

**Nursing Home Relocation Waiver for Persons with Mental Illness
Community Opportunities and Recovery (COR)
INFORMATION SHEET May 2007**

What is Wisconsin's proposal for a nursing home relocation waiver for persons with severe and persistent mental illness?

- The newly approved Medicaid 1915(c) Home and Community Based Waiver program called Community Opportunities and Recovery (COR) will relocate to the community nursing home residents who have serious mental illness and co-occurring physical disabilities. The new waiver will include a mix of case management, typical waiver and recovery focused services appropriate to support this target population. It also includes the availability of participant direction of services with employer authority in several service areas.

Why is the nursing home relocation waiver for persons with mental illness important?

- Wisconsin has, for over two decades, favored choice for people who require a high level of nursing and supervision services. For some individuals who have a mental illness this choice has not been available.
- As part of Wisconsin's efforts to improve our systems of care for people with long term care needs, the Department of Health and Family Services applied for and received a Real Choice Systems Change grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. One of the goals of that grant was to do a feasibility study of the 1915 (c) waiver options for persons with mental illness. The new COR waiver came out of that review.
- At present there are approximately 500 individuals residing in nursing homes that have been identified as needing specialized psychiatric rehabilitation services for their mental illness as well as nursing care. These individuals are adults who meet the nursing facility level of care. Many of these individuals exhibit difficult behavioral challenges that may also include behaviors that place themselves at risk.
- Many of these individuals would prefer to reside in a community setting that provides a service mix structured to support the special needs of behavioral, physical, medical, and mental health specific to the person.
- Because of the lack of community resources and funding designed to meet their needs, there has been a fiscal incentive to continue to serve these individuals in a nursing home. The COR waiver which is structured to meet these needs will help to mitigate financial disincentives. In general many of these individuals can be served in the community at the same or lower cost. COR will be able to offer them a choice to live in the community.

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What is the Department's proposed time frame for the COR Waiver?

- CMS has approved the COR application with an effective date of July 1, 2007. Over the first three years the Department proposes to serve the totals of 50 individuals the first year, 150 individuals in the second and 250 individuals the third year. The first participants are expected to be enrolled in COR during the first quarter of SFY 08.

How will this waiver compare to other home and community based waivers?

- As with the Community Options Program-Waiver (COP-W), eligibility will be based on initial and continuing nursing home eligibility. In addition COR will require a diagnosis of serious mental illness, a co-occurring physical health condition, the interest and the ability of the individual to relocate into a community placement. The new waiver will use the existing financial and functional eligibility processes in place for COP-W persons. The waiver does not include those individuals otherwise eligible, but seeking diversion from nursing home placement.
- The waiver services to be provided will be determined through a comprehensive assessment of an individual's needs. An individualized plan of care will be developed that includes both the mental health and physical health community-based services considered necessary to meet the unique needs of the person.
- The state will demonstrate that the program is cost-effective and that there are quality safeguards to protect the health and welfare of individuals served through the program.
- The COR waiver design includes services specific to the needs of the person with a mental health diagnosis and condition, which will include periods of intense supervision and support to remain safely in the community.
- The COR waiver will provide the array of services needed that are not now available under the state Medicaid plan or under mental health plan benefits such as basic activities of daily living and in-home and residential supports.
- The COR waiver will provide options to individuals to receive community-based supports tailored to address co-occurring disabilities and better meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II as applied in the Supreme Court *Olmstead* decision, which requires states to provide mental health service in the most integrated setting consistent with the person's needs.