

## **CONSUMER-DIRECTION IN GEORGIA HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED WAIVERS**

### **The Plan**

Georgia is committed to the continued improvement of home and community-based services. People with developmental disabilities and their families are the driving force in changing service delivery to empower consumers to make their own choices and improve their quality of life. The **Department of Community Health** and the Department of Human Resources are getting final approval from the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid to amend the Independent Care Waiver Program (ICWP) and the Mental Retardation Waiver Program (MRWP) to add self-direction as an optional service delivery mechanism. The amendments support the vision of people with developmental disabilities and their families as being able to experience as much freedom, choice, control and responsibility over the services they receive as desired. The initial implementation with a small number of participants in the ICWP started in April 2005, and then members will be added a time goes on. The MRWP will start offering self-direction by summer 2005.

### **Description of Program Amendment for ICWP**

Having surveyed the ICWP population to learn their interest in self-direction, DCH concluded that some members desire a more flexible delivery system. The Department will include Consumer-Directed Personal Support Services and Financial Support Services as an optional service delivery mechanism within the existing 1915c waiver to be funded with service dollars.

Consumer-directed services are being added to the waiver and will be available to all enrolled members who are willing and able to direct their care and perform essential employer functions, such as interviewing, checking references, hiring, supervising and firing attendants.

Consumer-directed Personal Support Services include assistance for personal care both of a supportive and health-related nature specific to the needs of the member. Services include providing assistance with eating, bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, toileting, transferring, bowel/bladder control and in/out of home respite.

When choosing Consumer-Directed Personal Support Services, a member will be required to select a fiscal agent to provide Financial Support Services.

### **Description of Program Amendment for MRWP**

The Division of Mental Health Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases, as a result of Georgia's current service system, sets the stage for the addition of self-direction within the MRWP. Members enrolled in the MRWP Natural Support Enhancement Services (NSE) will have the option to elect to engage in consumer-directed services, acting as the employer of their support and/or respite providers. The member or family/representative must be willing and able to direct his/her NSE services and perform employer functions, such as interviewing, checking references, hiring, supervising and firing. The member or family/representative who elects to self-direct his/her NSE services may continue to receive other waiver services under the traditional service delivery system.

Consumer-Directed Natural Support Enhancement Services give members and their natural support networks the option to self-direct the NSE services specified in the Individual Service Plan. NSE services target people who live in their own homes but who also have a support network comprised of family, friends, neighbors, and others who want to have active roles in supporting the member.

When choosing Consumer-Directed Natural Support Enhancement Services, a member will be required to select a fiscal agent to provide Financial Support Services.

### **Financial Management Services**

Financial Support Services are designed to perform finance and related functions for the member or family. These services assure that the funds to provide services and supports outlined in the individual plan of care that are to be implemented through a self-directed approach are managed and distributed as intended.

Financial Support Services will be delivered by organizations or individuals that are established as a legally recognized entity in the United States, qualified/registered to do business in the state of Georgia, and approved as a Medicaid provider by DCH. In August 2004, DCH did a "Request for Information" to solicit invitations from qualified entities interested in becoming a fiscal agent to members enrolled in self-direction. The Department received five proposals from interested vendors. In February 2005, DCH started accepting Financial Support Service providers.

### [Financial Management Services Criteria](#)

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