

Press Release Further Information:

October 17, 2008 Pam Ronan

Federal Government Approves New Jersey's Expanded Community Care Waiver
TRENTON New Jersey Department of Human Services' (DHS) Commissioner Jennifer Velez announced today that DHS' Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) has received approval from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), to amend the state's existing Home and Community Based Services Waiver. These changes will allow DDD to receive matching funds for many community-based services - that currently are funded only with state dollars - for people with developmental disabilities.

The waiver, which has been in place since 1982, is commonly referred to as the Community Care Waiver (CCW) and allows the state to use Medicaid funding to pay for certain services provided to people living in the community, rather than in an institution. Most of these services are provided by contracts with social service agencies.

"The state's amended Community Care Waiver is both beneficial to individuals and fiscally responsible," said Commissioner Velez. "More of the services we provide will now be eligible for cost-sharing, helping the state to continue providing these services through tough fiscal times." Through the amended waiver, DDD will be able to bill the federal government for a portion of the cost of a number of services that currently are funded entirely by the state, including community transition services, support coordination, assistive technology devices and non-medical transportation needs. In addition, through amended waiver language, DDD can now increase respite service providers and bill hourly for day habilitation and supported employment services. The amendment is retroactive to January 1, 2008.

"This amended waiver also now provides federal matching funds for the budgets granted to people who are self-directing their services," said Assistant Commissioner Kenneth Ritchey, who oversees DDD. "This option provides individuals greater choice in the services that they receive and the way in which they receive those services."

More than 40,000 people, including almost 2,900 who reside in one of the state's seven developmental centers, are eligible for services funded by DDD. The division's \$1.3 billion budget for SFY2009 includes more than \$900 million in contracts with agencies that provide community-based services throughout New Jersey.

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Pam Ronan, MPA, DHS Public Information Officer
609-292-3703