



FLORIDA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL, INC.

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iBudget Florida

iBudget Florida needs sufficient time to be fully implemented and evaluated before other redesign options for the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Services Waiver are considered.

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) implements the federal Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Services (DD/HCBS) Waiver which is a Medicaid option for protecting the health and safety of individuals with developmental disabilities, preventing institutionalization, and supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve as independent and productive lives as possible, included in their communities. This waiver option is utilized by about 30,000 Floridians with developmental disabilities so they may live and participate in their local communities.

All of those 30,000 people will transition to the iBudget Florida system over the next year. iBudget Florida is designed to make the funding process fair and equitable for all Medicaid waiver customers. It will provide increased opportunities for customers to direct their own care by having the freedom to choose their services. The new system will also allow the agency to control costs and have more financial predictability in the future.

APD determines a new individual budget, or iBudget, after considering several factors, including a review process that looks at the individual's age, the living situation (whether the individual lives with family, in their own home, or in a group home) and the kind of support needed, according to the agency-approved assessment, called the Questionnaire for Situational Information (QSI). All of this information will be used to help APD determine the amount of money that can be approved to assist individuals in meeting their needs.

Section 393.0661, F.S., requires APD and the Agency for Health Care Administration to develop a plan to redesign the waiver program by September 30, 2013, if the waiver budget deficit continues during 2012-2013. The redesign option being given serious consideration is managed care. Managed care options may further cut services and reduce the ability of individuals with developmental disabilities to live in the community.

It is the position of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council that the iBudget is designed to provide APD with the mechanism to strengthen their fiscal and operational controls of the DD/HCBS waiver to ensure that waiver spending is within the legislative appropriation. However, APD needs sufficient time to fully implement and evaluate the iBudget before managed care or other redesign options are considered.

The last portion of the state will not transition to the iBudget until July 1, 2013, which is only three months before a plan to redesign the waiver program is due to the Legislature. The iBudget should be allowed at least 12 months of being fully operational before it is assessed as a method for deficit reduction and cost controls. The iBudget system has checks and balances in place to improve in predictability over time.

The Council supports the principles of the iBudget and urges the Legislature to give this tool for budget equity, flexibility, cost control and predictability a fair chance to be implemented and evaluated before considering another shift in the system design.