



Providing services to individuals with complex needs may require some specific considerations. These include and are not limited to medical, communication, physical health, mental health and/or behavioral challenges. Conversations about services may include planning for higher than average staffing ratios and levels of support, nursing services, therapies throughout the day or the use of durable medical equipment.

Along with families and individuals receiving supports, Supports Coordinators (SCs), planning teams and provider staff working closely together will be very important. Transition age youth will also need to include their transition team/IEP team in the planning. Learn more about this on the Fact Sheet: Transition to Adult Life.

Creating unique combinations of services and activities may be right for some individuals. Refer to the Fact Sheet: Employment Services and Meaningful Day Activities for definitions and details about options. Other Fact Sheet topics include information about Supports Coordination, Individual Support Plans (ISP) and Waivers. All can be found on the Allegheny County Department of Human Services website. Find Fact Sheets at www.alleghenycounty.us/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=2147485075. If you do not have access to the internet call 412-253-1251.

Service availability will be influenced by available funding and PA Department of Human Services Office of Developmental Programs (PA DHS ODP) written policies and procedures. This includes those specific to the Consolidated, Community Living and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waivers. Learn more on the PA DHS website here www.dhs.pa.gov/contact/Pages/Intellectual-Disabilities-Contacts.aspx. Reach ODP by phone at 1-888-565-9435.

How can I be sure that my specific needs are going to be met?

Work with your SC to be sure your ISP is current and reflects your abilities, as well as supports needed to ensure success. Communicate with everyone that will help you in meeting your goals for your chosen life experiences. Your SC will assist in working with potential and chosen providers. If you disagree with a denial for a request for services your SC can give you information on appealing the decision.

Must any provider I choose accommodate my needs?

According to the PA DHS ODP providers of waiver services must be “willing and qualified”. It is ultimately the decision of the provider if they are capable of meeting a persons need. Once they have made the decision, the provider is making a commitment to meet your needs as outlined in your ISP.

How do I choose a provider?

Information can be found here www.myodp.org/mod/page/view.php?id=22049. The ODS Fact Sheet: Waiver Services, Providers and Delivery also offers some suggestions. Asking questions is important, especially those specific to your needs.

Learn more here www.myodp.org/mod/page/view.php?id=22049.

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Following are some additional points you may want to clarify with potential providers. Information provided offers general answers to these common questions.

How will my current therapy (examples: speech, physical or occupational) needs be met?

There are specific requirements for each type of therapy, including allowable locations and target skills intended to be learned in that environment (i.e. outcomes). There also needs to be a determination if the therapy is intended to be short term or on-going. Teams must work together to assure that all of this information is addressed in detail in the ISP. Your SC will facilitate documentation and will share information with the team regarding their approval and authorization.

Is there nursing staff available on site?

Providers are not required to have nursing supports on site. Should you have an assessed need for nursing, these details would be discussed with the team assisting you with choosing a provider. When contacting potential providers, determine whether or not they can provide the level of support you require.

I need support during travel to and from my employment or day activity. Who can travel with me? Do you have staff that will travel with me?

If travel is part of the service provision offered by the provider, they are responsible to provide transportation. Likewise, they are responsible to have trained staff available to support individual needs during travel. If your transportation is through a private contractor, there may be opportunities for medical supports to ride along. However, please note that typically behavioral supports are not allowed. You will want to discuss particular needs and/or concerns with any potential provider prior to choosing them.

What education will staff receive regarding my needs, including the use of my medical equipment and how to support me if I have a medical or behavioral health crisis?

It is the expectation of ODP that providers understand the individual needs of those they serve through training on all aspects of the ISP . Providers are also expected to receive specific training in regards to responding to medical and/or behavioral crisis.

Has the provider successfully supported others with similar needs to mine?

You will want to discuss this with any potential provider as each agency has different experiences. You may also choose to tour the site to see how the setting may or may not be what you have in mind.

What supports may be available for my provider to assist them in providing my services?

Providers may choose to get support to meet individual needs in a variety of ways. For instance, they may want to make a referral to their HCQU*. Many agencies also have internal committees that look at quality of care. You will want to ask about supports available to staff of any provider you are considering.

**There are 8 Health Care Quality Units (HCQU) in Pennsylvania that were set up by the ODP. KEPRO operates our Southwestern Pa HCQU. Primary activities include providing healthcare trainings to all stakeholders, providing clinical healthcare expertise to caregiving teams supporting individuals with complex physical and behavioral healthcare issues, and disseminating information. For more information visit the website at <https://hcqu.kepro.com/> or call 1-888-321-5861.*



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For more information regarding ODS, including additional Fact Sheets visit alleghenycounty.us/dhs/ODS