



Family Forum FAQ's 2019

Waiver Services & Policy

1. **Where are the NOW and COMP waiver services that were mentioned on the PowerPoint listed along with the associated policies?**

The manuals can be found here:

Department of Community Health- Waiver Manuals

(select Provider then Provider manuals)

<https://www.mmis.georgia.gov/portal/>

2. **Are any of the following covered under the NOW/COMP?**

- a. **Dental** – *Waiver Supplemental services can be used as available and needed for qualifying dental services*
- b. **Long term planning, guardianship, special needs trusts, wills** – *Not Covered*
- c. **Van modification** – *Yes, under vehicle adaptation*
- d. **Bathroom adaptation** – *Yes, under environmental modification*
- e. **Assistive technology** – *Not covered at this time*
- f. **Please give an example something covered under Goods and Services.**
Incontinent supplies are one example of something covered under Goods and Services. Please refer to the waiver manuals for more details.

3. **Can the waiver ever be lost?**

The NOW and COMP waivers are available to individuals who maintain Medicaid and clinical eligibility and abide by participant responsibilities as outlined in the waiver manuals.

4. **Can a family member be paid to be direct support staff?**

There is a family hire exception in policy for participant-direction. It is approved on a very limited basis and is reviewed on a case by case basis. There are strict restrictions found in Chapter 1200 of the NOW and COMP Part II policy manual.

- 5. Are therapy services considered a part of waiver services or are they separate? Is there a monthly cap on the amount of therapy services that someone can receive?**

Yes, adult speech, adult occupational, adult physical therapies are available waiver services for individuals with clinically assessed need. Yes, there is a cap in the amount of therapy an individual can receive, which can be found in the NOW and COMP waiver manuals.

- 6. There is a cap on CAG of \$17,000 per year. If this does not cover the full cost of CAG services, what should a family do?**

Discuss other service options such as Supported Employment and Community Access Individual with the individual's support coordinator.

Employment

- 1. What is Employment Express and how do you access it?**

Employment Express is actually employment express funding. This is a funding stream using state dollars to support individuals who are on the planning list and wanting to pursue supported employment. Job development and procurement is funded through the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) and Employment Express funding is used to provide support to an individual while on the job (working) once their case is closed with GVRA.

- 2. Do employers receive incentives for hiring individuals with DD?**

No

- 3. Does employment affect SSI?**

Each case is different. GVRA offers benefits counseling to help people see which earnings are affected and how they could impact benefits. Payroll earning must be reported to Social Security.

- 4. Does competitive employment affect a waiver?**

No, but income can affect Medicaid eligibility.

- 5. Can individuals on the planning list receive supported employment before receiving a waiver? How do families access Supported Employment services if they don't have a waiver?**

Yes, individuals on the planning list can contact the Regional Field Office to request a referral to GVRA to begin the supported employment service.

- 6. If Vocational Rehab deems an individual unemployable, what are other options?**

DBHDD needs to be made aware of this occurrence as DBHDD does not consider anyone who desires to work to be unable to seek and achieve employment.

- 7. If an individual with I/DD wants to pursue self-employment, are there resources to help?**
DBHDD is working to find resources and tools for self-employment.

Planning List

- 1. What is the planning list?**

The planning list includes individuals who have applied for Medicaid waiver services and have been determined pre-eligible.

- 2. How does someone apply for a waiver?**

Contact the Regional Field Office or go on the DBHDD website to print a paper application. To locate your assigned Field Office visit:

<https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/regional-field-offices>

- 3. Is there an age that an individual should apply for waivers?**

There is no age restriction on when a person can apply for NOW and COMP waiver services

- 4. What determines most-in-need? How do individuals receive waivers?**

DBHDD utilizes an objective, validated needs assessment tool and most-in-need questionnaire to determine who moves into waiver services. The planning list is not based on when you apply for service. The tool is updated at least annually. DBHDD encourages families to contact their DBHDD Regional Field Office at any time during the year if there is a change in condition or circumstance so the assessment tool can be updated.

- 5. Do the new autism services from DCH impact the ability for an individual to be on the planning list and/or receive services?**

The services available through the Autism State Plan do not affect the ability of an individual to be on the planning list. However, because the waiver is the payor of last resort, individuals who should be receiving services through the Autism State Plan will not be eligible to receive those services through the waiver.

- 6. How does DBHDD educate families on waiver services?**

Primarily through the DBHDD website. <https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/be-compassionate>

- 7. If there is no longer a waiting list for NOW and COMP waivers, do those of us on the previous waiting list have to reapply when our kids graduate and leave high school?**

DBHDD maintains a Planning List for individuals with IDD who have applied for waiver services and have been determined pre-eligible. Annually, the regional field office contacts the individual to update the needs assessment. People come off the planning list and move into services based on the needs assessment and most-in-need criteria. If the individual has a change of circumstance at any time during the year, they must

contact the Regional Field Office to have the needs assessment updated by a Planning List Navigator (specific staff person who manages this work).

