

## Newsletter #56 Medicaid Updates (NOW/COMP Waivers) and More

Dearest Advocates:

As many of you are aware, starting November 1, 2008 the New Options Waiver Program (NOW) formerly Mental Retardation Waiver Program (MRWP) and Comprehensive Supports Waiver Program (COMP) formerly Community Habilitation Supports Services (CHSS) go live. There has been a lot of confusion on how this is going to impact families and providers that currently utilize or work with these waivers.

The Office of Developmental Disabilities under Mental Health Developmental Disabilities and Additive Disease Division (MHDDAD) will be scheduling forums/trainings for families after the implementation of the COMP and NOW Waiver. The manuals for the COMP and NOW Waivers are posted. (I strongly recommend you look at them) They can be found at the Georgia Health Partnership website <https://www.ghp.georgia.gov/wps/portal>, click on the provider information tab, then click to view the full list of Medicaid provider manuals. You will see the COMP and NOW manuals posted.

I have cut and paste (with the permission of Heidi Fernandez – parent) some of the questions she recently got answered by MHDDAD. See below for that information.

I have also been putting in countless hours in the last few weeks talking to providers, parents and others trying to get additional clarification on many issues our families will face (specifically if you have Natural Support Enhancement (NSE) services under the former MRWP waiver). I am hoping to have a lot of questions answered by DHR-MHDDAD in the next week. I will keep you posted as I have more information to distribute.

Please note: The information in this newsletter was received from various sources but **YOU** need to confirm this information and how it impacts **your** child's waiver with your Support Coordinator. **This information is for informational purposes only.** I do not know any additional information at this time so **please** limit e-mailing me questions at this time. I am currently working on a lot of issues in the system and trying to focus on getting information for **everyone** so I do not have time to address individual concerns at this time. I do have a meeting scheduled with MHDDAD to address many of our concerns and hopefully get answers in the next two weeks. Thank you for understanding. I promise to keep you posted as I find out more information.

In addition, recently the AJC newspaper had an article on a real issue - parents of adults with disabilities that fear their child may outlive them. Please take a moment and thank the reporter, Gracie Bonds Staples [gstaples@ajc.com](mailto:gstaples@ajc.com) for continuing to bring attention to real disability issues in the community and many thanks to the parents willing to open up to talk to the media about their most personal issues in their lives. Education is the key to success in helping others understand why families need funding to continue to provide necessary programs.

I have also included a wonderful media segment on a senior from Texas that was recently crowned home coming queen (did I mention she has Down syndrome?). It's a great article/video on hope and the need for inclusive settings for our children to have the opportunities every other child has. Watch the video and feel inspired! I was.

In addition, in this newsletter are volunteer opportunities, winter Special Olympics, special needs gift and toy fair, and conference information.

*Happy Reading! Stay tuned-*

*United... We Will Make A Difference!*

Sincerely,

*Heidi*

**(Proud Mother to Jacob - 8 yrs old with Down syndrome and Jared - 7 yrs old)**

*“Help the Children Now, So They Can Help Themselves Later!”*

[www.heidijmoore.com](http://www.heidijmoore.com)

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**From: Parent Heidi Fernandez – Clarification of NOW/COMP Waivers**

Dear Families and Friends:

As we get closer to the NOW/COMP Waivers going live on Nov 1st there are questions that families have. Please see the questions below that were submitted to the Division with answers attached. I would like to thank the Division for working with me to address these concerns. My goal is to ensure that families are educated on the new waivers and can make informed decisions. I would encourage families to start having conversations with their support coordinators. The Office of DD has established a mailbox for NOW and COMP general implementation questions. For any additional requests for answers to questions about the new waivers please send question to this email box, [NOW-COMP-Questions@dhr.state.ga.us](mailto:NOW-COMP-Questions@dhr.state.ga.us). They will respond to the individual sending the email and they plan to post the answers on the Division of MHDDAD's website (at the What's New with the Waivers? site) as Frequently asked Questions.

**Here are the Questions and Answers:**

1. Co-employer sounds like a wonderful opportunity to meet the needs of certain individuals. Can you please refer me to a website or individual who can provide additional information? What is the process if one is interested in becoming a co-

employer? What are the qualifications? If someone is interested how quickly can they become a co-employer?

Answer: The co-employer option is new. There will be no enrolled co-employer agencies when we go live on November 1. However, the application for agencies to enroll to become co-employer agencies will be available by November 1. Any current provider agency that is interested in providing co-employer services will need to submit an application for those co-employer services.

2. Do individuals providing support or services under the NOW Waiver need to be NOW Medicaid Providers? Example: individuals who provide social skills training, ABA, floortime, music therapy?  
How about if you go self direct?

Answer: No. These individuals do not have to enroll to become Medicaid providers. Individuals can provide support or services under the NOW Waiver through participant direction, either under the co-employer option with a co-employer agency or under the self-direction option and payment by a fiscal agent.

3. Will the providers that now provide NSE be able to bill for the services in the ISPs of the individuals after the new waivers start Nov.1? If so, is there a billing manual that one can reference to?

Answer: NSE services are unbundling and billing will be according to comparable services in the NOW and COMP waivers. DCH policy manuals guide billing for these services. These policy manuals are available on the Georgia Health Partnership website.

4. Under certain categories in the NOW Waiver it states Not Covered: Payment is not made, directly or indirectly, to members of the individual's immediate family, except as approved. Are you referring to families not getting paid to provide direct support to their family member? How about families who pay for approved services and then submit the invoice to the provider for reimbursement. Will the new billing system under NOW continue to allow for families to receive reimbursement or does this mean that all payments need to go directly to the individual providing the service or support and not the family?

