



Assessment of **CONSUMER-DIRECTED SERVICES**

PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

To evaluate benefits and barriers experienced by individuals and families using consumer-directed services.

WHAT ARE CONSUMER-DIRECTED SERVICES?

Consumer-directed (CD) services allow an individual to hire, train and supervise their own personal attendants for personal assistance, companion, and respite services. The ability to self-direct services has been shown to increase positive outcomes for individuals. CD services participants responded to a VBPD survey to identify the benefits and challenges of CD services.

Our assessment is grounded in one overarching key finding: Medicaid consumer-directed services offer people with disabilities greater control over their services and supports. The ability to have that control results in increased satisfaction and fulfillment in all aspects of life.

Many of the recommendations focus on actions required by Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS), which administers the CD services available in Virginia's Medicaid programs. A summary of key findings and recommendations is below, organized into five main topic areas.

WHO CAN USE CD SERVICES?

Individuals in these Medicaid-funded programs may be eligible for CD Services:

- ✓ Commonwealth Coordinated Care (CCC) Plus Waiver
- ✓ Community Living (CL) Waiver
- ✓ Family and Individual Supports (FIS) Waiver
- ✓ Early and Periodic Screening, and Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) Benefit
- ✓ Medicaid Works Program

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ADMINISTRATIVE AND SERVICE AUTHORIZATION PROCESSES

Accessing CD services in Virginia can be challenging due to complicated paperwork and administrative procedures. Recommendations that the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) should:

- Conduct a CD services attendant enrollment audit that aligns with the procurement of Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) and fiscal/employer agent (F/EA) contracts; identify all possible enrollment steps and components; and implement a simplified, standardized process for completing paperwork and administrative procedures
- In collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and MCOs, create a clear and easily accessible process for participants and their families to understand how authorized hours are determined.

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CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SATISFACTION

There is a perceived lack of accountability in the system, and users feel there is no clear process to report issues or provide feedback. Recommendations that DMAS should:

- Make easily available to the public the results of MCO annual reports from the F/EA satisfaction surveys and provide information on the process for remediating areas requiring improvements
- Involve stakeholders in discussing and resolving issues related to CD services, such as enrollment, customer service, services facilitation, and how to address grievances/complaints.

3

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES & SERVICES FACILITATION

Users of CD services often struggle to understand the roles of different provider entities involved, leading to confusion about whom to contact for assistance. Recommendations that DMAS should:

- Create a standardized and user-friendly program guide that clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of each entity involved in CD services, including the EOR, MCO, F/EA, SF, care coordinator, and support coordinator.
- Collaboratively develop training and guidance materials for care coordinators, services facilitators, and support coordinators to facilitate understanding and accountability for roles and responsibilities.

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CD SERVICES ATTENDANTS

The healthcare system is facing a workforce crisis, particularly impacting direct support professionals who assist individuals with disabilities. Recommendations that DMAS should:

- Ensure the General Assembly takes action to improve the compensation for consumer-directed services attendants and to provide a living wage that is consistent with the national average and commensurate with the value of the work performed.

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FAMILY MEMBERS

For some, having a family member serve as the Employer of Record (EOR) can be a positive experience, but that is not always the case. Recommendations that DMAS should:

- Establish a policy that requires a services facilitator to annually review a family member's qualifications and suitability for the EOR role through the completion of the DMAS 95B form.