



# Waiting Lists in State I/DD Systems

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# Medicaid and Waiting Lists

- In most areas of Medicaid, waiting lists are not permissible, for example:
  - Services enumerated at 1905(a) of the Social Security Act – and therefore, any EPSDT benefits
  - Services provided through 1915(i) HCBS as a State Plan Option
  - Services provided through 1915(k) Community First Choice Option
- In fact, Section 1902(a)(8) requires that states, "... provide that all individuals wishing to make application for medical assistance under the [state] plan shall have opportunity to do so, and that such assistance shall be furnished with reasonable promptness to all eligible individuals..."
- Of course, all services must be “medically necessary”



There is  
almost  
always an  
exception in  
Medicaid

## Waiting Lists and 1915(c) HCBS Waivers

- 1915(c) of the Social Security Act permits states to limit the number of individuals served
- CMS notes in the Technical Guide for HCBS Waivers that “If it is necessary to defer the entrance of individuals to the waiver, the state must have policies that govern the selection of individuals for entrance to the waiver when capacity becomes available. These policies should be based on objective criteria and applied consistently in all geographic areas served by the waiver.”

### Various Strategies Used in States

- Waiting list policies and management for each waiver must be described in the approved waiver application(s)
- Many states elect to have a single waiting list for multiple waivers serving the same target group (i.e., multiple waivers for individuals with I/DD) and assist individuals on that waiting list to access the waiver that is best suited to meet their needs
- Individuals may be on more than one waiting list at a time, often depending on the types of waivers available within the state
- States may not have waiting lists for specific services within a waiver

## Numbers of People Waiting for Services

- An estimated 182,340 people with IDD living with a family member were waiting for Medicaid Waiver funded LTSS on June 30, 2017. For individuals with I/DD thirteen states reported not having a waiting list or reported no people waiting for Medicaid Waiver-funded supports
- Since 2017, Louisiana and Minnesota have both eliminated their waiting lists for services
- During times of tough budgets, sometimes waiting lists grow

## State Strategies for Managing Waiting Lists

- First Come, First Served
- Prioritization by age, diagnosis, situational factors
- Screening tools used to set priorities (PUNS, SIS, NC-SNAP, etc)
- While states must manage waiver capacity on a statewide basis, some states use local partners to assist in the process

# Reducing Waiting Lists

Over the years, states have prioritized reducing waiting lists for services

This is sometimes done with an infusion of state general revenue to serve individuals waiting for services

In other instances, states have devised waiver structural strategies to provide a limited number of services to a greater number of individuals, ensuring access for all with smaller service packages – supports waivers



## Waiting Lists – A continued priority

- States devising waiver structures to serve as many individuals as possible
- States aiming to grow more individualized, lower cost service models
- States prioritizing employment
- States prioritizing relationship-based services





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