What is a DISCO?

Developmental Disability Individual Support and Care Coordination Organizations (DISCOs) will be responsible for coordinating care and ensuring the delivery of services for people with developmental disabilities. They are organizations with experience supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and will be the long-term managed care service system for this population.

DISCOs will...

• coordinate the full spectrum of services a person uses, including health care. They will not have the right to deny access based on level of need.
• gain experience coordinating long-term care services in the beginning and later transition toward more comprehensive service coordination (e.g., acute and specialty health care and behavioral health).
• provide services directly, but must also subcontract with qualified providers to make sure that individuals have a choice of qualified providers that offer the full range of supports.
• receive a monthly capitation payment based on the consumers’ assessed needs. New York will share some of the financial risk in the beginning, but the DISCOs will eventually absorb full financial risk for meeting service needs within the capitation revenue.
• begin pre-enrolling volunteer members in January 2014 and will begin coordinating care for enrolled members in April 2014.

Please visit the Office For People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) webpage for further reading on DISCOs:
and www.opwdd.ny.gov/opwdd_services_supports/people_first_waiver/home or contact OPWDD with questions, suggestions, and concerns. The OPWDD Comment Line phone numbers are 1-866-946-9733 (TTY: 1-866-933-4889).

iCircle as a DISCO and iCircle’s relationship to the Southern Tier Independence Center

iCircle Services, LLC is the DISCO that STIC has joined, with STIC’s Executive Director serving on its Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Though it is not currently operating as a DISCO, iCircle will be applying to be one of the pilot projects being planned by OPWDD. Currently, iCircle’s region of operation includes 22 counties, with more than 80 committed providers.

iCircle will...

• operate as a DISCO with the focus of inclusion, respect, individual choice, learning, and empowerment for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
• be a means for individuals and families to self-direct and advocate for services they desire and that meet their needs.
• enable the co-management and information sharing between an individual’s Medicaid funded services and services under other revenue that are a part of...
Medicaid funded services and supports and other services that are a part of the consumer’s Individualized Service Plan (ISP) and Health Care.

- offer a team of care coordinators that will work with each person individually to help in managing their care. Care coordinators will assist consumers in understanding available services and how those services will be provided to them.

We at STIC have been in close contact with iCircle regarding the planning and implementation of iCircle as a DISCO. STIC will work to keep consumers and staff informed of the upcoming changes. Please visit iCircle’s website at www.icirclefl.org for more information. iCircle’s phone number is 1-585-347-1616 or 1-855-775-3778. You may view iCircle’s letter of intent on the following OPWDD webpage: http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/node/4536

**Consumer Questions about DISCOs:**

Q: How will OPWDD prevent DISCOs from self-referring individuals and families to the DISCOs own services instead of to the service providers that the individual/family would like?

A: OPWDD will make sure there is individual advocacy within and outside the DISCO, as well as due process rights to appeal any recommendations not wished for by the individual and his/her advocates. System components to address the issue of self-referral include:

- An assessment of an individual’s strengths, needs, and interests will take place outside of the DISCO through OPWDD.
- The information from the needs assessment will be used to inform a person-centered planning process that focuses on meeting the expressed needs and life goals of the individual as identified by the individual and his/her family, advocates, or support staff.
- Information will be clear and readily available regarding the performance of the DISCOs’ service providers’ that will allow individuals and families to make informed choices of service providers.

Q: What is the plan for assessing how many individuals will have 24-hour support needs? Is information being analyzed so the right decisions are made on how to provide for these individuals?

A: The new comprehensive needs assessment process will indicate individuals’ strengths and needs. This information will be used in person-centered planning with the individual, his/her family, staff, clinicians, and advocates. Until this new tool, known as the Coordinated Assessment System (CAS), is in effect throughout the entire service system OPWDD will continue to use the Developmental Disabilities Profile (DDP) and an improved person-centered planning process. The CAS will be used initially in small case studies, and in the initial DISCO pilots with those who voluntarily enroll. Eventually it will be rolled out across NY for all new comers and people who request it. It will be several years before everyone in the service system will be assessed with the CAS.

Q: What if an individual’s needs are more than the capitated rate will support? Will the person’s services be limited by the rate or will the DISCO absorb the cost?

A: DISCOs will receive a capitated payment for each person enrolled. This means that the DISCO will receive a standard rate for each person they support (a
means that the DISCO will receive a standard rate for each person they support (a “per-person” rate). The DISCO will be required to meet all of the service needs of its members. There is no individual limit on the amount of money that can be spent on an individual’s services. Therefore, if the needs assessment and service planning determine the individual needs a specific service, he/she will receive the service even if it costs more than the capitated payment to the DISCO. Meeting the needs of individuals requiring more intensive services cannot occur at the expense of other individuals’ services and supports.

Q: How will OPWDD measure quality in DISCOs once they begin?
A: OPWDD’s Division of Quality Improvement (DQI) will continue its site-based surveys of agencies to monitor service provision. OPWDD will review how DISCOs provide care coordination and monitor the quality of services provided by their service providers. OPWDD will develop performance and outcome-based metrics to measure DISCO performance. These measures will focus on outcomes for individuals as well as individual and family satisfaction with services received. These measures will include activities such as surveying individuals about the information they receive about their rights and the process to express concerns. Individuals will also be surveyed on their receipt of health care services based on their Individualized Service Plan (ISP) and assessment. OPWDD will assess the percentage of graduating students above baseline that transition from a high school into a Supported Employment program. NOTE: OPWDD developed these measures with guidance from Delmarva, a national consulting group that has assisted many states in developing performance measures.

Q: How will OPWDD manage the competing goals of saving money verses ensuring quality services?
A: OPWDD will improve efficiency within the system by establishing an approach to assessing needs and improving the ability of the system to plan and deliver services that respond to each individual’s needs. Administrative efficiencies will occur by networking providers together. OPWDD will develop new ways to measure and report quality to the individuals and families they support. New metrics will be in place that tell how well individuals are progressing toward their goals, how effective their supports and services are at reaching the life they want, and what their levels of satisfaction are with their services. The information will be available to individuals and families so they may see the effectiveness of the providers within the DISCO.

Q: What will happen to Medicaid Service Coordination?
A: The services currently provided by Medicaid Service Coordination (MSC) will move to care coordination within the People First Waiver. This is not intended to happen until the new DISCO structure is implemented statewide in the later years of the waiver. There are opportunities for the current MSC staff to continue to be involved in the lives of individuals and families. OPWDD anticipates that most MSCs will transition into positions related to care coordination in DISCOs. Also, there are roles for independent advocacy both within and outside a DISCO that MSCs will be well suited for. Current MSCs might serve as “independent living specialists” to assist consumers with understanding leases, household finances, and building relationships with neighbors and community resources.

*** Please contact Elizabeth Berka, Health Information Specialist, at STIC if you have more questions about the coming of the DISCO. I will look into your inquiries and find answers for you. My contact information is healthinform@stic-cil.org or (607) 724-2111 extension 304.

*** Please note that the information in this document is subject to change. Please...
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