



State of Connecticut Department of Social Services



Division of Autism Spectrum Services

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In July 2006, the Autism Spectrum Disorder Pilot Program was established under the Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

Section 37 of Public Act 06-188

- The pilot program began in New Haven county in July 2006 and then expanded to Hartford county in August 2008.
- In 2011, Public Act 11-4 established the Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services.
- Both the Pilot, and the Autism Division were established to fill a void in services for individuals with autism who do not have an intellectual disability.
- The pilot originally served individuals with ASD over the age of 18. It was later opened to those age 3 through the lifespan.
- To be eligible to receive services from the Division of Autism an individual must have:
 - ❖ **PRIMARY** diagnosis of autism
 - ❖ A full-scale IQ of 70 or above
 - ❖ At least three years of age
 - ❖ Legal residency in Connecticut
 - ❖ Medicaid eligibility
 - ❖ Impairment prior to age 22
 - ❖ Impairment expected to continue indefinitely
 - ❖ Reside in their own home or their family home

Effective July 1, 2016 the Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services was transferred from the Department of Developmental Services to the Department of Social Services

(Section 47 of Public Act 16-3, An Act Concerning Revenue and Other Items to Implement the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2017)

The transition included the DDS staff dedicated to the Autism Division and two autism waivers:

- ❖ Waiver For Persons With Autism (Lifespan Waiver)
- ❖ Early Childhood Autism Waiver (ECAW) ***officially closed in 2018***

The Division of Autism staff consists of:

- A Program Manager
- One Administrative Assistant
- One Autism Support and Resource Specialists
- 11 Case Managers
- One Case Manager Supervisor

What is a Waiver?

The Waiver For Persons With Autism is a Home and Community Based (HCBS) Waiver under Medicaid. This waiver allows Connecticut to receive partial reimbursement from the Federal Government for providing needed community-based programs and supports designed to enable individuals to leave an institutional setting or to prevent their placement in one in the first place. The Federal Government reimburses Connecticut 50% of the cost of services and support through the Medicaid program; therefore a person must be a Medicaid member to participate.

Medicaid Waivers

A Medicaid waiver allows the state to “waive” certain federal requirements within the Medicaid Program. These waivers permit the state to do the following:

- Offer services that are not available under the present state plan
- Limit the amount of spending per person
- Limit the number of individuals served
- Utilize special “institutional” eligibility requirements primarily related to income

Medicaid provides Connecticut reimbursement for ASD services through two distinct Medicaid payment methods:

- Medicaid Waiver (Autism Lifespan Waiver)
- Medicaid State Plan Services

Waiver For Persons With Autism (Lifespan Waiver)

- The Department of Social Services Waiver for Persons with Autism provides home-and community-based services to individuals with autism who do not have an intellectual disability (individuals must have a full IQ score of 70 or higher).
- Services provided under the waiver include:
 - ❖ Behavioral Services
 - ❖ Job Coaching
 - ❖ Community Mentor
 - ❖ Life Skills Coach
 - ❖ Social Skills group
 - ❖ Respite (In-home and Out-of-home)
 - ❖ Assistive Technology
 - ❖ Interpreter
 - ❖ Specialized Driving Assessment
 - ❖ Personal Emergency Response System
 - ❖ Individual Goods and Service
 - ❖ Non-Medical Transportation
 - ❖ Nutrition **** Newest Addition Jan 2023
- ❖ *****The Waiver for Persons with Autism is not an entitlement; therefore, services and access to services under the ASD waiver may be limited, based on available funding and program capacity. A waiting list applies.**

Lifespan Waiver Cont'd

- As of 12/08/2023- there are 2038 individuals on the ASD Waiver waitlist.
- Maximum Waiver cap per person per year: \$50,000
 - Current Number of Vendors: 165
 - Number of assigned cases: 320

Connecticut: Autism Insurance Reform Law

- The Autism Insurance Reform Law (SB 301/Public Act 09-115) was enacted on June 9, 2009. It became effective January 1, 2010 and required fully insured group health insurance plans to provide coverage for autism services to children under the age of 15 years.
- ASD services covered by the law include:
 - Diagnosis
 - Behavioral Therapy
 - Prescription drugs
 - Psychiatric care and Psychological care
 - Physical therapy, Speech therapy and Occupational Therapy

***Self-funded insurance plans (ERISA's) do not have to comply with State Autism Insurance Reform Laws, although many have made the decision to offer coverage on their own.

