

Access, Intake, and Eligibility Services

Overview

DADS provides functional and financial eligibility determination, development of service plans based on individual needs and preferences, assistance in obtaining information, and authorization of appropriate services and supports. DADS provides these services through regional staff located in offices around the state and through contracts with local area agencies on aging and local authorities that administer services to people with intellectual disabilities.

Three major initiatives further the efforts of Access, Intake, and Eligibility: the Balancing Incentive Program, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and the Promoting Independence Initiative.

Balancing Incentive Program (BIP)

The Affordable Care Act established the BIP, which authorizes \$3 billion for states through September 30, 2015, to increase access to non-institutionally based long-term services and supports. States that spend less than 50 percent of Medicaid long-term services and supports funding on community-based long-term services and supports are eligible for a 2 percent enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage. Based on Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services data, Texas spent 46.9 percent on community-based long-term services and supports in federal FY 2009 and is thus eligible to participate in the BIP. Texas' BIP initiative encompasses over 15 separate projects administered by HHSC, DSHS, and DADS. Within each agency, multiple divisions have direct responsibility for their specific program.

By October 1, 2015, Texas must make the following changes:

- attainment of a 50 percent benchmark of Medicaid community-based long-term services and supports expenditures;
- No Wrong Door/Single Entry Point System – statewide coordinated system that provides information on available services and how to apply for services; makes referrals, determines financial and functional eligibility or and provides assistance with assessments for financial and functional eligibility;
- Core Standardized Assessment Instrument(s) – standardized assessment instruments used in a uniform manner throughout the state to determine eligibility, identify service and support needs, and inform care plan development. Assessment instruments must address activities of daily living, instrumental activities of daily living, medical conditions/diagnoses, cognitive functioning/memory, and behavior concerns; and
- Conflict-free Case Management – separation of case management and eligibility determination from service provision (e.g., through administrative separation of services and enhanced state oversight). The goal of this provision is to ensure that individuals who perform assessments or evaluations or develop plans of care for an individual do not have a conflict of interest, such as being the individual's relative or paid caregiver, being financially responsible for the individual or having the authority to make decisions on the individual's behalf.

Texas reported to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in May 2013 that the state expended 59 percent of all long-term services and supports monies on community-based rather than institutional services, meeting the first requirement of the BIP. BIP funding is bringing an additional \$301.5 million to Texas within the next two years. These dollars will allow for many structural changes which include enhancements to the Your Texas Benefits portal, interoperability of the financial and functional eligibility systems, increased allotment of community services, creation of a new Medicaid community attendant program, increase in wages for community-based direct service workers, additional services to existing waiver program, and increased technological supports.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)

ADRCs play a key role in streamlining access to DADS programs and services by promoting better coordination and integration across aging and disability service systems. ADRCs serve as single points of entry into the long-term services and supports system for older Texans and those with disabilities. Individuals, family members, friends, or professionals can receive information, advice, and assistance to empower them to make informed decisions about long-term services and supports tailored to their needs. Services may be provided at the ADRC itself, over the phone, or in the home, depending on the needs of the individual. ADRC workers receive training to become system navigators help individuals determine their needs. Navigators identify resources to address those needs and to connect individuals to services such as home care, meals, transportation, prescription drug assistance, legal services, attendant services, respite or caregiver support, housing, and more. Additionally, navigators provide information about benefits and funding sources to help pay for services; and follow up to ensure individuals are linked to needed services.

Promoting Independence Initiative and Money Follows the Person Demonstration

The Promoting Independence Initiative reflects the state's effort to ensure the provision of a system of services and supports that fosters independence and productivity while providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to live in the setting of their choice. Money Follows the Person, a Promoting Independence demonstration project, allows nursing facility residents to move into a community Medicaid waiver program without having to wait on an interest list.

DADS is responsible for:

- preparation of the revised Texas Promoting Independence Plan, submitted to the Governor and Legislature every two years;
- preparation of the annual Stakeholder Report, submitted to the Executive Commissioner of HHSC;
- monitoring and oversight of implementation of all agency-specific Promoting Independence Plan recommendations across the enterprise;
- nomination, for HHSC Executive Commissioner review and approval, of appointments to the Promoting Independence Advisory Committee;
- staff support for the Promoting Independence Advisory Committee, including assistance

- in developing its annual report to HHSC; and
- coordination and oversight.

DADS also provides relocation services to ensure the provision of assessments and case management to assist nursing facility residents who choose to relocate to community-based services and supports provided through contracted relocation specialists. It includes funding for Transition to Living in the Community services to pay the household expenses of eligible individuals related to establishing and moving to a community residence. Transition to Living in the Community is a General Revenue activity and is used only when Medicaid will not pay for certain services. An eligible individual may receive up to a maximum of \$2,500 to pay for expenses related to moving and household start-up costs, pending approval by the case manager and DADS. Housing navigators work with all individuals in institutional settings who want to return to the community but have lost their community home. These individuals work with public housing authorities to help in securing affordable, accessible and integrated housing.

Several positive outcomes have resulted from Promoting Independence, Money Follows the Person, and Relocation Services.

- As of August 31, 2012, over 28,800 individuals left nursing facilities and over 7,800 individuals relocated from nine or more bed intermediate care facilities for individuals with an intellectual disability (ICFs/IID) and State Supported Living Centers.
- The number of Section 8 housing vouchers for individuals leaving nursing facilities increased from 35 to 140.
- Eleven ICFs/IID with nine or more beds (890 beds total) have closed and individuals given the choice of moving into the community.
- Individuals with co-occurring behavioral health issues are being provided two simple support services that are helping to keep these individuals in the community without returning to the nursing facility (88 percent retention rate).
- In FY 2011, 1,377 individuals successfully relocated from nursing facilities to community living with the assistance of Relocation Services. In FY 2010, 1,129 individuals used Relocation Services to relocate back into a community setting.