8. Who do we contact when we need to re-activate our application or reapply?

Contact the DBHDD Regional Field Office.

9. Is there a plan to raise the yearly allotment for "Family Support" funds?

Not at this time.

Support Coordination

1. What is the role of a support coordinator?

The role of the support coordinator is to act as an advocate for the person in services. It is similar to a case management role.

2. What is intensive support coordination and how does it specifically serve the individual?

Intensive support coordination is provided to individuals who demonstrate significant behavioral/medical needs based on assessment tools. An intensive support coordinator provides more in-depth oversight, more frequent visits, and works with a clinical supervisor to address more intensive clinical needs.

3. If a family is not pleased with the level of service from the support coordinator, who should they contact? Can families change support coordination agencies?

If an individual is unhappy with their support coordinator, they should first contact the leadership of the support coordination agency and express their concerns. If they feel that their concerns are not being addressed, they can contact the DBHDD Regional Field Office to communicate their concerns. An individual is offered choice and can move to another support coordination agency if they so choose. If that is desired, they will need to contact the Regional Field Office to let them know of the desire to change and which agency they would like to change to. There are 7 support coordination agencies to choose from in Georgia, but not all of the 7 agencies cover all areas of the state.

4. Please discuss the new ISP template. Can families review prior to the ISP meeting?

IDD Connects will **not** enable an individual or their family members to review the ISP prior to scheduling and completion of the ISP meeting being held. Authorized representatives will have access to the ISP prior to signing it and once it has been approved.

IDD Portal

1. When will families have access to the portal?

New applications can be completed within the IDD Connects Portal. Individuals who are already in DBHDD services will soon receive communication on how to access the portal.

2. Is the portal for individuals new to services or both new and existing?

It will be for both. At the moment, the new applicant's portion is operational.

<https://www.georgiacollaborative.com/individuals-families/iddconnects/>

3. Will IDD Connects allow participants to see notes/status of goals entered by providers?

No. IDD Connects will not allow individuals or families to view notes or status of goal entered by providers as providers cannot enter notes into IDD Connects.

4. If we have a waiver and need to request additional services, should we apply via I/DD Connects or support coordination?

Individuals should contact their support coordinator to request additional services.

5. If applying for a waiver is now electronic, how will that work for individuals with I/DD who are their own guardians?

Individuals may utilize natural supports to assist them in accessing the new application. DBHDD still accepts paper applications.

6. Recently, we learned that the system support coordination to access and retrieve records (HRST, SIS, Exceptional Needs, BSP, etc.), is not yet operational.

IDD Connects is the new system for DBHDD and went live August 19th. The system is operational though we are working to improve the functionality. Individuals or authorized representatives can request a copy of their ISP at any time.

Autism

1. Are providers being trained in autism, especially triggers and de-escalation?

Yes, DBHDD is providing some training through START (Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources, and Treatment) is a tertiary care research-based model of services and supports. While providing training, assessment, and crisis intervention services, START services are implemented in the context of a comprehensive, systems-linkage approach to improve capacity in the system as a whole.

The Center for START Services, developed in 2009, is a national initiative based at the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability/UCED and provides educational and capacity-building services, promotes and evaluates evidence-informed practices and approaches, and facilitates START model program implementation across the United States with the aim of improving the lives of individuals with IDD and behavioral health needs.

2. Are there autism specific crisis respite homes for individuals over 17?

Individuals over 17 who require the services of a crisis respite home would be placed in a regular crisis home for individuals with I/DD.

Participant Direction

1. What are the steps to change to the participant direction service delivery model?

Contact your support coordinator and inform them of your interest. Sign-up and complete the six-hour mandatory training provided by DBHDD Participant Direction staff. Provide the support coordinator the copy of the certificate of completion then select and enroll with the one of the three fiscal intermediaries within 90 days of completion of the training. You will also need to read and understand the NOW and COMP Medicaid policy for participant direction.

2. Is there a participant direction handbook or manual for families?

Yes, it is posted on the DBHDD website with other helpful resources on participant direction at:

<https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/be-compassionate/home-services/participant-direction>

3. If a family chooses to go self-direct, does the family also choose the support coordination agency?

Yes, all individuals can choose their support coordination agency.

4. Who can a family contact if there are specific questions on aspects of self-direct services?

The first steps would be to review the Medicaid policy and speak to their support coordinator.

Crisis Services

1. Does the mobile crisis unit avoid the needs for emergency room admission? 1013?

Yes, the purpose of the mobile crisis team is to deescalate crisis situations in the community. For more information on accessing crisis services, go to:

<https://www.georgiacollaborative.com/providers/georgia-crisis-and-access-line-qcal/>

2. What is the expected response time for a crisis team?

The expected time is 60 minutes from dispatch by the Georgia Crisis and Action Line (GCAL).

3. Does GA have crisis care for children/adults with I/DD and MH – inpatient, out of home?

Yes, DBHDD has in-home and out-of-home crisis options that are accessible through GCAL (1-800-715-4225).

