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 Supports Intensity Scale (SIS), one of the first steps in implementing the Innovations Plus program.

1. **What is the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)?**

   The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) was developed by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). Before SIS, a person’s level of need was usually measured by the skills a person lacked or by level of disability. The SIS shifts the focus to what support a person needs. It measures the support needs (level of assistance) that a person with intellectual or developmental disabilities would need to do the same things that people without disabilities do, such as go to work, keep up a home, have relationships, etc. Two versions of the SIS are available. One version of SIS is for individuals who are 16 years and older called SIS-A (SIS for adults). The other version is for children ages 5-16 called SIS-C (SIS for children).

2. **How is the SIS being used in North Carolina?**

   Legislation passed in 2011 requires DHHS to use a funding model for community services to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities based on the funding model developed by Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions (PBH) in North Carolina. As a result of this legislation, the SIS is being used for 2 purposes:

   (1) To use for person centered service plans, and

   (2) To set Individualized Budget Amounts.

3. **Is the SIS a valid and reliable tool for assessing support needs?**

   Yes. Researchers around the world have shown that the SIS is a valid and reliable assessment tool. It measures what it tries to measure -- the type and amount of support an individual needs.

   SIS-A for adults is a “normed” assessment tool. This means that it gives information that places a person’s need for support in comparison to other people with intellectual and
developmental disabilities. This is helpful for seeing how a person’s need for support measure’s up to others.

SIS-C is a more recent assessment tool and is in the process of being normed using information collected in North Carolina and several other states. Parents and/or guardians of children who receive SIS-C in North Carolina can decide whether or not they want the information from their child’s SIS interview to be included in the AAIDD norming data set. This decision will not affect the SIS results for their child. AAIDD expects to complete the norming process for SIS-C before Innovations Plus is implemented statewide.

Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions has been using both the SIS-A and SIS-C. Both SIS assessments tools have proven useful and reliable for assessing individual support needs in their LME-MCO.

4. **What is the difference between SIS-A for adults and SIS-C for children?**

Many items on the SIS-A and SIS-C are similar, however SIS-C includes items about supports needed at school and SIS-A includes items about supports needed to have a job.

5. **When will my support needs be assessed with the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)?**

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 3 years and children every 2 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 that you can use the information from the SIS to plan your services.

6. **How will my SIS assessment meeting be scheduled?**

A staff member from the Developmental Disabilities Training Institute (DDTI) in North Carolina will contact you and others to schedule the SIS assessment meeting. SIS meetings usually take 2 to 3 hours.

7. **Who will conduct my SIS assessment meeting?**

Individuals trained and certified by AAIDD will conduct all SIS assessments. Interviewers who administer the SIS for children have additional training and are certified by AAIDD to conduct assessments for children under 16 years old.
8. **Who will be at my SIS assessment meeting?**

You and people who know you well should attend. This can include family members, guardians, friends, staff from your residential setting or day program, a teacher, or a job coach.

9. **Do I have to participate in my SIS assessment meeting?**

The SIS interview is about you and your support needs. So it’s very important that you be there even if you are only able to stay for part of the meeting. If you absolutely cannot attend, the SIS interviewer will arrange to meet you in person before or after the SIS assessment meeting.

10. **What if I do not understand what the question means?**

Ask the person conducting the SIS to explain the question, or anything you do not understand.

11. **How do I know that I answered the questions correctly?**

There are no right or wrong answers to the SIS questions.

12. **What happens after my SIS assessment is completed?**

The information from the SIS assessment meeting will be shared with you, and your legal representative if you have one. Information gathered from your SIS assessment can be used to help develop your person centered service plan. Your SIS information will also be used by the State to calculate your Individualized Budget Amount (funding for you to get services that you need).

13. **When will I know what my Individualized Budget Amount is?**

A couple of steps need to happen before everyone gets individualized budgets. Over the next year, SIS assessment information is being collected from thousands of people, both children and adults, to develop a resource allocation model (a funding model). Once the model is ready, and people have participated in SIS assessments, THEN people will receive Individualized Budget Amounts.

If you participated in a SIS assessment, you will be notified of your Individualized Budget Amount prior to your annual service planning meeting.
14. Will the SIS assessment change my eligibility for Medicaid waiver?

No. The process to determine eligibility to receive waiver services and the SIS assessment are separate. To receive waiver services you must meet Medicaid eligibility requirements. If you are currently on the waiver, the SIS will not change your eligibility and if you are new to the waiver, you will only have a SIS assessment after your eligibility is approved.

15. Where can I get more information about Innovations Plus?

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Contact your local LME-MCO to learn more. You can find a list of LMEs-MCO’s and their contact information on the internet here: