

Summer
2011
Newsletter



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Florida
Developmental
Disabilities
Council

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APD Budget Updates

(Information Courtesy of APD's Website)

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) implemented a four percent provider rate reduction effective July 1, as required by the Florida Legislature. The new Medicaid waiver service rates are posted on APD's website www.apdcares.org.

Additionally, the law requires a cost plan freeze for all waiver recipients. No one may increase their waiver services unless they are in a crisis situation. The Florida Legislature has mandated that APD bring its Medicaid waiver expenditures within its appropriation. The Legislature approved \$810 million for the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver for the 2011-12 state fiscal year which began on July 1. APD customers received \$930 million worth of services during the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Lawmakers are requiring that APD submit a plan by September 1 on how it will reduce expenditures. The Legislature added a requirement in law that waiver support coordinators and service providers must assist the agency with bringing service levels within appropriations.

Also beginning July 1, the Medicaid waiver will no longer provide personal care assistance (PCA) to children under 21 years old. That service is now provided by the Medicaid State Plan operated by the Agency for Health Care Administration. Customers of Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+) will continue PCA services as usual.

The HCBS waiver provides supports to about 30,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities so they may participate in their local community.

Also starting July 1, the agency added Down syndrome to its list of developmental disabilities that it serves, although most people with Down syndrome already qualified for waiver services. APD annually serves more than 50,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities of autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities, spina bifida, and Prader-Willi syndrome.

APD is also busy gearing up to phase in the new iBudget Florida program which allows for more self-direction and customer choice for consumers on the HCBS waiver. The agency's Medicaid waiver supports about 30,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities so they may live and participate in their local community. Those 30,000 people will all transition to iBudget Florida over the next 10 months.

The schedule will begin in the northern part of the state. Customers living in Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Calhoun, Jackson, Washington, Holmes, Franklin, Leon, Wakulla, Gadsden, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, and Jefferson counties will begin receiving information about iBudget Florida in a few weeks to begin the transition so they will be controlling their personal waiver budgets starting **October 1**. This phase will cover 3,261 individuals.

The second phase of iBudget Florida is scheduled to begin **December 1**. It will affect 7,745 customers in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Hardee, Highlands, Polk, De Soto, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties.

The third phase will start on **February 1, 2012**, affecting 9,454 customers in Palm Beach, Broward, Dade, Monroe, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie counties.

The final phase is scheduled to be implemented on **April 1, 2012**, covering 9,490 customers in Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Putnam, Suwannee, Union, Baker, Duval, St. Johns, Nassau, Brevard, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Flagler, Volusia, Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Marion, and Sumter counties.

iBudget Florida is designed to make the funding process fair and equitable for all Medicaid waiver customers. It will provide for more opportunities for customers to direct their own care and will also allow the agency to have more budget control and financial predictability.

Some of the customer benefits of iBudget are:

- Greater ability to choose services that matter to them, given their unique situations.

- Greater flexibility for customers to respond to changing needs.

- Reduced bureaucracy and "red tape."

- Support coordinators freed to focus on providing help that makes a real difference.

- Confidence that funding is fair compared to other customers who are similarly situated.

- Reduced likelihood of policy changes that cause significant disruption due to budget deficits.

- Security of a financially stable system that will be there to serve customers down the road.

- Greater control over their lives.

- Greater opportunity for APD to use new funds to serve people on the waiting list rather than resolve deficits.

- For more information about the iBudget and other disability-related issues go to APDcares.org or call | 1-866-273-2273.

Council Members

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The Council is a non-profit organization that receives its funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities. The Council operates independently of any state agency or department.



Director's Message

The directive from the Florida Legislature to bring the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community- Based Services Waiver expenditures to within the appropriated funding level is daunting and scary.

In addition to the 4% provider rate reduction and continuation of the cost plan freeze, an additional \$75 million will need to be identified for reduction. This level of reduction will not be accomplished through efficiency measures nor by looking to the services received or provided by someone else.

Where will the cuts come from?

The developmental disabilities waiver system and the individuals who rely on this system have already experienced service and rate reductions.

There will be no cuts that will not be felt by many. However, if the Agency for Persons with Disabilities does not implement strong fiscal and operational controls and bring waiver expenditures within the legislative appropriations, the Legislature will move this waiver system into managed care.

To prevent this from happening, we must all work together to help APD balance the budget and, at the same time, protect needed services.

Debra Dowds

Executive Director

Self-Advocates Define Community Living

Reprinted from the
ADD Update July 2011

Leaders from the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), the National Youth Leadership Network and Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) shared their thoughts on the meaning of living in community in a paper published in March.

The paper, "Keeping the Promise: Self Advocates Defining the Meaning of Community Living," was created to provide the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and the broader policy-making environment, with a definition of community that captures what self-advocates feel are the most vital elements of community life.

ASAN, SABE and the National Youth Leadership Network leaders noted that the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the DD Act and other civil rights laws is not being fulfilled for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities seeking full community participation. The true spirit of access to community services and individualized supports in the areas of housing, education, employment and transportation, are falling short.

To better understand the perspective of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, ASAN, SABE and the National Youth Leadership Network convened a National Community Living Summit of self-advocates in the fall of 2010. Immediately following the summit, the leadership team conducted interviews with attendees of SABE's 2010 National Self Advocacy Conference held in Kansas City, Mo., September 23–26.

The paper addresses the questions posed to interviewees: What are the things that determine that a place or residential program is not part of the community? What are the things that determine that a place or program where a person gets residential services is truly in the community? What does "community living" really mean?

The paper summarizes five dimensions that holistically encompass community living: physical size and structure; rights and self-determination; qualities and attitudes of providers; access to community life; and meeting of support and access needs.

The paper recommends guidelines that should be used "to ensure that community integration is available to all people with disabilities, regardless of where they live ..." and discusses the indicators that define what community is and what it is not.

The self-advocates make their perspective very clear: "In genuine community, people have names not labels, live in neighborhoods not on campuses, make their own choices, and enjoy privacy and genuine relationships of equality."

To read all the recommendations, go to <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add/> and click on "Keeping the Promise of Community".

News and Notes

Save the Date

2011 NACDD Annual Conference

“Building Bridges: Meeting the Expectations of a New Generation”

November 16-17, 2011
Gaylord National Hotel
201 Waterfront Street
National Harbor, Maryland
(adjacent to Washington, DC)

For more information go to www.nacdd.org

Save the Date

2011 The Arc National Convention

“Achieving New Heights”

September 16-19, 2011
Sheraton Downtown
1550 Court Place
Denver, Colorado 80202

For more information and to register go to www.thearc.org.

Tax Incentives for Small Businesses

There are federal tax credits and deductions available to businesses that employ and/or accommodate individuals with disabilities. Additional state tax credits may be available. Check with your State Department of Revenue for further information.

As tax credits and deductions are subject to yearly change, be sure to contact the Internal Revenue Service for current information at 1-800-829-1040 or 1-800-829-4059 (TTY). For more tax credit information go to:

[http://spot.pcc.edu/~rjacobs/career/tax_credits_and_deductions.htm#Federal Tax Credits](http://spot.pcc.edu/~rjacobs/career/tax_credits_and_deductions.htm#Federal_Tax_Credits)

Updates on Council Projects

Florida Self-Advocacy Alliance - The Florida Self-Advocacy Alliance was started in response to a summit in Atlanta earlier this year that many self-advocates attended. The Administration on Developmental Disabilities is hosting a variety of these self-advocacy summits all over the country to promote self-advocacy. There were six states at the summit in Atlanta.

The representatives from Florida decided to continue the self-advocacy work begun at the summit and they are now known as Florida Self-Advocacy Alliance.

The goal of the alliance is to bring together a network of all self-advocacy groups in Florida. This does not mean the Florida Self-Advocacy Alliance wants to take them over; rather the aim is to assist in networking activities to create systemic change in our state.

The Alliance is meeting on a bi-monthly basis through conference calls to work on its direction and how it can make great change in Florida's future.

Early Steps Preservation Initiative - This project developed and implemented a public relations campaign to support funding for Early Steps by targeting legislators prior to and during the 2011 session. This involved encouraging graduates of Early Steps to share their stories with lawmakers (via vignettes, videos, etc.), developing a message for lawmakers (especially newly elected ones) stating why funding for Early Steps must continue, and developing information packets for distribution to lawmakers. Many project activities were completed as part of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day 3/23/11. Legislators approved increased funding for Early Steps for FY 2011-2012.

Community Campaign to Reduce Fetal Alcohol Syndrome - This project focused on a campaign to reduce Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. The provider is now working on sustainability efforts by soliciting potential organizations with the goal of turning over the Florida Fights FASD campaign for them to take on as their own.

Health Care Transition Strategic Plan Year 3 - This project is implementing activities from the state health care transition strategic plan, promoting FloridaHATS through a brochure and social media venues, supporting local coalitions, updating and promoting an insurance guide, and promoting a training module. This project will also establish the "My Health Care" initiative. The initiative will develop Florida-based training teams that include self-advocates and professionals to educate self-advocates on how to communicate with health care professionals to identify and to advocate for their own health care needs. FloridaHATS promotional work continues through the educator module development and online health services directory for young adults.

Dental Education and Training – This project is in the final stages of developing comprehensive training materials focusing on the importance of oral health care for individuals with developmental disabilities and providing specific strategies for caregivers to promote and assist in successful oral health care for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Youth Leadership Forum - The Youth Leadership Forum provided leadership, citizenship and social skills training to 42 high school students with disabilities during a four-day period. Students serve as delegates from their hometowns, and 20 alumni served as junior staff. The Able Trust, which coordinates the program each year, exceeded the minimum number of participants with developmental disabilities (15) by serving 23 students with developmental disabilities as part of the total group. They also exceeded the number of students returning to serve as junior staff. They expected 15 to return and 20 returned this year.

Leadership Activities - Florida Care received applications from 52 individuals and approved funding for 48 of those to attend the conference, workshop, or training for which they had applied.

Coping with Stress - A Guide for Caregivers - This project will develop "Coping with Stress", a booklet targeted at caregivers of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Improving Wellness - The FIT Club - Gulfstream Goodwill will replicate the programs implemented in Year 1 to improve the health and wellness and overall quality of life and reduce secondary health conditions for individuals with developmental disabilities. Participants are continuing to work on health and wellness goals through weight loss, exercise, and health education. Replication guide developed and approved. Year 3 approved by the task force and will include piloting the replication guide.

To learn more about the Council, including information on free publications, go to www.fddc.org.

You can also learn more about the Council by going to the Council Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/TheFDDC>