STABLE Accounts

A STABLE Account is an investment account available to eligible individuals with disabilities. STABLE Accounts are made possible by the federal Achieving a Better Life Experience (“ABLE”)

Act. STABLE Accounts allow individuals with disabilities to save and invest money without losing eligibility for certain public benefits programs, like Medicaid, SSI, or SSDI.

For specific questions on setting up a STABLE account or to learn more, who can families contact?

To learn more about Georgia's STABLE accounts please go to:

<https://www.georgiastable.com>

To view the Georgia' Council's Facebook session on STABLE Accounts:

<https://www.facebook.com/georgiaddcouncil/videos/georgia-stable-information-session/2596432700419584/>

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV)

Families who self-direct are concerned about privacy issues, burden of implementation, and connectivity issues for rural families. Please provide any relevant updates and who families can contact with concerns.

The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) is leading the EVV initiative. Please refer to their website for updates and information:

<https://medicaid.georgia.gov/programs/all-programs/georgia-electronic-visit-verification>

PA/ISP Issues

- 1. With the implementation of the new online IDD Connects system, individuals with birthdays in September/October are experiencing delays in uploading PAs to the fiscal agents and are concerned about interruption of services. Who should families contact if they are experiencing issues?**

Contact your support coordinator with your concerns. DBHDD is diligently working to solve the issue as quickly as possible.

- 2. Within the last few months we participated in our family member's ISP and support coordination advised that the entire process had been changed, and they had only recently been trained on it. We were informed that the new system would no longer allow addendums if there was any choice/need to change said services.**

The change is that instead of using the term addendum, we use an ISP version change. Version changes can occur as needed to update services within the confines of policy.

- 3. When my family member's birthday rolled around and we still hadn't received a copy of her ISP, her support coordinator informed us that the Regional Board still hadn't approved it so what she sent us wouldn't include the final goals or the actual budget.**

If this family is still in need of a copy, they should reach out again and request it. If there is an issue, the SC is working through it with the DBHDD Regional Field Offices. We can confirm the system is pushing the information to the GAMMIS (Medicaid) system as designed for the most part. We are prioritizing ISPs that are close to expiration and working endless hours to resolve issues.

- 4. We met in August to plan the ISP in advance of my daughter's birthday in October. It's my understanding that the new individualized service plan is to go into effect on her birthday. Can you tell us when the new IDD system will be operational and actually how many of these changes are supposed to benefit this population or the family members who try to understand it?**

IDD Connects is meant to replace the multiple systems DBHDD staff and network utilize to complete their work. The system increases transparency and communication between DBHDD, SC, and providers. Families can now complete a waiver application online and upload documents instead of completing a paper application.

- 5. My daughter's birthday is in November. She has COMP waiver which has been a blessing. I hope they will address ISP and PA issues.**

DBHDD is actively working to resolve issues within the IDD Connects system.

Budget

Will I/DD services be affected by upcoming state budget cuts?

At this time, Medicaid waiver funding is not impacted by budget cuts.

DBHDD, Division of Developmental Disabilities Contact Information

Amy Riedesel, Director of Community Services

Directs supported employment, NOW and COMP participant direction, waiver supplemental services, respite services, state funded services, Aging & Disability resource connection and family support services.

Amy.Riedesel@dbhdd.ga.gov

Ashleigh Henneberger, Director of Waiver Services

Directs and drafts policies as it pertains to NOW and COMP waivers, the DD provider manual, and DD policies

Ashleigh.Henneberger@dbhdd.ga.gov

Allen Morgan, Director of Field Operations

Directs field operations for six regional field offices. Field offices, the first point of contact for families regarding services, locate and coordinate services, investigate and resolve complaints, and monitor services to ensure quality.

Allen.Morgan@dbhdd.ga.gov

Jeffery Thompson, Admissions Manager

Manages all activities related to waiver service entry and use of state funds for individuals.

Jeffery.Thompson@dbhdd.ga.gov

Dana Scott, Director Office of Health and Wellness

The Office of Health and Wellness is a clinical hub that provides consultation to field offices, providers, and families regarding clinical support for skilled nursing and behavioral supports for individuals on NOW/COMP waivers.

Dana.Scott@dbhdd.ga.gov

Robert Bell, Director of Community Supports

Management and oversight of work of support coordination statewide.

Robert.Bell@dbhdd.ga.gov

Helpful Links**DBHDD, Division of DD Services**

<https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/be-compassionate>

Georgia Crisis and Access Line (GCAL)

1-800-715.4225

<https://www.georgiacollaborative.com/providers/georgia-crisis-and-access-line-qcal/>

Department of Community Health – Waiver Manuals

(select Provider then Provider manuals)

<https://www.mmis.georgia.gov/portal/>

Commonly Used Acronyms

<https://qadbhdd.policystat.com/policy/6713301/latest/>

To Locate Your Assigned Field Office

<https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/regional-field-offices>

Participant Direction Handbook

(located under Resource Section)

<https://dbhdd.georgia.gov/participant-direction>