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Since 2009, New Mexico's Developmental Disability Supports Division (DDSD) has been working to improve and redesign the system of services offered to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Medicaid Waiver program (DDW). We named this initiative to improve services "ACT – New Mexico." ACT stands for *Access Community Together*. This Fact Sheet is one of several that describe the changes underway. In this Fact Sheet we lay out the strategic goals for the system improvements, what changes have already taken place, and the changes planned next. New Mexico is committed to these changes to assure services in the future for people currently served and the thousands who are waiting.

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### **Why are these changes being made to the DDW?**

New Mexico has one of the most expensive DDW service systems in the country. Over the past three years, New Mexico spent approximately 30% more per person than the national average to serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Meanwhile, the number of people waiting for services is growing. These individuals are part of our community and need services too.

DDSD is proud of all that was accomplished over the past many years. We are one of ten states with no public institutions. And there are many inspiring examples across the state where people are living and participating in their communities with the support they need. Still, we cannot continue to do what we have been doing. We must find new ways to spend the money we have to assure that people get the services that they need in ways that are fair and efficient, so that people can live high quality lives in their communities.

### **What are the goals of the DDW redesign?**

The ACT-New Mexico initiative will result in a "re-design" of the DDW system for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. DDSD has four primary goals. DDSD seeks to:

- Continue serving people who currently use our DDW community-based services system in ways to better promote community integration and self-direction, as much as possible.
- Serve more people including those on the waiting list.
- Distribute resources to people receiving services in a fair way based on their level of need, and service providers fair rates for the services they deliver.
- Redesign the DDW community based service system to assure that people get the high quality services they need, no more and no less.

## **How will New Mexico achieve these goals?**

DDSD, in collaboration with other state agencies, has undertaken a thorough and thoughtful systems change process.

First, it is important to assess individual support needs using a tool that is fair and accurate for everyone. DDSD, with advice from an Advisory Council on Quality (ACQ), chose the Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS) as the tool that will be used. The SIS, along with other information, is useful to fairly and equitably develop budgets to meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities in New Mexico.

Second, DDSD staff considered what services people will receive and what the state will pay for each service. This included a study of the costs providers have for delivering services and what DDSD reimburses for those services.

Third, decisions were made about the type and amount of services people should receive based on their level of need. DDSD wants to make sure that people receive the services they need, no more and no less.

Finally, DDSD will assign people a NM DDW Group based on information from the SIS. Once a person knows their NM DDW Group and service package, they will know the amount available to purchase services and can develop a service plan that fits their needs.

## **What changes have already happened?**

A lot of progress has been made! DDSD is making changes to the DDW service system in four stages. Three of the four stages have been completed. The four stages are shown below along with a description to indicate what was done, and what still needs to be accomplished.

### **☑ Stage 1: Redesigned the DDW community service system for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.**

New Mexico's DDW community service system is funded by a federal program called Medicaid. The state puts up its share of money, and the federal government matches it. In 2012, for every service dollar used for these community services, New Mexico put up 31 cents and the federal government paid 69 cents. This program requires that states have a well thought out plan to show what services will be offered to whom and at what cost.

Stakeholders and state staff worked together to plan out the changes. DDSD wants to give individuals more control over the services that they choose and promote increased community integration. While thinking it through, DDSD sought and received feedback from individuals and their families, advisory groups, and stakeholder organizations. These consultations informed the Division on how to restructure the program.

**Stage 2: Conducted a study of service reimbursement rates paid to service providers.**

A rate study is an evaluation of how much money is paid for each kind of service (such as day habilitation or job coaching). These kinds of studies are conducted periodically for several reasons. First, to make sure that providers are reimbursed in an equitable manner. Second, to make sure that rates are set fairly across providers. Finally, to provide incentives to create services in areas where the state wants to increase the number of service providers.

DDSD's rate study was completed in 2011-2012. The study was designed to examine the cost of providing services and included a survey of providers, review of data available from the US Department of Labor, public comment, and several meetings where the findings and what they meant were discussed. Findings from this study resulted in a better understanding of what types and amounts of services people with different support needs will use. The study also guided DDSD to update reimbursement rates paid to providers for services rendered, and new proposed rates were published for public comment.

**Stage 3: Used the information collected on support needs and the completed rate study to decide what types and amounts of services people could receive.**

The Supports Intensity Scale<sup>®</sup> (SIS) is being used in other states and countries to assess support needs but also to help set budgets for services. DDSD used the SIS and other

information to set budgets and develop service packages.

In the spring of 2011, New Mexico DDSD started with a random sample of 500 people who were using community services and completed a SIS assessment. The findings from those assessments were checked against data from other states. DDSD found that service recipients in New Mexico look a lot like service recipients in other states. But because New Mexico does not have public institutions and all individuals are served in the community, the average support needs of individuals receiving DDW community services is slightly higher than in states with institutions.

SIS findings were considered along with other information, such as where people live, the new rate schedule, and expectations about what type and amount of services people will use to come up with budgets and service packages. DDSD then selected about 100 individuals and took a much closer look to see if these budgets and service packages were appropriate. DDSD asked a panel of experts to review each person's case file, the SIS results and the proposed budgets and service packages. The panel helped DDSD to improve its methods for matching budget amounts to individual support needs, and for identifying people that really need more support than is normally expected.

**Stage 4: Implement the newly re-designed to the DDW community service system.**

This is the final stage to the change process. Based on a completed SIS assessment, DDSD

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will be able to assign individuals to a pre-set group based on their support needs and develop an individual support plan and budget to match their level of need. DDSD staff made changes to DDW service codes, regulations and other parts of the DDW service system. Final regulations and rates are published on the Human Services Department website.

**What changes will happen next?**

DDSD plans to implement the DDW re-designed system in January 2013, but people will not transition to the new system until their ISP (Individual Service Plan) date. The first plans under the new system will be created in March 2013. Everyone will be in the new system by the end of February, 2014.

Throughout the implementation process DDSD will continue to conduct statewide training and technical assistance, and provide support to individuals.

**Technical Assistance**

DOH is committed to providing the necessary information to individuals, providers and teams to understand the system changes being made and how to use the information for person centered planning and to develop budgets.

Technical assistance is available in all five of the DDSD regional offices.

Metro Regional Office Main: (505) 841-5500 Toll Free: (800) 283-5548	Counties of Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, and Valencia
Northwest Regional Office Main: (505) 863-9937 Toll Free: (866) 862-0448	Counties of Cibola, McKinley and San Juan
Northeast Regional Office Main: (575) 758-5934 Toll Free: (866) 315-7123	Counties of Colfax, Harding, Los Alamos, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Taos and Union
Southwest Regional Office Main: (575) 528-5180 Toll Free: (866) 742-5226	Counties of Catron, Dona Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Otero, Sierra and Socorro
Southeast Regional Office Main: (575) 624-6100 Toll Free: (866) 895-9138	Counties of Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Guadalupe, Lea, Lincoln, Quay and Roosevelt