



**MENTAL RETARDATION BULLETIN  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE**

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SUBJECT:

**County to County Relocations**

BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin T. Casey", is written over the printed name.

Kevin T. Casey  
Deputy Secretary for Mental Retardation

**SCOPE:**

County MH/MR Programs  
Administrative Entities  
Supports Coordination Entities

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this bulletin is to advise County MH/MR Programs of the Office of Mental Retardation's (OMR) policy regarding required procedures when individuals relocate from one county to another in Pennsylvania.

**BACKGROUND:**

This policy was developed to ensure that Medicaid waiver requirements continue to be met and to provide direction to counties regarding how to consistently implement standardized, statewide procedures when an individual relocates from one county to another.

**DISCUSSION:**

This bulletin stipulates and clarifies the role of county government agencies when an individual or family initiates a relocation from one county to another. Such a situation could arise under several circumstances:

- A waiver enrolled individual moves from one county to another.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO: **The Appropriate Regional Office**

- An individual receiving county base-funded services moves from one county to another.
- An individual registered with a county agency but not receiving services (PUNS/Waiting List) moves to another county.
- An individual relocating from a State Center to a county in which they have not previously resided.
- A child in custodial care is placed in foster care in another county.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### Waiver Funding

Medicaid Waivers available through OMR are accessible statewide; therefore if an individual is enrolled in waiver services and chooses to relocate, the county must accept the individual's transfer. The person's Individual Service Plan (ISP) and waiver effective date will not be affected by the transfer.

### Base Funding

Counties are required to provide base-funded services under local county priority and availability of funds. Therefore, if an individual is receiving base-funded services in one county, they may not be able to receive those same services in the county to which they relocate. If an individual relocates and has unmet needs, a Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) form should be completed.

### Eligibility

Receiving counties must accept the eligibility assessment of the sending county; however, this assessment may change during the subsequent annual update or review by the receiving county. Should a new assessment indicate that the individual does not meet waiver requirements, the receiving county must provide the individual and representatives identified by the individual (a legal guardian, relative or friend) with written notice at least 10 days prior to the termination of any waiver funded services, as specified in MR Bulletin 00-04-07, entitled "*Clarifying Procedures for Individual and Provider Appeals*" and MR Bulletin 00-00-09, entitled "*Service Preference in Medicaid Waiver for Individuals with MR*". The individual has the right to file an appeal (fair hearing request) with the Department of Public Welfare (DPW). The receiving county will be responsible for processing any paperwork and must continue to provide waiver funded services until the appeal is resolved, if the appeal is filed within 10 days from the date the notice was mailed.

Upon an individual's request for relocation, the sending county is responsible for providing the individual with the name, address and phone number of the person at the receiving county who can provide information or assistance. The sending county should

participate and assist in planning the individual's move and must ensure that all pertinent records are transferred no later than 30 days prior to the planned move date, when advance notice of a move or relocation is provided by the sending county. If an individual relocates without notifying their home county, the receiving county is responsible to provide notification of the individual's move to the sending county when the information becomes known.

### Costs:

An individual's move from one county to another may result in either increased or decreased costs.

### Increased Costs

If the individual relocates to a county where the provision of services as reflected in the current plan will be more expensive than their previous county, the sending county must only transfer the amount that the sending county had spent on the same services. If the receiving county requires additional monies to meet a waiver recipient's needs as identified in their plan and assessment, and all other sources of funding have been exhausted, OMR will provide the additional funds.

If a move to another county will cause an individual enrolled in the Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waiver to exceed their funding cap, the receiving county should consider other funding sources to meet their needs. If the receiving county does not have adequate funding available, they should complete a PUNS form. If the lack of funding jeopardizes the individual's health and safety, the county should submit an *"Individual Emergency Status"* form to the Regional OMR.

Advance written notice to the consumer, with the consumer's right to a county meeting, mediation or an appeal with the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals in accordance with MR Bulletin 00-04-07 is required before P/FDS or Consolidated Waiver services can be denied, reduced or terminated.

### Decreased Costs

Should the individual move to a county in which the provision of the same, approved services is expected to cost less than their previous county, no money should be transferred until the receiving county develops the individual's plan and a cost is assigned. After the plan is developed and approved, the sending county will transfer only the amount of money assigned to the individual's plan, not to exceed the cost the sending county had been paying to serve the individual.

In both cases, counties must take the steps necessary to make direct payments to the provider in the receiving county, to transfer the authorized amount for services to the receiving county and to notify the Regional Office in time for the subsequent rebudget. The appropriate Regional Office will then process the transfer in the next

rebudget/adjustment submission to the Central Office. The effective date of the transfer shall be determined based on when services begin and shall be documented on the Individual Relocation Form. If an individual has already moved, or is receiving services in another county prior to the effective date of this bulletin, but the transfer has not been completed, the counties shall agree upon an effective date or it will become effective on July 1 of the next fiscal year. OMR will provide both the sending and receiving counties confirmation of the transfer with start-up and annualized costs. Until funds are transferred through the rebudget/adjustment process, the counties involved will arrange for service payments for the individual and must ensure continuity of services until the transfer is complete. This may include the sending county paying the provider directly or arranging to pay the provider(s) through the receiving county until the transfer occurs.

### Change in Service Needs

Some individuals may find that their service needs change following a move to a new county. Changes in service needs should be reflected in the individual's standardized needs assessment and must be addressed by the receiving county. This standardized assessment must be updated at least annually; however a new assessment can be completed at any time if the individual's needs change.

The receiving county must provide the individual and representatives identified by the individual with written notice prior to the denial, reduction or termination of any waiver funded services, as specified in MR Bulletin 00-04-07. The individual has the right to file an appeal (fair hearing request) with DPW.

### PUNS

In the event of the relocation of an individual currently on the waiting list with a current and active PUNS, the PUNS should transfer with the individual to their new county. The PUNS form should be updated or changed only if the needs of the individual change. Counties accepting the relocation of base-funded individuals should follow the same PUNS procedures.

### Monitoring and the Role of the Counties

Unless otherwise requested by the family, if an individual relocates to a non-contiguous county, the counties must work together to negotiate monitoring. If negotiations are unsuccessful, the receiving county is responsible for monitoring to ensure continuity of services.

If the individual relocates to a county which is contiguous to the sending county, the sending county has several options with regard to monitoring. The sending county can choose to monitor the individual, contract with a receiving county provider or work out other arrangements to ensure that monitoring is provided. This does not preclude the individual's choice of any willing and qualified provider.

## Appeals

In any instance of the denial, reduction or termination of waiver services, an individual or their representative maintains the right to appeal. The steps necessary for both individual and provider appeals can be found in MR Bulletin 00-04-07.

## Individual Relocation Form

A standardized form for the relocation of individuals from county to county has been developed and is attached to this bulletin. This form should be completed by representatives from the individual's sending county and forwarded to the receiving county. The receiving county should then forward the completed form to their Regional OMR Office for signature. All Regional Offices affected by the transfer should receive copies of the documentation after all signatures have been obtained.

## County Directory

OMR will develop and maintain a directory of county contacts responsible for the relocation of individuals to and from their home county. This list will be maintained and updated as necessary by the Regional Offices of Mental Retardation.

## Individual Records

### Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS)

When an individual relocates to another county, the sending county is responsible for ensuring that the individual's information in HCSIS is accurate and complete. The receiving county is responsible for updating and maintaining the individual's information within the HCSIS system. A "release of information" is required prior to transferring an individual's record.

Attachment:

Individual Relocation Form