

**Today's Quote:** *"Patience and perseverance have a magical affect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish."* John Quincy Adams - 1767-1848, Sixth President of the United States of America

## Federal Government Approves Expanded Waiver for New Jersey

As of November, the federal government has granted DDD's request to amend its Medicaid waiver. This decision gives the division more control and flexibility in its ability to provide and fund many community-based services for people with developmental disabilities.

As a result of this decision by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the DDD will have the ability to receive matching funds from the federal government for a number of services that currently are funded totally with state dollars. Most of these services are provided by social service agencies through contracts with DDD.

This decision affects New Jersey's Home and Community Based Services Waiver, more commonly referred to as the "Community Care Waiver" or the "CCW." The CCW allows the state to use Medicaid funding to pay for certain services provided to people in the community, rather than in an institution.

"I am very pleased that DDD has been allowed to amend its waiver because New Jersey is now positioned to be in line with what is happening across the rest of the United States," said DHS Commissioner Jennifer Velez. "This will allow us to serve people in a way that will draw down additional federal funds. It not only

helps the state in tight fiscal times, but it also will allow us to be more effective in the way we serve people with developmental disabilities."

Through the amended waiver, DDD will be able to bill the federal government for a portion of the cost of a number of services currently funded entirely by the state. DDD was also granted permission to add new standards and clarifications to some services, including respite, supported employment and day habilitation, which

already are included in the waiver and therefore funded in part by the federal government. This gives the state greater flexibility in managing the waiver and allow for broadening the definition of a waiver service.

In addition, the federal government will now provide federal matching funds to help pay for individual budgets that are granted to people who are self-directing their own services.

This change allows people greater flexibility and choice in both the services they receive and how they receive them. It also makes it possible for people in Real Life Choices to be served through the waiver. The amendment is retroactive to January 1, 2008, which allows the state to bill the federal government for waiver services provided to individuals since that date.



## NASDDDS Executive Director Thaler explains trends in DD systems

DDD staff and numerous stakeholders from New Jersey recently heard a national expert presenting a sobering overview of new national economic and demographic trends, and their likely affect on developmental disabilities (DD) systems around the country.

The presenter was Nancy Thaler, M.S., Executive Director of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS). Thaler's talk marked the 200th presentation in the ongoing Developmental Disabilities Lecture Series. It was held on November 18 at the Double Tree Guest Suites in Mt. Laurel.

In her presentation, called "Building a New Paradigm: A Values-Based Response to Demographic and Economic Realities," Thaler talked about how an aging population and limited economic resources will affect the states' ability to deliver services to individuals with developmental disabilities and how state developmental disabilities systems must adapt.

Thaler said, going forward, a core component of these systems must be the understanding that most people with developmental disabilities already are, and will continue to be, living at home with their families. Nationally, surveys have shown that more than 55 percent of all people receiving services live with families, and five states reported that 70 percent or more of all persons receiving support resided with their families. In New Jersey, approximately 68 percent of all individuals with a development disability live with their families.

She cited a number of trends that are contributing to this paradigm shift including:

- The fastest growing segment of the population is the age group 85 and older; and by 2030, almost 20 percent of the population will be 65 years or older.
- As this segment of the population grows, there will be relatively fewer young people in the work force to care for them, even if money is available to hire them. And, said Thaler, given current fiscal realities and the ongoing economic crisis, such funding will be at a premium.



- The current reality is that we can't afford to pay for 24-hour residential services for everyone; we can not staff 24-hour residential services, even if we could afford it; and states all over the country have waiting lists for those services.

Looking ahead, said Thaler, things are only going to get more difficult for states trying to fund residential placements. She suggested that states should become more realistic about how they provide care and try to do a better job of supporting people living with their families.

To do this successfully, our concept of families should broaden to include not only parents, but also siblings, grandparents and other relatives. In addition, planning should start early and be proactive. The entire family network should be engaged in this process. The focus should include both the individual's desired outcomes and a consideration of the family's needs.

Given the fact that not all individuals have families, Thaler said some states address that need through the concept of Shared Living, which involves matched, long-term relationships with other individuals and families who are willing to share their homes. These caregivers receive a stipend, respite and support and supervision from an agency.

## DDD Tell Individuals Their Ranking on the Residential Services Waiting List

For the first time ever, DDD has written letters to everyone in the Priority Category of the Waiting List for Residential Services notifying them of their place on the list. The letter, mailed the week of November 10th, went to approximately 4,600 individuals.

“Many families are vitally concerned about their loved one’s ranking on this waiting list,” said Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Ritchey. “We want to make sure they have it, which is why in the future we plan to provide this information to them annually.”



The division’s residential waiting list is divided into three categories: Priority, Priority Deferred and General. The individuals in the Priority Category are considered to have the greatest potential need for a residential placement.

The criteria for these categories are outlined in DDD’s Division Circular #8 (see link to circulars at <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/DCs.html> and at NJAC 10:46C). In general, individuals are assigned to the priority category when one of the following situations exists:

1. The individual is in need of placement because he or she is determined to be at significant risk.
2. Both of the birth or adoptive parents are 55 or older.

DDD is only able to provide residential services when funding has been budgeted for that purpose. When funding is available, individuals are served in the order in which their name was added to the Priority Category of the list.

The letter confirmed the date individuals were added to the Priority Category and noted their number on the list as of October 31, 2008. It was accompanied by a fact sheet describing the eligibility criteria for receiving DDD-funded services, a description of the division’s services and contact information for the division and its regional offices.



***How many people have recently moved to the community from developmental centers?***

July 2007 - June 2008 = 121

July 2008 - November 2008 = 40