



Providing support and information for families of children with disabilities, chronic illness and other special health care needs

Consumer Directed Services...Now Available in the Home and Community-Based (HCS) and Texas Home Living Waivers!

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Consumer Directed Services (CDS) is a service delivery option that offers individuals and families more control over their lives and the services and supports they receive. CDS has been available in other programs and waivers for a number of years, but was added to HCS and TxHmL as of February 1st! Those who are currently receiving services through these waivers or are anticipating receiving these services in the future should learn more about this opportunity that allows you to control who provides your services.

What is the Consumer Directed Services option?

A service delivery option defines the way you receive your services. In the traditional agency model, the agency decides who they will send to your home to provide services to you or your child. The CDS option allows the individual receiving the services and/or their family/legally authorized representative to be the employer of their direct-care supported home living providers (attendants) and respite service providers. This means that you (not a direct service agency or private provider) are able to recruit, hire, train, supervise, and terminate at will the employees providing these much needed and often very personal services. You no longer have to settle for whoever the agency decides to send to your home. Many individuals currently using the CDS model hire extended family members (aunts, uncles, cousins, etc), fellow church members, neighbors, teachers' aides, etc. - people they know and trust.

Individuals using the CDS model are supported by a Consumer Directed Services Agency (CDSA) that provides administrative support including payroll, payroll tax filing, and more. This agency also assists the individual or family in understanding their duties and responsibilities as the employer.

In addition to having more control over who provides these services, the CDS option allows you to pay significantly higher wages to supported home living attendants and respite providers than what the provider agency typically pays them. As we all know, higher wages can certainly result in higher quality of services.

How do I find out more about CDS?

HCS case managers are required to provide information to their clients on the CDS option. While this can be helpful, it is sometimes difficult to receive comprehensive information from the case manager because

Texas Parent to Parent

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the direct service provider agency (also the employer of the case manager) will likely lose money if you chose CDS. Cutting out a portion of the administrative costs paid to the provider agency is what allows the CDS client/employer to pay higher attendant wages. If you have difficulty in getting accurate and comprehensive information, you can contact your local Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center (MHMR), a local disability organization, or the Department on Aging and Disability Services in Austin. Another way to find out more is by talking to individuals or other families who have used this option to maximize their decision making and TxP2P can assist you with this. And, as always, if I can answer any questions, please contact me at colleen.horton@mail.utexas.edu

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