



**DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS BULLETIN**  
**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE**

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SUBJECT:

***Supports Intensity Scale™ (SIS™) and PA Plus Users Manual***

BY:

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**SCOPE:**

Administrative Entity (AE) Administrators or Directors  
Supports Coordination Organization Directors  
Providers of Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support Waiver Services

**PURPOSE:**

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) has adopted the Supports Intensity Scale™<sup>1</sup> (SIS) and the PA Plus as the standardized needs assessment for participants aged 16 -72 in the Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waivers. The purpose of this bulletin is to describe the rollout and implementation strategy of the SIS and PA Plus. Included are instructions on the use of the SIS and PA Plus in the development of the Individual Support Plan (ISP) as it relates to the Waiver requirement that all ISPs address assessed needs.

A standardized assessment helps everyone to understand what supports a person needs to be successful and have an *Everyday Life*. One standardized assessment for all Waiver participants will enhance the consistency of the planning process and provide a common structure to promote consistency and accountability for all stakeholders.

**BACKGROUND:**

In March of 2005, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) expressed significant concern that ODP must have a method to assure that necessary supports and services were consistently and appropriately delivered to Waiver participants. In response to these concerns, ODP assured CMS that a statewide, standardized needs assessment would be adopted to consistently assess the needs of Waiver participants. ODP established a workgroup of stakeholders who reviewed a number of assessment tools used nationally and recommended the SIS. The SIS and PA Plus is ODPs statewide standardized needs assessment to achieve this requirement.

<sup>1</sup>Supports Intensity Scale™ 2004 AAIDD

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

**The Appropriate Regional Program Office**

ODP includes a small number of additional questions, known as the PA Plus, to be administered with the SIS in order to gather additional information that will be used for planning. ODP has contracted with a conflict-free vendor to administer the SIS and PA Plus (See Bulletin 00-07-02, “*Overview of the Supports Intensity Scale and the PA Plus*”).

## **DISCUSSION:**

The SIS and PA Plus will eventually replace the current needs assessments conducted by AEs for all Consolidated and P/FDS Waiver participants. Effective with this bulletin, all Waiver participants must receive a SIS and PA Plus assessment through the multi-year rollout strategy managed by ODP. AEs will continue their current assessment practices for Waiver participants until the individual has been identified to receive an initial SIS and PA Plus.

ODP only recognizes the SIS and PA Plus assessment conducted by its independent vendor as acceptable in meeting this requirement once the individual has received a SIS and PA Plus.

The SIS and PA Plus are not:

- A method to diagnose disabilities.
- A method to evaluate eligibility for mental retardation services and supports.
- A replacement for the provider assessments required in the licensing regulations.
  - This assessment remains the responsibility of the provider on an annual basis as specified in the regulations.
- A replacement for the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) and Individual Emergency Status Form (IESF).
  - AEs are expected to continue to follow the current PUNS and IESF process guidelines.
- A mechanism for developing individual budgets or producing individual budget amounts.
- The *sole* basis for determining services and supports for an individual.

The *SIS and PA Plus Users Manual* was designed to accompany this bulletin to provide guidelines for implementation. This manual provides information useful for individual planning for all stakeholders affected by the assessment implementation (Waiver participants and families, Supports Coordinators, Support Coordination Organizations, AEs, Providers, the SIS and PA Plus Vendor, etc.).

As per the AE Operating Agreement, all AEs are responsible for adhering to the bulletin and the attached manual.

## **ATTACHMENT**

*Supports Intensity Scale™ (SIS™) and PA Plus Users Manual*