

New Jersey Awarded Federal Grant to Open Doors to Community Living

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Money Follows the Person Funding Helps Transition Residents from Institutions

TRENTON - The Department of Human Services (DHS), in partnership with the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), has been awarded a grant that may total up to \$30.3 million over five years by the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The grant will assist people who are elderly and/or physically or developmentally disabled to live and receive services in local communities, rather than in an institution.

“We are proud partners with the Department of Health and Senior Services in applying for and receiving this CMS grant that will assist the state in providing hundreds of people with services that they need to enable them to live in community homes,” said Acting DHS Commissioner Jennifer Velez. “Providing individuals who live in an institutional setting with a personal choice to receive long-term care services in a community setting is our shared goal.”

The five-year grant will assist the DHS' Division of Developmental Disabilities in implementing its “Olmstead” plan, *Path to Progress*, by covering a larger portion of the cost for the services for one year for 329, of the 1,850 people, who will move from state developmental centers to community homes. Olmstead is a 1999 U. S. Supreme Court decision affirming an individual's right to live outside an institution.

The CMS grant to New Jersey also includes 261 people who will move from nursing homes to community homes. CMS awarded the grants to 13 states to help shift Medicaid's traditional emphasis on institutional care to a system offering greater choices that include home and community-based services.

“Being able to receive increased federal match funding under this demonstration program over the next five years is just one more tool for New Jersey in support of the rebalancing of its long-term care system as mandated under the Independence, Dignity and Choice in Long-Term Care Act,” said DHSS Commissioner Fred M. Jacobs, M.D., J.D. “New Jersey is witnessing a fundamental change in its long-term care policy for older adults and persons with disabilities. It is a transformation that is directed at giving more people more control over their care and providing more support for community living.”

As in the regular Medicaid program, New Jersey will still need to expend state funds to draw down the amount of the grant. The grant is in the form of enhanced federal funding participation. A higher matching rate of 75 percent of the state's costs for services will be paid to the state for one year after an individual moves out of an institution and into the community. The Medicaid program traditionally pays up to 50 percent for care for elderly and disabled individuals living in institutions who need help with activities of daily living.

The grant will be used to design programs with four major objectives:

- * Increase the use of home and community-based, rather than institutional, long-term care.
- * Eliminate barriers that prevent Medicaid-eligible individuals from receiving support for appropriate and necessary long-term services in the settings of their choice.
- * Ensure that the Medicaid program can provide home and community based long-term care services to those who choose to move from an institutional to a community setting.
- * Ensure that home and community-based long-term care services are monitored for quality and provide for continuous quality improvement in these services.