



Colorado Department of Human Services

people who help people

VETERANS AND DISABILITY SERVICES
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Bill Ritter, Jr.
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Karen L. Beye
Executive Director

June 19, 2009

Mr. and Mrs. Wenlock
67045 E. 48th
Byers, Co 80103

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Wenlock:

I received your correspondence regarding the upcoming changes in the SLS program. I asked Jo Kammerzell to contact you to discuss the concerns in your letter and some of the information in this response will reflect the conversation she had with you. As you know, Colorado has experienced many changes in the system that provides services for people with developmental disabilities. These changes are due to the need for Colorado to come into compliance with federal requirements for service delivery through Medicaid Home and Community Based Services waivers. These waivers are the contracts Colorado has with the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which provide the funds to pay for services. We are aware of the likely impacts of these changes on many people.

Up front, let me tell you that it is very difficult to explain all of the complex information involved in these changes in a way that is understandable. The staff at DDD are committed to try and explain this process in the easiest way possible but it is perhaps our biggest challenge. So, in advance, I apologize as I know that I may not be able to give you the answers that you are seeking through this correspondence. DDD staff will continue to work with you as much as possible to address or resolve your concerns.

You asked the following questions:

- Sean currently receives 30 hours of Supported Community Connections (Community Access) each week. He is a Level 4 on the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) and under the new Service Plan Authorization Limit he will not be able to get the same number of hours of this service. What is the Division for Developmental Disabilities (DDD) going to do to make up for the remainder of those hours?

The CCB (Denver Options) will provide Sean with his appeal rights and can assist you in filing an appeal. With the changes being implemented there may be cases where SLS will no longer be able to provide the level of service that an individual needs. For those individuals, we would encourage them to request to be placed on the waiting list for HCBS-DD services

(comprehensive). This may be something to discuss with Sean's Case Manager through Denver Options. With the changes in the HCBS-DD waiver, services will now be able to be provided within the family home and this may be a good option for Sean. DDD staff did check into the option of Adult Day Services through the Elderly Blind and Disabled (EBD) Waiver. This service is provided in a facility based group setting. Based on Jo's conversation with you this does not sound to be a viable option. However, Jo has asked that Denver Options follow up with you on other services that may be available for Sean through other sources. An example that Jo provided to you is accessing physical therapy services through Medicaid State plan.

- How did DDD determine the SIS was a valid tool?

The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) is a nationally recognized and standardized tool that has undergone extensive reliability and validity testing. It has also been selected by many states as a portion of their rate setting process by identifying consumer support levels. Attached you will find information that was sent out to the system on the selection of the SIS which will provide you with greater detail.

- Denver Options has indicated that they can no longer supplement services, why?

It is true that when a rate for a service is determined, this rate cannot be supplemented by other funds. However, if a person is able to get funding for services through other means, this is allowable.

- Why will there be a delay in payment to providers?

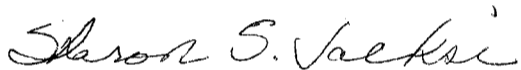
Denver Options has indicated that they will be providing written information to their contractors on processes for payment given new documentation requirements. DDD expect, that providers will be paid in a reasonable time frame and will work with any CCB if there is an unreasonable delay.

- Now that service providers are required to do administrative tasks such as documenting services they provide to individuals they serve, this will take away from the actual time spent with Sean.

It is required that service providers maintain written documentation of the service they provide to individuals. When the rates were developed, this was taken into consideration. The provider must provide the amount of direct service that is identified in Sean's Service Plan. The administrative function is intended to be an additional cost of doing business. If this office discovers that proper service is not delivered or billing is not within guidelines, it will work to correct the problem.

It has been hard to balance the requirement for standardized rates within an existing appropriation while still trying to minimize the impact on thousands of service recipients and hundreds of service providers. Unfortunately, there is no way to avoid having some amount of increase or decrease to existing rates and services when establishing a system of statewide standardized service rates. Every effort has been made to try to minimize any negative impact on services currently being provided. Sean's case manager through Denver Options will continue to work with you to determine the best way to move forward for him.