Answer: Reimbursement should go directly to the individual providing the service or support and not the family.

5. For the children that have the low NSE budgets and dont have a SIS how do you request for additional funding?

Answer: There is an established process for requesting additional services when an individuals needs change. This process will continue for children. The family makes the request to the support coordinator, who follows up with a request to the regional office.

6. For NSE families that use their budget or most (95%) of their budget for ABA therapy will there be any exceptions?

Answer: ABA therapy falls under different services. The available total funding for these services exceeds the current \$20,000 limit on NSE services.

7. What category will ABA not provided in the home fall under?

Answer: It falls under Community Access Services, Behavioral Supports Consultation Services, and Natural Support Training Services. For adults, these services can also be a part of Prevocational Services and Support Employment Services.

8. Will there be on going training on the new waivers? While I understand that certain training is specific to support coordinators and providers. I would like to recommend that training be open to providers, support coordinators and families at the same time this will cut down on the possibility of miscommunication.

Answer: We are in the process of scheduling family forums beginning in December. We may schedule joint training in the future.

9. Can you please provide a link to the NOW/COMP policies and procedures?

Answer: <http://www.ghp.georgia.gov> (Provider Information then Medicaid provider manuals)

Thank you so much,

Heidi Fernandez

Parent and Advocate

"Knowledge is Power"

"To the world, you may be one person, but to one person, you may be the world."

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### **Volunteer Opportunity:**

Want to Volunteer for a great cause but only have a few hours-

Please join us on Thursday, October 30<sup>th</sup> with The Home Depot at Jacob's Ladder Neurodevelopmental Learning Center from 8am to 1pm. Jacob's Ladder Neurodevelopmental Learning Center is a nonprofit private school established to provide children with the services they need in order to realize their full potential. They have recently moved to a new location at 407 Hardscrabble Rd in Roswell and the outdoor area needs some help. If you are interested in helping please contact Jennifer Snow at [snow4011@bellsouth.net](mailto:snow4011@bellsouth.net) or 404-358-073

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## **The Special K's - Indoors Winter Games Special Olympics**

2008 Training Schedule

Special Olympics Georgia Winter Games (January 18-20)

*Due to our growth, please RSVP on all sports you plan to have your athlete train in!*

### **Basketball**

Traditional Team, Unified Team, Team Skills & Skills

Centennial HS – Both Gyms

Begins Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>

Practice time will start @ 4:30 – 5:45pm

Head Coach – Chris Bray &

Coach Chris Kidd, Coach Cliff, Coach Jeff, Coach Tom, Coach Rick

### **Cheerleading**

Centennial HS – meet inside at Stadium entrance

Begins Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>

5 – 5:45pm

Co-Coaching – Denise Demick & Andrea Demick

### **Power lifting**

LOCATION & TIME: To Be Determined

Call to be put on the list!

Coaching –Tom Uebelacker

Must be 16 years old, RSVP and space is limited

## Bowling

Spalding Lanes

Norcross

Mondays, November 3rd<sup>th</sup>

6:30 -8:30 pm

Head Coach – Christina Currere

All Training will continue through to the Winter Games Competition. Coaches will notify you of canceled trainings due to holidays or other conflicts. *Attendance is important for 3 reasons: 1-the athlete's understanding of the sport, 2- the athlete's safety and the safety of the team and lastly 3- Respect for the volunteers and coaches that commit their time!*

NOTE: If you know someone who would like to participate with us as an athlete, unified partner, coach or volunteer please share this information with them.

Direct questions to Debbie Currere 770-649-0070.

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## Special Needs Gift and Toy Fair

How to Make Toys Work for Your Child this Holiday Season

Sponsored by

Metro East Center of the Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS)

Atlanta Alliance on Developmental Disabilities (AADD)

DeKalb Developmental Disabilities Council

Date: Saturday, November 15, 2008

Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

Place: Metro East GLRS  
2415-C North Druid Hills Road, NE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30329 678-676-2417

@ Hands-on access to toys

@ Demonstrations for parents

Using toys to enhance your child's social skills

Using toys to enhance your child's language skills

Adapting toys to use switches

@ Door prizes

Appropriate for All Ages and Abilities

Drop by and try out a variety of adapted and "off the shelf" toys and gifts appropriate for individuals with special needs. Vendors will be displaying items for you to view and your child to enjoy. Ordering information will be available.

NOTE: In order to make this a memorable day for your child with special needs, we ask that parents bring only their special needs child to this fair.

Directions from I-85: Take Exit 89, North Druid Hills Road. North Druid Hills Road is south of I-285's Spaghetti Junction and north of Lenox Road.

If coming from the south, turn right onto North Druid Hills Road. If coming from the north, turn left and cross back over the expressway. Go approximately .6 mile.

Directions from I-285: Take Stone Mountain Freeway, Highway 78 toward Decatur. Take the first exit, North Druid Hills Road. Turn right onto North Druid Hills Road. Go approximately 3.7 miles.

- ä Metro East GLRS is housed in the Jim Cherry Teacher Center across the street from Target and Taco Bell. We share a building with Open Campus High School and DeKalb School of the Arts. Come in through the red doors.

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**Good Media attention: Senior With Down Syndrome Crowned High School Queen**

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/story?id=6025166&page=1>

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/living/2008/10/16/homecoming.queen.cnn>

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**AJC Article: Parents of disabled adults fear for children who may outlive them**

[http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/stories/2008/10/13/georgia\\_disabled\\_care.html](http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/stories/2008/10/13/georgia_disabled_care.html)

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**Touch The Future Conference:**

October 22-25, <http://www.touchthefutureandtransition.org/>

The Exhibit Hall will be open to the public on Saturday, October 25, 2008  
from 8:30 to 11:30AM.

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