

The Direct Line

News from Director John Martin

Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities

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Intermediate Care Facilities: Overview

Part of moving Ohio's developmental disabilities system forward includes modernizing the Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) Program. We are modernizing the ICF program to ensure individuals are aware of their options and have the opportunity to live in the least restrictive environment. These changes also preserve this important service option for individuals who need the level of care an ICF offers.

After the operation of the ICF program transferred from Medicaid to DODD, the Department started encouraging both the conversion of ICF beds to waivers, and the downsizing of large ICFs (nine or more beds). While these efforts have helped more people move into a community setting, there still is work to be done; per capita, Ohio ranks 6th in the country for the number of individuals living in non-state operated ICFs, and 2nd for the number of individuals living in large ICFs. The Executive Budget focuses additional reforms on large ICFs, both reducing the number of people who live in them, and offering community-based alternatives.

The Department's goal with these changes is to honor the choices of individuals – to help those who wish to live in a community setting to do so, and to allow those who wish to remain in an ICF to do so. These initiatives will make it easier for individuals to move into a community setting, and strengthen the ICF program for individuals who are living there.

What are the changes?

There are several initiatives in the Executive Budget designed to help with these goals. The Department met with stakeholders to review the initial budget recommendations – the group amended the proposals, and submitted a final set of recommendations that meet the Department's policy objectives and allow providers to continue serving individuals. The changes will:

- **Help those individuals who want move into the community to do so.** Several initiatives will make it easier for **Ensure individuals are aware of their options.** It's important that individuals are aware of the option to live in a community-based setting. To help with this, individuals living in an ICF and their families will regularly receive information about community options. Also, before an individual moves into a large ICF, the County Board will complete an assessment to determine if less restrictive options (such as home and community-based services) could meet the individual's needs. It's important to note that the decision about where to live is up to the individual, these efforts are just to make sure individuals understand their options.
- **Help those individuals who want move into the community to do so.** Several initiatives will make it easier for people living in an ICF to move into the community, including making them a priority on the waiver waiting list, expanding the state funding available waivers, and offering rental assistance to help with the initial transition.
- **Give individuals who want to live in an ICF greater privacy.** Removing the grandfather clause that permits more than two people in a bedroom will help individuals have more privacy and a more home-like environment. Also, it will help some individuals who want to move from a larger facility to move in to a smaller facility that is more integrated into the community. Most ICFs are in the process, or have completed the process, of moving to no more than two people per bedroom. The requirement would not apply to children, or to individuals who currently have more than two per bedroom and want to continue that arrangement.

John R. Kasich, Governor

John L. Martin, Director

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- **Help ICFs downsize.** Downsizing ICFs is critical to helping more people live in the community, and giving individuals who live in ICFs more space and privacy. ICFs often state that a barrier to downsizing or converting beds to home and community-based services is the financial impact this has. The Department will help with these concerns by temporarily increasing the capital ceilings for ICFs undergoing downsizing and conversion, and doing a case mix adjustment after the downsizing or conversion.
- **Modernize the ICF reimbursement system.** The current reimbursement system is more than 20 years old, and some aspects no longer support the direction of the DD system to help people more fully participate in their communities. The Department will work with a third party to develop a plan to reform the reimbursement formula. The goals of the redesigned system are to reward quality, make payments based on health outcomes, and promote integrated services appropriate to the needs of the individual.

What is driving these changes?

DODD has long worked to provide options to people with disabilities to live in settings of their choice. It is the goal of the Department to honor the choices of individuals – to help those who wish to live in a community setting to do so, and to allow those who wish to remain in an ICF to do so.

Also, there has been increased pressure from Disability Rights Ohio and the U.S. Department of Justice to downsize or eliminate institutional settings. While the Department sees an ongoing need for this service option, it is important to make it easier for people to select community-based settings. These changes balance the need to preserve and strengthen the ICF program while promoting an increase in community living.

Where can I learn more?

- **Online:** Go to DODD.Ohio.gov/OurFuture for more information, including frequently asked questions and a chart that explains how these changes affect individuals who live in an ICF, and providers who operate an ICF
- **Email:** Receive general news and information in your email inbox – sign up for Pipeline DODD.Ohio.gov/pipeline
- **By phone:** Call the DODD Budget and Developmental Center Closure Hotline toll-free at 855-611-6446 (OHIO) or 614-728-5311