

The below was received from ODP via email on January 31, 2017.

[ODP-STAKEHOLDER-COMMUNITY] A Message from PA Department of Human Services Concerning Proposed Amendments to ODP's Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support Waivers

*The PA Department of Human Services (DHS) has heard concerns from consumers and families regarding the department's recently proposed amendments to DHS' Office of Developmental Programs' (ODP) Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support waivers that are due for renewal on July 1, 2017. These waivers serve 32,000 Pennsylvanians with intellectual disabilities. I wanted to take a moment to provide an update on where that stands.*

*We are not closing workshops. The Wolf Administration is committed to serving more people in the community and giving them access to high-quality services. In that light, and in accordance with new federal guidelines, ODP's five-year renewal of the waiver programs includes a new service called Community Participation Support Services. These supports include the current sheltered workshops and adult training programs, but add in a full range of options that would support people to participate in activities in the community.*

*In December, we published waiver documents for public review. We were looking to get comments from all impacted people on the feasibility of the proposal, the time frames, the requirements, and what would be needed to implement. The Department is committed to full transparency on this critical process and published the documents seeking valuable public input for consideration.*

*The comment period has since ended and we received more than 2,000 comments that we will thoroughly review and consider. Over all, the comments we have received have been supportive of the services in the waivers to better support families and broaden residential services options. Many commentators have endorsed the flexibility this service gives individuals, families, and providers. The objection that many commenters have expressed are related to the requirement to achieve a specific percentage of participation and the time frames for meeting those benchmarks in the Community Participation service. There are several components to the proposed waiver amendments, but the main focus of concern, and even fear, that we are hearing from clients and their family members is on the sheltered workshops. They worry that the services they value are going to be taken away. We want to assure you that this is not the case.*

*We are proposing changes that allow providers to modify their service models over time to support people in integrated community settings in alignment with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Home and Community-based Settings rule. DHS is looking to increase opportunities for employment, community involvement, and participation. Expectations have also changed - our young people with disabilities are now in integrated, not secluded, classroom settings. They enter the post-education world desiring jobs in the community making competitive wages. That being said, we*

*know that is not an option for everyone, but when possible, we hope to make that goal a reality.*

*Moving forward, we will continue to carefully analyze all of the comments and will go through a thoughtful process to determine what changes should be made to the original proposal. While we proceed to finalize the waivers we must assure that the result will be a much fuller range of options that leads to each person realizing their full potential and fully participating in the life of their community.*

*The Department of Human Services, Office of Developmental Programs, will continue to update you with our progress.*

*Sincerely,  
Nancy Thaler  
Deputy Secretary  
Office of Developmental Programs*

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