Innovations Plus
Frequently Asked Questions

North Carolina's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is improving the system of services offered to people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD). An important change to improve services is a new program called “Innovations Plus.” Below are questions and answers about the new Innovations Plus program.

1. What is Innovations Plus?

In 2011, the North Carolina legislature passed a new law. The law requires DHHS to change how services are delivered (Session Law 2011-264). Key changes are below:

- The 23 Local Management Entities will become 11 Managed Care Organizations known as LME-MCOs.
- Services for people with I/DD will be funded through a Medicaid home and community based waiver program called “Innovations.”
- People will receive financial resources to get services based on their needs. Needs will be measured by the Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS) assessment. The SIS measures the level of support a person needs for daily life activities.

DHHS calls these changes “Innovations Plus” because it is based on the Innovations waiver started at PBH LME-MCO. Soon the Innovations Plus program will be offered statewide.

2. What is Innovations Plus designed to do?

Innovations Plus changes aim to create a fairer system and make sure that people get the right amount of supports for their needs. To achieve this, DHHS contracted with 11 (LME-MCOs) to provide services to people in their local community by:

- Using the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) to find out the support needs of people with I/DD.
- Giving each person an Individualized Budget Amount (an amount of money) to spend for their services.
• Developing a person centered service plan for each person based on their goals and their support needs, and make sure that services and supports in the ISP happen as planned.
• Evaluating how well Innovations Plus is working and continue to improve.

3. How soon can I expect things to happen?
First steps in this process are underway. A sample group of people receiving services are being scheduled for assessment of their support needs. Also information on how much services cost around the state is being collected. All this information will go into figuring out how to set budgets for people to get their services. Each of these steps takes time, but DHHS expects that Innovations Plus will be ready to go in 2013.

4. How is “Innovations Plus” different from the “Innovations” waiver?
Another change is that people who were getting services through the “CAP-MR/DD” waiver will move to the “Innovations” waiver. DHHS is working with LME-MCOs to make sure that services are transitioned smoothly from CAP-MR/DD waiver to Innovations.

Under Innovations Plus, you will still receive services through the Innovations waiver, but you will now get an Individualized Budget Amount to get the services you need. You will be told what the amount is before your next service planning meeting.

5. When will my support needs be assessed with the Supports Intensity Scale?
Your need for supports (help in daily life activities) will be measured using the Supports Intensity Scale. SIS assessments will begin in September 2012. After your first SIS assessment, adults will get a new SIS assessment every three years and children every two years. You may update your SIS before then if a big change occurs in your life that affects your support needs.

SIS assessment meetings happen before your service planning meeting so you can use the information from the SIS and your Individualized Budget Amount to plan your services.

6. How will my Individualized Budget Amount be determined?
Using information from the SIS assessment and other information, you will be assigned an amount of money that is used to get needed services. This is called an Individualized Budget Amount. Besides the SIS, other information that is also considered includes where you live (group home, family home, etc.), age, and significant medical or behavioral supports needed.
8. **When will I know what my Individualized Budget Amount is?**

   Beginning in 2013, Innovations Plus will be rolled out across the state. You will be notified of your Individualized Budget Amount before your annual ISP planning date.

9. **Where can I get more information about Innovations Plus?**

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   Contact your local LME-MCO to learn more. A list of LMEs-MCO’s and their contact information is on the internet at this link:  
   [http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dma/lme/LMEMCOmap01113.html](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dma/lme/LMEMCOmap01113.html)