

Nursing Home Relocation Waiver for Persons with Mental Illness Community Opportunities and Recovery (COR) INFORMATION SHEET 2006

What is Wisconsin's proposal for a nursing home relocation waiver for persons with severe and persistent mental illness?

- The new Medicaid 1915(c) Home and Community Based Waiver program called Community Opportunities and Recovery (COR) will relocate residents of nursing homes who have mental health disabilities and co-occurring physical disabilities. The new waiver will include a mix of case management and services appropriate to support this target population.

Why is the nursing home relocation waiver for persons with mental illness important?

- Wisconsin has, for over two decades, favored choice for people who require a high level of nursing and supervision services. For some individuals who have a mental illness this choice has not been available.
- As part of Wisconsin's efforts to improve our systems of care for people with long term care needs, the Department of Health and Family Services applied for and received a Real Choice Systems Change grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. One of the goals of that grant was to do a feasibility study of the 1915 (c) waiver options for persons with mental illness. The proposal for the COR waiver comes out of that review.
- At present there are over 500 individuals residing in nursing homes that receive specialized psychiatric rehabilitation services for their mental illness as well as nursing care. These individuals are adults who meet the nursing facility level of care. Many of these individuals exhibit difficult behavioral challenges that may also include behaviors, which place themselves at risk. Given the lack of community resources designed to meet their needs, there has been a fiscal incentive to continue to serve these individuals in a nursing home.
- Many of these individuals would prefer to reside in a community setting that provides a service mix structured to support the special needs of behavioral, physical, medical, and mental health specific to the person.
- A new 1915 (c) Home and Community Based Waiver structured to meet the special needs of this population will also need to overcome financial disincentives. In general many of these individuals can be served in the community at the same or lower cost. Finally we will be able to offer them a choice to live in the community.

What is the Department's proposed time frame for the COR Waiver?

- The Department is currently in discussion with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) related to the proposed COR waiver. It is anticipated that we will submit the revised COR application in September 2006. CMS will then review and approve or deny the state's request.
- If COR is approved by CMS the anticipated effective date to begin Waiver operations is January 2006. Over the first three years the Department proposes to serve the totals of 50 individuals the first year, 150 individuals in the second and 250 individuals the third year.

How will this waiver compare to other home and community based waivers?

- As with the Community Options Program-Waiver (COP-W), eligibility will be based on initial and continuing nursing home eligibility, a diagnosis of mental illness, the interest and ability of the individual to relocate into a community placement. The new waiver will use the existing financial and functional eligibility processes in place for COP-W persons. The waiver does not include those individuals otherwise eligible but seeking diversion from nursing home placement.
- The waiver services to be provided will be determined through a comprehensive assessment of an individual's needs. An individualized plan of care will be developed that includes both the mental health and physical health community-based services considered necessary to meet the unique needs of the person.
- The state will demonstrate that the program is cost-effective and that there are quality safeguards to protect the health and welfare of individuals served through the program.
- The COR waiver design includes services specific to the needs of the person with a mental health diagnosis and condition that is severe, persistent and may require periods of intense supervision and support to remain safely in the community.
- The COR waiver will provide the array of services needed that are not now available under the state Medicaid plan or under mental health plan benefits such as basic activities of daily living and in-home and residential supports.
- The COR waiver will provide options to individuals to receive community-based supports tailored to address co-occurring disabilities and better meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II as applied in the Supreme Court *Olmstead* decision, which requires states to provide mental health service *in the most integrated setting*.