



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby

**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
& ADDICTION SERVICES**

Commissioner Patricia Rehmer

***Testimony before the Appropriations and Human Services Committees
Amendment to the DMHAS Home and Community Based Services Medicaid***

Waiver

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Good afternoon, Senators Harp and Slossberg, Representatives Walker and Abercrombie and members of the Appropriations and Human Services Committees. My name is Kathy Bruni and I am Manager of the Alternate Care Unit at the Department of Social Services. I am pleased to be here this afternoon with Megan Goodfield, Program Manager with the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to discuss the proposed amendment to the Mental Health Home and Community-Based Services Medicaid waiver. The addition of these services will assist with the diversion and transition of individuals who do not require the continuous skilled nursing care offered in a facility. These services will enhance the Department's ability to serve waiver participants in a community setting as well as maximize the number served.

In the amendment, we would add the following services:

- **Overnight Recovery Assistants** - to provide supervision and assistance as needed during evening and overnight hours to enable individuals to live safely in an independent community setting.
- **Adult Day Health** – a service to provide 4 or more hours per day for one or more days per week of programming which will encompass both health and social services needed to ensure the optimal functioning of the participant.
- **Home Delivered Meals** - commonly known as "meals on wheels," will provide one or two meals per day for persons who are unable to prepare or obtain nourishing meals on their own. Many participants have cardiac issues or diabetes requiring specialized diets.
- **Recovery Assistant Services Group** - a service provided for 2-4 participants to enhance socialization and community integration while providing supports related to activities of daily living.

Our goal in making these changes is to offer a wider range of service options to our waiver participants.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Mental Health Waiver began on April 1, 2009. The target population is adults with serious mental illness who are being discharged or diverted from nursing home care. This waiver provides participants with the medical and psychiatric services and supports necessary to live independently in the community.

Waiver services are provided face to face, in the participant's home or in other community settings (non-office based). Individualized assessment, recovery plan development and service delivery focus on participant strengths and assets, utilization of natural supports and community integration. In other words, service delivery emphasizes wellness and recovery from the disabling effects of psychiatric disorders, with attention to both psychiatric and medical needs. Services complement and/or supplement services available to participants through the Medicaid state plan and other federal, state and local public programs as well as natural supports that families and communities provide.

The waiver currently serves individuals who were or currently are in nursing facilities or who are at risk for this level of care. The average annual Medicaid cost for participants is approximately \$37,000 per year. However, there is a wide range of costs for program participants. While there are some care plans with very high costs of care, they are offset by care plans with much lower costs, allowing the state to achieve cost neutrality overall in the program. The waiver is operated by the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services with administrative oversight by the Department of Social Services.

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