

Open for Public Comment: Renewal of the Adult Autism Waiver (AAW)

ODP Announcement 21-024 **REISSUE**

AUDIENCE:

All Stakeholders

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this communication is to announce that Appendices A through H of the proposed renewal for the Adult Autism Waiver (AAW) are available for public review and comment. **There is a 30-day public comment period that begins on February 27, 2021 and ends on March 29, 2021.**

DISCUSSION:

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is pleased to announce the opportunity for public comment on Appendices A through H of the AAW. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approves waivers for a five-year period. The current AAW expires on June 30, 2021. As such, ODP must submit an application to renew the AAW to CMS. The waiver renewal is anticipated to be effective on July 1, 2021. As part of this process, ODP is seeking your valuable feedback and comments on Appendices A through H of the proposed renewal.

In the request for renewal of the AAW, ODP proposes the following substantive changes to Appendices A through H:

- Promote health, wellness, and safety by adding Homemaker/Chore as a new service.
- Support individuals with complex needs through the addition of reserved capacity for individuals that are discharged from a state center and individuals

that are disenrolled from the AAW due to incarceration for more than 6 months.

- Simplify the system through additional alignment of all waivers administered by ODP. This includes:
 - Revising the service definitions, service limitations, and provider qualifications for Day Habilitation, Residential Habilitation, Life Sharing, and Respite services in the AAW to align with the three other ODP-administered waivers, where possible.
 - Removing Temporary Supplemental Services as a discrete service from the AAW. Supplemental Habilitation is being added to residential services and 2:1 staff-to-individual ratios are being added to the Community Support and Respite services to meet the needs of individuals who require more intensive staffing.
 - Refining the definitions of critical incidents, protocols, oversight of medication administration, and oversight of restraints and restrictive procedures to comply with 55 Pa. Code Chapter 6100 regulations and ODP Incident Management policy.
 - The alignment of quality improvement strategies to include the use of the Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) process and the Plan-Do-Check-Act Model.
- Develop and support qualified staff through revisions to provider qualifications for Supports Coordinator Supervisors and Supports Coordinators.
- Promote choice and control by adding independent living technology as a component of Assistive Technology services.
- Removing Therapies (Counseling and Speech/Language Therapy) to ensure that the AAW does not duplicate services covered under the Medical Assistance state plan.

ODP will be publishing a separate notice announcing the availability of Appendices I and J for public comment upon completion of the rate setting process. A communication will be published when these appendices are available.

Appendices A through H of the proposed renewal of the AAW are available at:

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Disabilities-Aging/Pages/Adult-Autism-Waiver-Renewal.aspx>

Information regarding Appendices A through H of the proposed renewal of the AAW, including how to provide comments, can be found in the Pennsylvania Bulletin, Volume 51, Number 9, published on Saturday, February 27, 2021 at:

<https://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pabull?file=/secure/pabulletin/data/vol51/51-9/295.html>

COMMENTS:

Interested persons are invited to submit written comments regarding the proposed AAW renewal. Comments should be addressed to Laura Cipriani, Department of Human Services, Office of Developmental Programs, 625 Forster Street, Room 510, Harrisburg, PA 17120. Comments may also be submitted ODP at RA-odpcomment@pa.gov using subject header "AAW Renewal".

Comments received by 11:59pm on March 29, 2021 will be reviewed and considered for revisions to the proposed renewal of the AAW.

ODP will also hold a webinar to receive comments on the proposed renewal of the AAW renewal. Date, time and link for registration to attend this webinar are as follows:

March 16, 2021
2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

The following link must be used to register for the above webinar:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/408654799932370446>

Anyone who is interested in participating in the webinars may do so by phone but will need a computer to provide comments during the webinars. To assist ODP in accurately capturing comments provided during the webinar, individuals are asked to submit a written copy of their comments by email or mail to the address provided above.

Persons who require an auxiliary aid or service may submit comments using the Pennsylvania Relay Service by dialing 7-1-1 or by using one of the toll-free numbers:

- (800) 654-5984 (TDD users)
- (800) 654-5988 (voice users)
- (844) 308-9292 (Speech-to-Speech) or
- (844) 308-9291 (Spanish)

Copies of Appendices A through H of the AAW may be obtained by contacting the Office of Developmental Programs, Bureau of Supports for Autism and Special Populations, at the following address or email:

P.O. Box 2675, Harrisburg, PA 17105, RA-odpautismwaiver@pa.gov

CONTACT:

Questions about this communication should be directed to RA-odpautismwaiver@pa.gov.