

What is Medicaid?

Medicaid (also called Medical Assistance in PA) is a public health insurance program in the United States. Every state runs its own Medicaid program with help from the federal government. Pennsylvania's Medicaid program is called Medical Assistance.

What is a Medicaid Waiver?

A Medicaid Waiver is a program offered through Medicaid that gives special services to certain groups of people. Each state creates and runs its own Medicaid Waiver programs. However, the federal government has to approve these programs.

Why is it called a Waiver?

The name Medicaid Waiver refers to the fact that states are “waiving”, or giving up, some federal Medicaid rules in order to support certain groups of people in a different way. For example, in traditional Medicaid, states are not allowed to have waiting lists. This means that anyone who is eligible for Medicaid can get it.

However, states are allowed to have waiting lists for Medicaid Waivers. Also, states can allow waivers to cover services that are not paid for by traditional Medicaid, such as employment and community supports. These extra services are called home and community-based services.

Who are Medicaid Waivers for?

States can decide what services people can get from their Medicaid Waivers. States also get to decide what group of people can be in a Medicaid Waiver. This means that the state can make a Medicaid Waiver for a specific group. Most Medicaid Waivers are for:



older adults
(over 65 years old)



people with certain
disabilities like autism



people with illnesses
that last a long time
(like HIV/AIDS)

How can people get a Medicaid Waiver?

To get a Medicaid Waiver, people have to show that they need support in order to live and work in the community. States will do an assessment to learn how much support a person needs. This assessment will determine if the person is eligible for a Medicaid Waiver.

Medicaid Waivers are meant to serve people in their homes and communities instead of in an institution. Many people with disabilities, like autism, need home and community-based services to be able to live independently in their communities.

What Medicaid Waivers are available for individuals with autism?

In Pennsylvania, the following Medicaid Waivers and Programs are available for individuals with autism:

Bureau of Community Supports (BCS) Waivers

-  Consolidated Waiver
-  Person/Family Directed Support Waiver, or P/FDS
-  Community Living Waiver

Bureau of Supports for Autism and Special Populations

-  Adult Autism Waiver
-  Adult Community Autism Program (ACAP is only available in four counties: Chester, Lancaster, Dauphin, and Cumberland).

These waivers have different eligibility requirements, offer different services, and have different benefits and limits. However, they are all meant to help people live independently in their homes and communities. All of these waivers are run through Pennsylvania's Office of Developmental Programs (ODP).

How can Medicaid Waivers help individuals with autism? Medicaid Waivers can help people with autism get home and community-based services. Some examples of home and community-based services are:

-  Job coaching
-  Transportation to a job or an appointment
-  Building skills for independent living like getting dressed and showering
-  Learning skills to help live in, work in, and be a part of the community