

## **Proposed HCBS Waiver Amendments**

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver programs are designed to allow individuals to use Medicaid dollars to pay for services when they require long-term supports (such as individuals with developmental disabilities) in the community rather than in an institutional setting. Some of the regular Medicaid State Plan rules are “waived” to allow this to happen.

There are currently proposed amendments for the HCBS-DD (Developmental Disabilities) and HCBS-SLS (Supported Living Services) waivers. These changes are being proposed to reduce the DD budget while having the least effect on services that are currently being provided in the system. The individuals who receive services through Community Living Alternatives’ (CLA) residential program fall under the HCBS-DD waiver. The main changes that may have an impact on these individuals fall into the following areas: day habilitation services; prevocational services; supported employment; behavioral services; and dental services.

Day Habilitation Services include Specialized Habilitation (SH) and Supported Community Connections (SCC). SH is generally provided in a non-integrated setting where most people have a disability and SCC is typically provided in the community where the individuals interact with nondisabled individuals. These services do not include sheltered workshop activities. The waiver proposal will decrease the number of units available under this service area, in combination with Prevocational Services, from 7,112 units (or 1,788 hours)/year to 4,800 units (or 1,200 hours)/year or an average of 24 hours per week. Therefore, individuals that are currently enrolled in SH or SCC services five days/week for six hours each day (or 30 hours/week), may see a change to a four day week at six hours/day, or shortened days for five days/week.

Prevocational Services are those in which individuals are learning skills to prepare them for paid work in the community. Individuals receiving these services typically are paid at less than minimum wage while learning these work skills. The waiver proposal states that individuals who receive Prevocational Services should obtain paid or unpaid work in the community within five years, however, it may continue longer if there is an assessment and documentation that indicates the individual needs this service for a longer period of time. Individuals who receive Prevocational Services may also receive Supported Employment and/or Day Habilitation Services. In the waiver proposal, units of service will again be limited to 4,800 units (or 1,200 hours)/year or an average of 24 hours/week. As with Day Habilitation Services, this

may cause a change in the number of days/week or the number of hours/day individuals will be receiving these services.

Supported Employment Services provide the support necessary for individuals to maintain competitive employment in the community. If an individual is enrolled in Day Habilitation Services in combination with Supported Employment, the units have remained the same at 7,112 units (or 1,788 hours)/year or an average of 7 hours/day for 254 service days.

Behavioral Services include services by a qualified professional such as evaluations, functional behavioral analysis, consultations and recommendations for behavioral interventions and individual and/or group counseling that are related to the individual's developmental disability. Individuals with a dual diagnosis of a developmental disability and a mental health condition will have their needs met by the appropriate system (such the counties' mental health system and/or behavioral services in the DD system). These services cannot be duplicated.

There are two major proposed changes to this section: the elimination of behavioral line staff (which does not impact any of the individuals through CLA) and a limitation on the number of units to 80 per service plan year and 40 units per year for a behavioral assessment. This cap on units will impact individuals who regularly see a behavioral therapist through the DD system, not those that receive services through the counties' mental health system (such as Aurora Mental Health).

Finally, there is a proposal to put a limit on the amount of money that can be spent on dental services each year. Preventative and basic services are limited to \$2,000 per year and major services are limited to \$10,000 for the lifetime of the waiver (or five years). For most individuals, we do not anticipate this to be a problem.

The Division for Developmental Disabilities is accepting public comment on these proposed changes.

If you choose to comment, please send an e-mail to [Shari.Repinski@state.co.us](mailto:Shari.Repinski@state.co.us) using a subject line of Waiver Amendments. If responding by postal service, please send your comments to Shari Repinski, DDD, at 4055 Lowell Blvd, Denver, Co, 80236. Responses need to be received by May 27, 2011.

Click here for the [HCBS Waiver Amendment Process](#) and click here for the [Waiver Amendment draft](#).