

# The Pennsylvania Autism Waiver

## Consumer Frequently Asked Questions

### ⌘ What is the Autism Waiver?

This waiver was developed in response to key findings of the Autism Task Force formed by Department of Public Welfare Secretary Estelle Richman in 2003. The Task Force observed that there were almost no community-based services in Pennsylvania for adults living with Autism Spectrum Disorders. In response, the Autism Task Force recommended the development of targeted supports and services designed specifically for adults living with autism.

### ⌘ What makes the Autism Waiver different from other developmental disabilities waivers in Pennsylvania?

- The waiver is specifically designed to meet the needs and profile of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- It will be administrated directly by BAS, not through the counties or Administrative Entities.
- Intelligence (IQ) is not an eligibility factor.
- Providers will be required to complete autism specific training and demonstrate competence.
- Clinical and technical assistance will be available to waiver providers.
- Participants' progress will be measured against goals.

### ⌘ What is covered under the waiver?

In addition to Supports Coordination, services include:

- |                                  |                              |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ➤ Assistive Technology           | ➤ Job Assessment and Finding |
| ➤ Behavioral Specialist Services | ➤ Nutritional Consultation   |
| ➤ Community Inclusion            | ➤ Residential Habilitation   |
| ➤ Community Transition Services  | ➤ Respite                    |
| ➤ Day Habilitation               | ➤ Supported Employment       |
| ➤ Environmental Modifications    | ➤ Temporary Crisis Services  |
| ➤ Family Counseling              | ➤ Therapies (OT and SLT)     |
| ➤ Family Training                | ➤ Transitional Work Services |

### ⌘ What are the eligibility requirements for the Autism Waiver?

In order to be eligible for the Autism Waiver, a person must be a resident of Pennsylvania or planning to be a resident at the time of enrollment and meet functional and financial eligibility criteria. Priority is given to people not already receiving ongoing state funded or state and federal funded long-term care services.

#### **Functional eligibility:**

- The applicant must:
- have a diagnosis of ASD
  - be 21 or older
  - be at risk of institutionalization in an Intermediate Care Facility

#### **Financial Eligibility:**

- Based on Medical Assistance resource and income guidelines including long term care limits
- Income limit is based on 300% SSI Federal Benefit Rate (FBR)

## **⌘ How do I know if I meet Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) level of care?**

In order to meet ICF level of care, the disability must:

- Result in substantial functional limitations in three (3) or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, understanding and use of language, learning, mobility, self-direction, and/or capacity for independent living.
- Be manifested before the person reaches age 22.
- Be likely to continue indefinitely.

## **⌘ How many people will be served under the Autism Waiver?**

There are plans to serve 200 consumers in the first year. Waiver capacity may increase as the budget allows.

## **⌘ What if I am already receiving services?**

The Autism Waiver gives priority to individuals not already receiving state funded or state and federally funded home and community based services. Examples of these are the OBRA Waiver and the Consolidated Waiver.

Priority 1: Those not already receiving state funded or state and federally funded home and community based services.

Priority 2: Those currently enrolled in state funded or state and federally funded home and community based services.

## **⌘ How do I request an application?**

From July 1<sup>st</sup> through August 11<sup>th</sup> an applicant will:

- Call the toll free number (1-866-539-7689) and leave a message with basic information requesting an application
- BAS will return the call to collect additional information.
- The applicant is categorized as Priority 1 or Priority 2 as defined above.
- At the end of the six-week period, all Priority 1 requests will receive a randomly assigned number. All Priority 2 requests will also be assigned a random number.
- Application packets will be mailed to Priority 1 individuals in order of their randomly assigned numbers until waiver capacity is reached. If additional waiver capacity remains, packets will be sent to Priority 2 individuals in order of their randomly assigned numbers. Completed applications will then be reviewed to determine if applicant meets eligibility criteria.

After the initial six week period:

- Persons calling the toll-free number to request an application will be assigned to Priority 1 and Priority 2 categories as above.
- The requests will be listed on the appropriate priority list according to the date and time of their initial call.

Application packets will include all necessary forms and instructions on how to complete and submit the application and related documentation. Applicants will be notified of the enrollment by mail.

**⌘ Will there be a waiting list?**

If applications exceed capacity a waiting list will be maintained on a first come, first served basis.

**⌘ Can I keep my Health Choices managed care plan?**

Yes. You will continue to receive your physical and behavioral health care through your current health care plan. The Autism Waiver does not cover those services.

**⌘ If I am found eligible for the Autism Waiver how long can I remain in the program?**

There is no time limit on remaining in the waiver program provided an individual continues to meet all eligibility requirements. The waiver does not have a maximum age limit.

**⌘ Is there a maximum amount (cap) of waiver funded services a participant can receive?**

No. There is no overall limit (cap) on funded services. However, some waiver services have lifetime maximums. Other services have limits on the number of service hours within a specific timeframe. Participants will receive services based on individual need.

*For more information on the Autism Waiver please visit the Bureau of Autism website at [www.autisminpa.org](http://www.autisminpa.org) or email us at [DPW-AutismOffice@state.pa.us](mailto:DPW-AutismOffice@state.pa.us).*

**TO APPLY FOR THE AUTISM WAIVER, CALL TOLL FREE BEGINNING ON  
JULY 1, 2008:**

**1-866-539-7689**