

Informing Families

Building Trust

A Partnership for Better Communication
on Developmental Disability Issues in Washington State

CHANGES AHEAD: INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY SERVICES

If you receive (or are waiting to receive) **Individual & Family Services (IFS)**, big changes are ahead. The IFS program, which is currently funded by state only dollars, is in the process of transforming into a federal Home & Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver* in May 2015.



Change can be hard, but it is pretty much the one thing you can always count on to happen in any large system. It's important to stay informed and be aware of what's coming next so that you're prepared.

Why Is This Happening?

The change from state only IFS to a waiver-funded IFS brings in more federal funding that will allow DDA to serve more families, and that's the main reason it's happening.

When Is This Happening?

If the application to the federal government is approved, the transformation of the IFS program into a waiver will begin to take place next spring (2015), probably some time in May. If you are currently receiving IFS, you will be transitioned when you have your annual assessment (after the new program is implemented in the spring). This transition includes new enrollees who are already being added to the current program.

Key Changes:

- ▶ The waiver program provides *services*, not *activities*. Unlike the current IFS, which is a flexible funding program, the waiver will only cover the supports needed to live at home or participate in the community, but not the activity itself. For example, it will cover supports to participate in an integrated summer camp, but not the tuition for camp (unless it's part of the program's package of services).
- ▶ Services will only be delivered by qualified, contracted providers. This is a big change for families currently receiving IFS who are used to the flexibility of being reimbursed for non-contracted respite providers or recreational programs.
- ▶ Medical Co-pays and exceptional medical costs are not covered.
- ▶ Everyone on the new IFS waiver will likely be eligible for Apple Health/Medicaid, regardless of family income.
- ▶ All community-based services must meet the new federal regulation for integrated (that is, non-segregated) setting.

A Peek Behind the Curtain

What do these changes really mean? Check out our FAQ page on upcoming changes, at: informingfamilies.org

*Pending approval by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services



Out with the Old in with the New

The good news about the new IFS waiver is that it offers services and a stable funding source that the state-only program did not provide. Here are some of the new additions to approved services (pending approval by CMS):

- ◇ Assistive Technology
- ◇ Peer Mentoring
- ◇ Person-Centered Planning Facilitation
- ◇ Community Engagement (support to participate in integrated community programs)
- ◇ Supportive Parenting (for parents with I/DD)
- ◇ Skilled Nursing Services