Self-funded vs Fully-insured

- Self-funded health plans pay claims of employees as they occur.
- Fully-insured health plans, pay a certain amount each month (the premium) to the health insurance company.
 - Office of the Healthcare Advocate
 - Autism Speaks (Advocacy, sample letters)

State Plan Services

- The State Plan for ASD services was the result of guidelines issued by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This required Medicaid programs to cover autism services for individuals under the age of 21, citing the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) child health component under federal law.
- The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit provides comprehensive and preventive health care services for children under age 21 who are enrolled in Medicaid. EPSDT is key to ensuring that children and adolescents receive appropriate preventive, dental, mental health, developmental, and specialty services.
 - ❖ **Early:** Assessing and identifying problems early
 - ❖ **Periodic:** Checking children's health at periodic, age-appropriate intervals
 - ❖ **Screening:** Providing physical, mental, developmental, dental, hearing, vision, and other screening tests to detect potential problems
 - ❖ **Diagnostic:** Performing diagnostic tests to follow up when a risk is identified, and
 - ❖ **Treatment:** Control, correct or reduce health problems found

State Plan Services Cont'd

- The State Plan Services for ASD are managed under the Integrated Care Unit in the Division of Health Services at DSS.
- The Autism Lifespan waiver is managed under the Community Options Unit within the Division of Health Services.
- **Carelon Behavioral Health (formerly Beacon)** is the Administrative Service Organization for the State Plan ASD services. They are responsible for reviewing documentation to support level of care guidelines and medical necessity to authorize ASD services for Medicaid (HUSKY A, C and D) members under the age of 21. ***Husky B members are **not** eligible for State Plan ASD services.
- Carelon also provides Care Coordination and Peer Specialist Services for individuals with ASD.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Services: The State Plan

- Autism services available through the Medicaid State Plan (HUSKY A, C and D) for individuals under the age of 21 include:
 - ❖ Comprehensive diagnostic evaluation
 - ❖ Behavioral Assessment
 - ❖ Treatment Plan Development
 - ❖ Development of a Program Book
 - ❖ Direct Intervention
 - ❖ Group Treatment Services (Social Skills groups and Parent groups for members and their families)

Transition Resources at 18

After age 18, the parent's income and assets should not be documented in the application. Beginning at age 18, the person is considered a household of one (family of one) when applying for state/federal benefits.

- **Decision Making Options - Conservatorship**
- **Applying for SSI**
 - to help with food, clothing and shelter (basic needs)
- **Applying for Husky C**
 - apply for SSI before applying for Husky C. Being approved for SSI establishes an individual's disability.
- **BRS**
- **Obtaining a valid Photo ID**
- **Registering to Vote**
- **Applying for SNAP benefits**
- **Extended Transition Services 18-22**

Do You Qualify for Benefits?

- To see if you qualify to receive medical benefits, help buying food, and/or cash assistance- visit www.connect.ct.gov
- 211 Navigator Benefits Screener at www.211navigator.org
 - State & federal benefits
 - Energy assistance
 - Rental assistance
 - Childcare
 - Much more

Department of Social Services Website

- To access the Division of Autism website: www.ct.gov/dss > Click on Programs and Services > Click on Autism Spectrum Disorder-ASD
- ❖ **Overview**-program description and services offered
- ❖ **Eligibility**-program eligibility criteria and links to application. ******The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) currently determines eligibility for the Department of Social Services (DSS) Autism Waiver. Please note that the application is the same for both the DSS Autism waiver and the waivers provided through DDS.**
- ❖ **Interpretation Services**- English is a second language
- ❖ **Become a Provider**- qualifications, applications and forms, rates, changes, provider list
- ❖ **Provider Training**- trainings for providers. Some may be mandatory
- ❖ **Related Resources**-**Autism** Checklists and Guides by age, Autism resources at the Local, State and National level, Autism Resource Library.
- ❖ **Contact**-How to reach us

Types of Information and Resources You Can Expect

Resource Guides for different age ranges


- Birth to 5
- 6-12
- 13-17
- 18-21
- 21 and Older

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- Early Intervention
 - Medical Related Information
 - Assistive Technology
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Life Skills
 - Safety
 - Social
 - Funding for Services and legal Issues
 - Support Systems
 - Transportation
 - Advocacy

Types of Information and Resources You Can Expect

Quick Reference Resource Sheets:

- Resource For Families
- Adolescent and Adult Resources
- Transition Resources
- Employment Resources

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- Known ASD agencies, website and/or blogs
 - Safety
 - Support/advocacy/support groups
 - Assistive Technology
 - Legal Assistance
 - Career development
 - Post secondary planning
 - Employment
 - Social and recreational

Types of Information and Resources You Can Expect

Information and resources based on specific areas of concern

The Search By Topic Option on the DSS Autism Waiver Website allows Autism Support and Resource Specialist's to navigate an Autism Resource Library consisting of 13 categories, containing hyperlinks or documents

- Advocacy and legal Aid
- Assistive Technology- Medical Equipment-Interpreter Services
- Benefits
- Education
- Employment
- Financial Assistance and Funding Services
- Housing
- Life Skills
- Medical and Health Related
- Safety
- Social and Recreational
- Support Networks and Groups
- Transportation