

Talking Points for MR/RC waiver Budgets – February 2003

Questions primarily of interest to individuals and families

1. *Will waived services continue to be an option?*

- Yes. Individuals will remain on the waiver as long as they meet eligibility requirements.

2. *Will Hennepin County put more people on the waiver in the future?*

- Yes, but fewer than in past years. We anticipate meeting individuals' needs, however we will have less ability to serve the number of persons requesting services. We will continue to serve persons according to the severity of needs and highest priority.

3. *Why is my current authorization "frozen"?*

- Hennepin County has taken measures to lessen the impact of our State's budget crisis. The changes are our first response to the state budget deficit.
- We are currently limiting any increases to an individual's budget to increases that are necessary to ensure health, safety and stability.
- You may reassign money in your budget as long as you are not increasing your budget, or changing service codes. This must be a cost neutral redistribution.

4. *How is my budget amount determined when my plan renews?*

- The amount that you have available to plan for is based on the amount that was *authorized* in your budget last year. The authorized amount is less than or equal to the amount that was *allocated*.

Definitions of Allocation and Authorization

Allocation: The amount of money you are given in order to plan and implement services, on an annual or daily basis.

Authorization: Your authorization is your approved services. You receive an authorization letter from the state outlining approved services. This is what is listed on your MMIS Service Agreement.

5. *Can dollars be moved around within an authorization provided that the total amount authorized does not increase?*

- Yes, with a couple of exceptions. Authorizations for case management, assistive technology (authorized outside of CDCS) and environmental modifications cannot be reduced in order to allow additional authorization of other supports. Case management, assistive technology (authorized outside of CDCS), and environmental modification amounts are also not included in the amount available upon renewal.

6. What will happen to our allocations in the future?

- Our resources are tied to the state's resources. The budget amounts will become increasingly more clear in the coming months.
- We will continue to distribute allocations, however they will be different as a direct impact of the state budget deficit. We may need to reexamine how we allocate for our recipients.
- Sometime after July 2003, if the CDCS amendment to the MR/RC waiver passes, DHS will be determining allocations amounts for CDCS services. We do not have information on how they will set the budget.

7. For clients whose allocation amounts were previously increased so that they could look for SLS placements, can we go ahead with those placements?

- No, we cannot go ahead with those placements unless they are needed to assure the client's basic health and safety (the standard that applies to all increases during the freeze). Planners will work with case managers to determine which current developments can proceed.

8. Will we allow authorization of vocational services for June grads or other clients temporarily without vocational programming?

- Yes, we will allow authorization of vocational services for June grads and others without vocational services. No increase request is needed if using a DTH provider. However, if the authorization will be for CDCS or hourly supports, the case manager needs to request an allocation amount by e-mailing Curtis Buhman.

9. What is the process of requesting changes in my budget if I need to?

- We have a resource consideration committee that addresses requests. Health, Safety and Stability are the guiding reasons for requests and the committee prioritizes according to individual need. A waiver allocation committee will review all requests. They will consider the following definitions of health, safety and stability.

Definitions of Health, Safety and Stability:

Health, Safety, Stability Definition (for purposes of addressing increase requests during the freeze)

As you know, we are not increasing authorizations unless they are needed to assure a client's health, safety, or stability in the community. For our purposes, client issues will be considered that represent a threat to the client's health, safety and stability when, if not addressed, they would likely produce an adult/child protection issue for which we have no support alternatives other than use of county property tax funds.

While this standard is necessarily vague, here are some guidelines that should help staff and supervisors apply it to individual authorization increase requests that arise:

1) **Major Life Changes:** Increases that are needed to assure health, safety and stability normally accompany a major life change such as a major illness or loss of a caregiver. If a major life change is not at the root of the increase request, the request is not likely one that will assure health, safety or stability. Be sure to identify the major life change attached to any increase request you forward during the temporary "freeze."

2) **Active Treatment/Support Based:** Increases that are needed to assure health, safety and stability normally rely on active treatment/support which is staffing based. This is not to say that no non-staffing based increases will be approved, only that you will likely find it much more difficult to justify how non-staffing related items will assure basic health, safety, and stability.

3) **Cost Effectiveness:** The supports being requested should not duplicate existing supports and should be the least expensive option that will provide the necessary outcomes. To assure that a cost effective option is selected, it will be necessary to consider as many options as possible for addressing unmet needs. Requests that include information on alternatives considered or attempted are more likely to be approved.

4) **What Happens If We Don't Approve the Increase?:** The requested increase should be necessary to avoid an adult/child protection issue and/or to avoid the use of county property tax funds. When making a request during the "freeze," be sure to briefly outline how the client will be effected if the request is not approved.

Questions primarily of interest to case managers.

1. How is the maximum amount a case manager can authorize for a client determined?

Changing ongoing service agreements: The maximum amount available is what is currently authorized. To add services to an existing authorization will require an equivalent or greater amount of service dollars be removed from the authorization.

Renewing service agreements: The maximum amount available for renewals, is the annualized amount of authorized lines that run through the end of the authorization period, or the allocation amount, whichever is smaller. For example, a client with an authorization ending 3/31/03 has only one authorized line item other than case management -- a CDCS authorization that runs from 7/1/02 through 3/31/03 for \$30,000. This works out to \$109.49/day. This client

can authorize either this \$109.49/day amount of their allocation amount upon renewal, whichever is the smaller number.

2. Will case managers be given these maximum authorization amounts?

- Yes, we distributed a report in late December through the supervisors with maximum amounts for persons renewing at the end of January and February. We will be distributing an updated report shortly that will include information on renewals through the end of May.

3. Can we allow increases that were discussed with families prior to 1/1/2003 when the freeze went into effect?

- While we have allowed some increases to go through, especially where the FI/ER was delayed in submitting a budget due to the holidays, we can no longer honor these discussions but have to apply the freeze to everyone.

4. May we shift DTH authorized dollars to the SLS provider when the client has a prolonged absence from the DTH?

- Yes, this is a cost-neutral change. No increase request is needed -- the case manager can work this out directly with the financial case aide.

5. How do we request increases in situations where the client's health and safety are at risk, and how will those requests be processed?

- To make a request, complete the "Resource Allocation Increase Request Form" and submit to your supervisor. If your supervisor agrees with the request, they e-mail it to Curtis Buhman. Curtis will e-mail back with a time when the case manager and/or sup can present the request to the Resource Reconsideration Committee (meeting times are Tuesdays at 1:00).