

The Direct Line

News from Director John Martin

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

30 East Broad Street, 12th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

DODD.Ohio.gov
800-617-6733

CMS Transition Plan: Employment and Day Services

In January 2014, the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released new requirements for Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers administered by states. Essentially, the rule says that federal Medicaid funds no longer can be used to pay for waiver services in settings that isolate people, including institutions, and settings next to public institutions. This new rule applies to facility-based work and day services that are paid for using Medicaid HCBS waiver funds; it does not apply to Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF).

To keep this important federal funding, DODD is working to develop new service models that promote community employment and integrated day services. These new services will ensure that all individuals, regardless of where they choose to receive services, will have opportunities to be involved in community-based activities. The level of community participation will be based on each person's service plan. Individuals will continue to have access to places during the day where they can receive assistance with personal care, medical needs, or respite. In addition, they will be able to receive the same level of support that they receive under the existing service models.

Individuals are asking for these new services – more people want to work in the community, and to participate in community activities. That's why some organizations have consolidated their current operations – people are leaving those facility-based settings and spending more time working and participating in the community.

It's important to remember that none of these changes will occur overnight. In fact, DODD has asked CMS for ten years to make these changes so we can slowly and planfully make adjustments in consultation with families and stakeholders.

What does this mean for me?

This change may or may not affect your current setting, whether it is facility-based work or day services, or a disability-specific farm or apartment complex. While CMS has not ruled on any specific setting in Ohio, CMS has said that some settings will require heightened scrutiny, or an on-site review; this applies to settings that, on paper, look like they don't meet the requirements of the rule when, in fact, they do. DODD will review each setting individually to determine whether or not it has the HCB setting characteristics required by the new CMS rule. If a specific setting does not meet those requirements, DODD will work with the provider to develop a plan to bring the setting into compliance. Our goal is to develop a plan that will minimize any disruption to the individuals receiving services.

Based on that, there are two ways this will affect you:

- **You will have access to new and different services.** As these new services are developed, you will have more options to help you get a job in the community, and participate in community activities.
- **You may see some changes to your current setting.** While these changes don't necessarily mean you will have to change your setting or your provider, what you do during the day may change. Some providers will need to change how they offer services to meet the requirements of the new rule, and to be able to offer the new services once they are developed. It's important to note that most providers report that they currently meet the requirements of the new rule, or can meet those requirements with minor changes.

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How are you developing the new services?

We know there are people who are doing creative things in their local community. We also know that, on a bigger scale, we need more examples of some of these new service models. DODD will work to learn more about those things that are working well in local communities, and to come up with new ideas. That's why DODD has asked CMS for ten years to make these changes.

Where can I learn more?

- **Online:** Go to DODD.Ohio.gov/OurFuture for more information, including frequently asked questions, and a link to the Ohio's updated Transition Plan
- **Email:** Receive general news and information in your email inbox – sign up for Pipeline <http://dodd.ohio.gov/pipeline/>
- **By phone:** Call the DODD Budget and Developmental Center Closure Hotline toll-free at 855-611-6446 (OHIO) or 614-728-5311