ODP Announcement

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INFORMATION REFERRAL TOOL (IRT) AND CHANGES TO COMPASS RELATING TO THE BALANCED INCENTIVE PROGRAM

ODP Communication Number: Memo 019-16

The mission of the Office of Developmental Programs is to support Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, choice and opportunity in their lives.

AUDIENCE: Administrative Entities (AEs) and County Mental Health/Intellectual Disability Offices (MH/ID) Offices

PURPOSE: The Pennsylvania Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Aging (PDA) have been working to make it easier for Pennsylvanians to learn about and access community-based supports and services through the Balanced Incentive Program (BIP). The purpose of this announcement is to provide information about enhancements to the program.

DISCUSSION: The BIP was created to improve information sharing about Long Term Support Services (LTSS) for older Pennsylvanians, adults with physical disabilities, persons with intellectual disabilities, persons with autism and persons with serious mental illnesses. BIP’s goal is to improve how individuals are able access information on community based programs within their area. To that end, the following enhancements have been developed, which will be implemented on March 12, 2016.

- Information and Referral Tool (IRT)
  - The IRT is a new, online tool that was created to assist individuals in identifying programs and resources that may help individuals to obtain services and remain in their homes and communities.
  - It also will provide guidance about supports and services that may benefit an individual, a family member, or friend.
  - Based on the individual’s responses to a series of questions, the tool offers suggestions on local and state programs that could help.
The tool is not intended to specifically identify a person’s needs or diagnosis or to determine actual eligibility for a program.

- COMPASS
  - Improvements to COMPASS will allow individuals to submit an application for, or be referred to, certain home and community-based programs.

With the changes, you might receive referrals and/or applications in new ways.

- Through the Information Referral Tool (IRT), based on the responses, if an individual is determined to need further information from the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), when they reach the results page, in addition to receiving the contact information for their local MH/ID Office, the individual will also have the opportunity to be directed to COMPASS in order to submit a referral for ODP Services.
  - The IRT can be accessed at: [http://www.dhs.pa.gov/irt](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/irt)
  - Please note: this URL will NOT work until these improvements are implemented on March 12, 2016.

- As a result of the COMPASS changes, it is important to note that for ODP, applications will no longer be accepted directly through COMPASS; however, through COMPASS, referrals can now be created, at the request of the individual, to the local county MH/ID offices through HCSIS. This means, once a referral is created, an alert will be sent via HCSIS to the local county MH/ID office.
  - Once a referral is received, the counties will have 2 working days to respond, unless it is an urgent matter, in which contact should be made within 24 hours.
  - Eligibility should be determined at this time in accordance with Developmental Programs Bulletin number 00-08-04: Individual Eligibility for Medicaid Waiver Services, which can be found at: [http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/bulletin_admin/d_005106.pdf](http://www.dhs.pa.gov/cs/groups/webcontent/documents/bulletin_admin/d_005106.pdf)
  - Please note: this announcement pertains ONLY to the Office of Developmental Programs, Bureau of Supports to people with Intellectual Disabilities. Please refer to the Bureau of Autism for specific changes in relation to COMPASS and the IRT.

A presentation on the IRT is included with this announcement for further information about the tool. If you have any questions or comments about the content of this announcement or about the BIP in general, please contact RA-PWBIP@pa.gov.
Balancing Incentive Program

Information & Referral Tool (IRT)
• Help individuals identify which programs may be most beneficial to them based on a short subset of questions
• The overall goal of the tool is to utilize the least amount of questions necessary in order to refer each individual to the entity (or entities) that can assist with enrollment; provide further information; or help the individual to apply for services
• The IRT is not meant to be diagnostic in nature, serve as an assessment, or determine eligibility for services or programs
• The IRT is being developed in conjunction with the following program offices and related populations: OMHSAS, ODP, BAS, Aging, and OLTL, and is meant to be all inclusive
• The IRT was a requirement set forth by CMS as part of the Balancing Incentive Program
The IRT is dynamic in nature; the questions and results presented are determined by the information provided by the user throughout the tool. Not everyone will have to answer every question.

The question sets will be different, depending on whether the individual knows their diagnosis, or not.

Individuals will be provided with the option to skip any question that they do not want to answer or does not apply to them.

The Information and Referral Tool is optional; persons will only use it if they seek assistance. It is not a requirement in order to apply for any program or to receive services.

Data/information provided by individuals is not going to be stored or kept on file.
Two Stakeholder meetings were held in order to discuss the IRT. The following items have been incorporated into the IRT as a result of the feedback received:

- Age and location
- The ability to choose one or more diagnoses from a prepopulated list OR check a box stating that they do not know their diagnosis/diagnosis is not listed
- Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)
- The option to choose “None” or “Skip” if the section or question does not apply or the individual does not want to answer
- The PA Link Call Center Number will be included throughout the IRT in order to give the individual an opportunity to speak with a live person during regular business hours, if desired
Feedback From Previous Stakeholder Meetings

• Number of questions
  – Consideration was given to the amount of time it takes to complete the survey versus how many questions are included
  – Similar questions/topics are grouped together in order to allow for easy navigation

• The results page will include a link to COMPASS and the Web Resource Center for all individuals (the link to the Web Resource Center will be added to the list of results once the website has been implemented)

• At the end of the IRT, individuals will:
  • Receive contact information (Phone Number) from one or more entities that might best serve their needs
  • Have the ability to submit some basic information in order to request that they be contacted by one or more of the entities shown on the results page, if they choose
  • Receive a list of additional resources (Websites)