also continue to be responsible for the following programs: Ticket to Work, Personal Assistance Services and Personal Preference.

In addition, DDS will assume responsibility for seven programs that serve people with permanent or temporary disabilities who are living in the community. These programs were administered through the State's Medicaid program, and will now be administered by DDS. These programs are: ABC Waiver, AIDS Community Care Alternatives Program (ACCAP), Model Waivers 1, 2 and 3, TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) Waiver and Personal Care Assistant (PCA) Services.

The focus at DDS will be people who become disabled as adults, either through an accident or illness. However, DDS information and referral services are available to anyone with a question about any type of disability. When appropriate, callers might be referred to other divisions within the Department of Human Services, including the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), the Division for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH), the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI), the Division of Mental Health Services (DMHS) or the Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services (DMAHS). DDS also provides information on other national, state, local, non-profit and private programs that serve people with disabilities and works closely with organizations and agencies such as the State's Independent Living Centers and the county offices of disability services.

Programs new to DDS include:

The ABC Waiver: This program serves medically fragile children who are under the care and supervision of the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). It provides full Medicaid benefits plus a number of special services, such as transportation and specialized medical equipment and supplies.

AIDS Community Care Alternatives Program (ACCAP): At any one time this program can serve a maximum of 1,000 people statewide, including those of any age with AIDS and children up to age 13 who are HIV positive. It provides full Medicaid benefits plus case management, private-duty nursing, medical day care, personal care assistant services, certain narcotic and drug abuse treatments at home and hospice care. Children receive additional benefits, including placement in a specialized group foster care home or reimbursement to their foster parents, through DYFS.

Model Waivers 1, 2 and 3: These three programs serve a maximum of 250 disabled Medicaid beneficiaries of all ages at any given time. They are designed to provide services in addition to full Medicaid benefits to people who otherwise would be unable to live in the community and would probably have to move into a nursing home or other institution. The 150 people covered under Model Waiver 3 also are eligible for private duty nursing.

TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) Waiver: This program serves people between 18 and 64 who have survived a traumatic brain injury. People in the program receive full Medicaid benefits plus additional services including case management, a structured day program, a personal care assistant, transportation, respite care and night supervision.

Personal Care Assistant (PCA) Services: This is an optional benefit offered to New Jersey Medicaid beneficiaries who are experiencing some functional impairment and need assistance with some aspects of daily living. Beneficiaries must have a doctor's order to receive this service, but they do not have to be permanently disabled. An estimated 15,000 people receive this service at any given time.

Programs that will continue to be administered by DDS:

Ticket to Work: This program, created last year through Federal legislation, offers people with disabilities who are working, and whose income would otherwise make them ineligible for Medicaid, the opportunity to pay a small premium and receive full New Jersey Medicaid coverage. This is crucial for many people with disabilities because Medicaid benefits are more comprehensive and better address the day-to-day needs of people with disabilities than benefits offered through most private health insurance plans. People with disabilities can qualify for the program with annual gross earned incomes as high as \$42,950.

Personal Assistance Services Program (PASP): This program provides routine, non-medical assistance to people with disabilities who are employed, involved in community volunteer work or attending school. Personal assistants help with tasks such as light housekeeping, bathing, dressing, preparing meals, shopping, driving or using public transportation. The number of PASP hours a person receives depends on individual need but can be as great as 40 hours per week.

Personal Preference: This research program, which is being done in conjunction with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is studying the effects of allowing disabled Medicaid beneficiaries who are eligible for Personal Care Assistant Services the opportunity to direct their own care. The study will compare their experience to the traditional method of providing the same services through an agency. New Jersey is one of three states participating in this federally sponsored study. The results will help determine how personal care services are provided in the future.

Information and Referral: The Division will continue to maintain the toll-free information line, 1-888-285-3036, and answer questions on any issues affecting people with disabilities.

If you have any questions concerning this Newsletter, please contact DDS at 1-888-285-3036.

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