



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

Testimony before the Appropriations and Human Services Committees

*Amendments to the 1915(c) Medicaid Waiver for Individual and Family Support
Amendments to the 1915(c) Medicaid Waiver for Employment and Day Supports
Amendments to the 1915(c) Medicaid Waiver for Comprehensive Supports*

September 20, 2019

Good Afternoon Senators Osten and Moore, Representatives Walker and Abercrombie and honorable members of the Appropriations and Human Services Committees. My name is Deidre S. Gifford and I am the Commissioner for the Department of Social Services (DSS). I am pleased to be here with Kathy Bruni, DSS Director of Community Options and Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Under the provisions of section 17b-8 of the Connecticut General Statutes, we are here today to seek your support to amend the following three applications each to be effective January 1, 2020:

- (1) Medicaid Waiver for Individual and Family Support;
- (2) Medicaid Waiver for Employment and Day Supports; and
- (3) Medicaid Waiver for Comprehensive Supports.

As Connecticut's single state agency for Medicaid, DSS has administrative authority over the three above-referenced waivers, while DDS functions as the operating agency for such waivers.

Each waiver is designed to assist individuals with intellectual disability by providing services that allow them to continue to live in the community.

DSS and DDS are proposing the following changes:

- (1) Adding **Vehicle Leases** as a service to all waivers. This service will provide waiver participants with a less expensive transportation alternative for a customized vehicle to enhance an individual's ability to remain in their own home while continuing to participate in employment opportunities and community outings.
- (2) Adding **Remote Supports** as a service to all waivers. This service will promote independent living through an off-site, direct service provider who will monitor and respond to a person's health and safety needs by utilizing real-time, two-way communication. This service also may include assistance from a local provider who will provide backup staffing in cases where direct assistance may be needed.
- (3) Adding **Eligibility Coordination** as a service to all waivers. This service will provide education and training on methods to obtain and maintain eligibility for Medicaid waiver services.

- (4) Increasing the **Assistive Technology** limit per waiver participant from \$5,000 to \$15,000 over a five year period, and adding an assistive technology support cost to the Assistive Technology service array on all waivers. These changes will enhance and improve functional capabilities for waiver participants.
- (5) Adding **Vehicle Modification** as a waiver service to the Employment and Day Supports waiver and increasing the Vehicle Modification limit per waiver participant from \$10,000 to \$15,000 over the term of each of the three waivers. Vehicle modifications allow participants to make necessary alterations to their vehicle to promote independence and community inclusion.
- (6) Adding **Environmental Modification** as a waiver service to the Employment and Day Supports waiver and increasing the Environmental Modification limit per waiver participant from \$15,000 to \$25,000 over the term of each of the three waivers. Environmental Modifications allow participants to make physical adaptations to their private residence to ensure the health and safety of the individual while promoting greater independence in the home.
- (7) Adding **Personal Emergency Response system** as a service to the Employment and Day Supports waiver. This service will promote general safety and provides an emergency alert option for waiver participants.

Finally, DSS and DDS are proposing to align performance measures and implement technical and administrative clarifications requested by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) across all three waivers.

No current waiver participants will be negatively impacted by the proposed changes. In addition, these amendments are projected to be cost neutral and will result in enhanced quality of life especially as the remote supports and assistive technology will permit greater independence by the waiver participants and allow DDS to further examine who needs to live in a group home setting. Along with these new services, which provide a less costly support alternative, DDS also has built in safeguards for expenditures within its operation of the three waivers. Individuals participating in one of the three waivers are provided with a budget based on their individualized needs. DDS then approves each service within an individual's budgeted allotment. This process provides DDS with comprehensive oversight of all waiver expenditures.

Pursuant to §17b-8, a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the amendments in the Individual and Family Support, Employment and Day Supports and Comprehensive Supports waivers was posted for public review and comment in the CT Law Journal, as well as on both departments' websites, beginning July 2, 2019 for a period of 30 days. There were no comments submitted in response to the NOI. A letter notifying the Committees of Cognizance of the departments' intent to amend the waivers was transmitted on August 30, 2019.

The departments respectfully request that the Committees approve the request to amend the Individual and Family Support, Employment and Day Supports and Comprehensive Supports waivers, as described. Staff from DSS and DDS will be happy to answer any questions.