If you have further questions or need further clarification, please contact Jo Kammerzell at (303) 866-7462 as she is the individual at the Division for Developmental Disabilities who manages the SLS waiver.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon S. Jacksi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial 'S'.

Sharon S. Jacksi, Ph.D.

Director, Division for Developmental Disabilities

C: Tim Hall, Veterans and Disability Services
Jo Kammerzell, DDD



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To: CCB Executive Directors
Policy Advisory Committee
CEARCs
CAPRA
Speaking For Ourselves
Self-Advocate Advisory Council
CMS Waiver Steering Committee
Regional Center Directors

From: Fred DeCrescentis
Viki Manley

Subject: Selection of New State Level of Need Assessment

Date: July 25, 2006

The Colorado Department of Human Services/Division for Developmental Disabilities (CDHS-DDD) contracted with the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) to review and analyze assessment tools that the state could utilize to establish tiered funding rates that are tied to consumer support needs for residential and day services furnished through the Developmental Disabilities Waiver programs. HSRI identified ten tools that may apply to funding for developmental disabilities services. These tools were a mixture of “national tools” and tools that individual states developed on their own. HSRI staff met with a wide range of Colorado stakeholders to obtain their input.

Based on review of the report and communication that DDD has had with its stakeholders, CDHS-DDD and the Department of Health Care Policy & Financing (DHCPF) decided to adopt the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) published by AAMR. Following is a listing of some of the key considerations in making this decision:

- As the system moves toward standardizing its rate setting methodology, the process must be transparent in that the link between assessment results and support/funding levels should be clear.
- The SIS yields more reliable and valid information about individual support needs and, thereby, a better foundation for linking funding to such needs.
- The SIS uses a three-dimensional scoring method that takes into account the frequency, type and amount of supports that a person needs and so provides a stronger approach to assessing the individual’s level of support needs.
- The instrument is a national tool that was normed on a sample of 1,306 adults with intellectual disabilities from thirty-three states and two Canadian provinces. The SIS has acceptable

reliability/validity. AAMR continues to conduct studies and to make refinements to the instrument, to update its training and to support users.

- The SIS focuses on an individual's current needs while some of the other tools reflect a "look back" approach. Although historical usage is important information, such tools don't routinely capture the need for a service or support that was not used in the past.
- The SIS has the potential added advantage of providing relevant information to support individual service plan development.
- As noted above, the SIS is principally designed to directly feed into and support the development of person-centered plans by measuring the frequency, intensity and volume of support that individuals need in various dimensions of everyday community functioning and living.
- The SIS already has been adopted by five states even though the tool only became available less than two years ago. So far Louisiana, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Utah and Washington have selected the SIS as their baseline assessment tool. Alta Regional Center in California (Sacramento) also has adopted the SIS. Alta serves 13,000 children and adults with developmental disabilities.
- The SIS is the only tool that includes a focus on employment-related supports.

Considering the decision made, we do understand that there will be challenges in its implementation:

- The SIS is a proprietary instrument and therefore will cost the State additional funds.
- Training personnel in the administration of the tool is critical. Training will need to begin very soon in order to conduct assessments for all individuals receiving Comprehensive Waiver services this year.
- The baseline SIS instrument may need to be supplemented to secure additional pertinent information about the person needed for rate setting. The system will need to immediately begin work on the supplemental documentation.

In summary, CDHS-DDD and DHCPF believes that Colorado would be best served by selecting the Supports Intensity Scale and looks forward to the anticipated benefits identified on behalf of individuals receiving services. Thank you.

- c. Mr. John Daurio, Director, OADRS
- Ms. Marva Livingston Hammons, Executive Director, CDHS
- Ms. Barbara Phremus, Director, DHCP&F
- Mr. Steve Tool, Executive Director, DHCP&F