



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Vicki Rich

(614) 644-0263

[Vicki.rich@dodd.ohio.gov](mailto:Vicki.rich@dodd.ohio.gov)

## **New Waiver Offers More Independence to Individuals with Developmental Disabilities**

**Columbus** - The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) announced today that Ohioans with developmental disabilities soon will have a new option that allows them freedom to control how they receive support services. Under the recently federally-approved Self-Empowered Life Funding (SELF) waiver, individuals direct how their approved support dollars are allocated, and how they receive waiver services like remote monitoring and health equipment or supplies. They also can utilize new services such as Community Inclusion and Integrated Employment to help live more inclusive lives within their communities.

“Waivers were developed more than twenty years ago to give individuals with developmental disabilities options beyond institutionalization, giving them funding support to receive care and support where they choose to live—in home and community-based settings,” said DODD Director John Martin. “The new SELF waiver is the next evolution in understanding how to support individuals to direct how they live, not just where they live.”

The state anticipates enrolling up to 2,000 individuals in the SELF waiver over the next three years. Within those numbers, up to 100 children with intensive behavioral needs will receive a state-funded waiver—which offers flexible service options for families of children with autism and other behavioral support needs.

Waivers are approved under federal guidelines by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services, and then operated by DODD. Ohio’s 88 County Boards of Developmental Disabilities administer waiver services, and work directly with individuals to enroll in and comply with waiver requirements. Enrollment for the new SELF waiver will begin in July 2012, following program development and county board administrative training.

Individuals must meet eligibility requirements for the waiver, including meeting required ‘level of care’ needs, and be willing and able to perform responsibilities associated with self-directing their care. The SELF waiver has an overall annual cost cap of \$25,000 for children and \$40,000 for adults. The cap offers predictability for counties and the state in projecting funding needs for the community, while the structure of the waiver offers participants the flexibility to tailor services for their particular needs.

“This is a much-awaited service waiver for many in the developmental disabilities community because it recognizes individuals’ capabilities and desires to live more independently, and take responsibility for directing their own lives. It goes to the heart of our state’s vision of creating a healthcare environment that is person-centered and driven by quality of care,” said Patrick Stephan, DODD Deputy Director for Medicaid Administration.

**(MORE)**

DODD is responsible for overseeing a statewide system of supports and services for people with developmental disabilities. The department's mission is the continuous improvement of the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.