

Thomas O. Forslund, Director

Governor Matthew H. Mead

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Dear Eligible Citizens on the Waiver Waiting List and/or their Legal Guardian:

Update on the New Waivers!

As you may be aware, the 2013 Wyoming Legislature made a major decision about the current Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver programs and passed Senate Enrolled Act 82 in March. This new law required the Wyoming Department of Health, Behavioral Health Division (the Division) to develop the means to serve more eligible citizens who are currently on the wait lists by using existing funds and providing better services. This new law also required the development of two new waivers, a Supports Waiver and a Comprehensive Waiver, to replace the current Adult and Child DD waivers. This letter is to inform you about the new waiver programs and the changes to the wait list that will be in effect once the new waivers are approved by our federal partners, the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS).

How will people on the wait list be affected by the new waivers?

Individuals who are currently on Adult DD or Child DD waiver wait lists and all newly approved applicants will be moved to the Supports Waiver wait list once the waiver is approved by CMS. If you are currently on the Adult or Child DD waiver wait list, you will receive credit for the time you have spent on that list.

When will people on the wait list get funded?

People on the wait list will not receive funding letters when the waiver is first approved in February or March 2014. The Division *was not given additional funding* during the 2013 legislative session to fund people from the wait list. Therefore, the Division will fund people as the newly redesigned waivers lead to efficiencies and cost savings.

If the Legislature appropriates more funds to the waivers, additional people may receive funding as determined by legislation and the budget authorized within that bill. As funding becomes available, the Division will send out funding letters by the wait list priority order.

What is the order in which people will get funded?

People on the wait list will be funded onto the Supports Waiver on a "first come, first serve" basis. This rule means the person who has spent the most time waiting is the first to get funded. New, eligible people will be placed at the bottom of the list. Emergency cases for funding from the wait list are reviewed by the Extraordinary Care Committee. Your case manager knows this process and the emergency criteria to assist you in case this becomes necessary.

What is the framework for the Supports Waiver?

The Supports Waiver has been designed to provide some funding for eligible citizens on the wait list. As a reminder, funding the wait list will begin once there have been cost savings incurred in the waiver redesign or if new funding is appropriated to the waiver from the Legislature. The Supports Waiver offers more service flexibility within the limited budget. As long as service definitions are followed and you stay within your budget, you can purchase as many units of a particular service as needed.

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How is the Supports Waiver budget determined?

The Supports waiver has two budget levels and the funding amount is determined by age. For ages 0-21, the budget is \$12,500. For ages 22 and older, the budget is \$16,500. Case management services are not included in the assigned budget; this amount will be added to the budget separately.

How do I get on the Comprehensive Waiver?

Once on the Supports waiver, a person may choose to be placed on the Comprehensive waiver wait list. Funding from the Comprehensive Waiver wait list begins with people who have the highest level of service need (level 6) to the lowest (level 1). This waiver is intended to serve people with a higher level of need. While waiting for the Comprehensive Waiver, people may receive services from the Supports Waiver. Placement on the Comprehensive waiver can only occur as funding becomes available for that waiver.

What is the framework for the Comprehensive Waiver?

The Comprehensive waiver has been designed to provide funding for eligible citizens with a higher level of assessed needs. Individual budgets will be based on assessed needs using a new Individualized Budget Amount (IBA) methodology. Rates for services are based on the rates effective October 1, 2013. There are many new service options to choose from as well as the same services in current waivers, such as residential habilitation and day services.

How is the Comprehensive Waiver budget determined?

The Comprehensive Waiver has a new budget methodology and assessment process to provide fairness in funding to all participants. The Division developed a new method to calculate an IBA on the Comprehensive waiver. There are four factors used to calculate the IBA: 1) Level of Service Need; 2) Age (above or below age 21); 3) Current living situation; and 4) Possible add-ons for other assessed needs (such as therapies, behavioral support services, nursing, crisis intervention, or employment services) that are not fully captured in the initial level of service need, as determined by the Division.

Level of Service Need will be determined by two assessments: Inventory for Client and Agency Planning (ICAP) and a supplemental assessment that asks questions relating to protection, advocacy, medical and behavioral supports. The Level of Service Need is important for placement on the Comprehensive Waiver. The Division added the supplemental assessment to provide a more complete picture of a person's needs that the ICAP may not identify. Interviewers from the University of Wyoming - Wyoming Institute on Disabilities (WIND) will be conducting the supplemental assessments starting in early Spring 2014. Your case manager was asked to identify a respondent, someone who knows the participant very well, to speak with the WIND interviewer by phone to answer the assessment questions.

Questions?

These transition months will be upon us soon and while we know that change is difficult, please know the Division staff is dedicated to helping you and your family through this transition period to a new wait list. We are hopeful that the waiver redesign will lead to faster movement on the wait list over the next couple of years. If you have any questions, please contact your case manager or talk to a specialist at the Division's main number (307) 777-6494 or toll-free at 1-800-510-0280.

Sincerely,



Joe Simpson, M.S., Ed.S.
Administrator

JS/JS/ja

c: Chris Newman, M.H.A., Senior Administrator, Behavioral Health Division