



*Testimony before the Appropriations and Human Services Committees
Michael P. Starkowski
Commissioner
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Good afternoon, Senators Harp and Doyle, Representatives Geragosian and Walker, and members of the Human Services and Appropriations Committees, my name is Michael Starkowski and I am the Commissioner at the Department of Social Services. I am here before you today to seek your approval of an amendment to increase the number of slots allowed under the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Medicaid Waiver to accommodate a need in our Money Follows the Person program. The ABI waiver is currently at capacity and, therefore, requires this amendment to support persons transitioning from the Money Follows the Person Program to the ABI Waiver. To facilitate this change, an amendment application to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), as authorized under section 1915(c) of the Social Security Act, must be submitted.

Since 1999, Connecticut's Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Waiver Program has been providing supports to individuals with brain injury in the community. Without these services, these participants would otherwise be at risk of institutionalization.

I'd like to take this opportunity to provide you with a brief overview of the amendment.

Program Description

The ABI Waiver Program provides services and supports to persons who have experienced an accident or health event that resulted in damage to the brain. Eligible clients are either at risk of institutionalization or currently living in an institution. Participants must have monthly income that does not exceed \$2,022 per month; and assets less than \$1,600.

The waiver employs the principles of person-centered planning to build an adequate and appropriate plan of care for the support and care in the community. Supports include Medicaid State Plan Services as well as those targeted to persons with brain injury such as independent living skills training and cognitive behavioral interventions.

A fact sheet that provides greater detail about the program is attached.

Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendment would increase and reserve the number of slots available by 35 to accommodate consumers transitioning from the legislatively approved Money Follows the Person (MFP) program to the ABI Waiver, effective January 1, 2010, through December 31, 2011. This capacity expansion was assured to CMS with the submission of Connecticut's MFP Demonstration Operating Protocol. Connecticut has been successful in its efforts to provide community living opportunities to persons affected by brain injury. MFP has exceeded its projections for the ABI Waiver population. In the original MFP Protocol it was projected that 21 individuals would be transitioned to the ABI Waiver via MFP by 2011. The table below identifies the number of persons targeted to receive supports on the ABI Waiver, post-MFP participation.

Year	Number
2010 MFP Transitions	10
2011 Expected Transitions/Approved Care Plans	25
Total	35

MFP has exceeded projections with other target populations as well. Through the efforts of MFP, 400 people have moved to the community. The institutional costs compared to community costs reflect significant savings. Quality of life data is encouraging. Baseline data is collected on all participants prior to transition and at six-month intervals thereafter. One example of a question asked while still living in the nursing home is "Are you happy or unhappy with the way that you live your life?" Of the participants who responded, 55.9% said that they were happy in the nursing home. After a year in the community, the participants were asked the same question and 77.4% answered that they were happy, a 21.5 point increase over the baseline question asked while at the facility.

As a result of changes initiated by the Affordable Care Act, MFP will continue through 2020. In addition, CMS recently awarded Connecticut with an additional \$20 million in administrative dollars to build rebalancing infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I would be happy to answer any questions from the committees.