

West Virginia I/DD Waiver Quality Improvement Advisory Council Handbook



Introduction

The West Virginia I/DD Waiver Program provides services to individuals who require an ICF/IID level of care, and who are otherwise eligible for participation in the program. I/DD Waiver program members receive services in a home and/or community-based setting for the purpose of attaining independence, personal growth and community inclusion. West Virginia supports an individual's freedom of choice of providers for I/DD Waiver program services.

Council Purpose

The purpose of the I/DD Waiver Quality Improvement Advisory (QIA) Council is to provide guidance and feedback to the Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Medical Services and its contracted Operating Agency in the development of an ongoing quality assurance and improvement system for the I/DD Waiver Program. To this end, the Council's charge is to work with staff to develop and strengthen the Waiver's ability to:

- Collect data and assess program member experiences in order for the Council to assess the ongoing implementation of the program, identifying strengths and opportunities for quality improvement,
- Act in a timely manner to remedy specific problems or concerns as they arise and
- Use data and quality information to engage in actions that lead to continuous improvement in the Waiver program.

The Quality Improvement Advisory Council will work with WV BMS and the Operating Agency to ensure that the I/DD Waiver supports the desired outcomes outlined in the six (6) focus areas of the Quality Framework developed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). These focus areas include:

§1915(c) CMS Quality Assurances

- **Waiver Administration and Oversight:** The State Medicaid agency is actively involved in the oversight of the waiver, and is ultimately responsible for all facets of the waiver program.
- **Level of Care:** Persons enrolled in the waiver have needs consistent with an institutional level of care.
- **Provider Qualifications:** Waiver providers are qualified to deliver services/supports.
- **Service Plan:** Participants have a service plan that is appropriate to their needs and preference and receive the services/supports specified in the service plan.
- **Health and Welfare:** Participants' health and welfare are safeguarded.
- **Financial Accountability:** Claims for waiver services are paid according to state payment methodologies specified in the approved waiver.

The Advisory Role

The role of the Quality Improvement Advisory Council is advisory in nature and therefore, it has no authority in administering the I/DD Waiver Program. Its function is to advise and assist WV BMS in program planning, development, and evaluation consistent with its stated purpose. In this role, the Quality Improvement Advisory Council shall:

- Recommend policy changes,
- Recommend Program priorities and quality initiatives,
- Monitor and evaluate policy changes,
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of Waiver priorities and quality initiatives,
- Serve as a liaison between the Waiver and its stakeholders and
- Establish committees and work groups consistent with its purpose and guidelines.

Council Membership

Voting Council Members

The I/DD Waiver Quality Improvement Advisory Council will consist of sixteen (16) voting members. At least five (5) will be current or former program members (or their legal representatives/family member) of I/DD Waiver services; at least five (5) will be I/DD Waiver service provider representatives; three (3) will be stakeholders such as direct care workers, family members, advocates/allies of people with disabilities; one (1) will be a WVUCED representative; one (1) shall be a staff of the Disability Rights of West Virginia (the Federally mandated protection and advocacy organization), and one (1) shall be a representative of the WV Developmental Disabilities Council. To the extent possible, the Council will represent all regions of the state. *Voting Council members may not be direct employees of the State of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.* This is in effect to reduce the potential conflict of interest of Council members working for the state and providing feedback to the state.

Ancillary Council Members

In addition to the sixteen (16) voting members, the Council will also attempt to fill three (3) ancillary positions with persons who would be available to step in and participate as a Council member. Voting members with recently-expired membership terms receive preference in filling open ancillary positions. Ancillary members may serve in this capacity for a maximum of one (1) year. On a routine basis, ancillary members are encouraged to contribute to Council discussion but do not have voting privileges. *Ancillary members may only vote if:* A voting member is unable to fulfill Council obligations through the remainder of his or her term –or– a quorum cannot be established for voting without the contributive vote of the ancillary member. Ancillary members will receive all Council correspondence and attend meetings regularly. At least one (1) of these three (3) positions must be filled by a current or former program member or their legal representative/family member.

Membership

Membership Committee

The Council shall form a membership committee. This committee will be charged with the responsibility to develop procedures for:

- Assisting in identifying and recruiting potential Council members,
- Nominating members for appointments,
- Appointing new members,
- Filling vacancies and
- Orienting new members.

Membership Committee Protocol

Selection, Nomination and Appointment of New Members

1. WV/BMS will indicate notification on the WV/BMS website notifying the public of the opportunity to attend meetings and present information during the public comment period. Notification will also be distributed at statewide training forums. This notification will also include solicitation for new members, when vacancies arise.
2. Those interested in being a voting QIA Council member should complete the I/DD Waiver QIA Council Membership Application. The Membership Application must include the interested parties' experience/relevance with the I/DD Waiver program, category of membership and availability to attend meetings on at least a quarterly basis.
3. All applications will be forwarded to the Membership Committee. In the event that there are not a significant number of applicants, applications will be forwarded by the Operating Agency to all Council members for review either prior to or at the next QIA Council meeting.
4. Voting on applicants may take place either prior to or during the next scheduled QIA Council meeting. A simple majority vote is required to establish an applicant as a new voting member.
5. In the event there is an overwhelming number of applicants, the membership Committee will review all applications and prepare a ballot of those applicants they wish to nominate for membership.
 - a. The Membership Committee should make contact with those they wish to nominate to ensure nominees are still interested in Council membership.
 - b. The Membership Committee's final ballot must list nominees, category to represent and brief description of the individual's experience in the field. The ballot will be forwarded by email to voting members of the Council to be returned within 10 calendar days.
6. Results of email balloting will be reviewed/presented at the subsequent meeting (sooner if necessary to fill a vacancy more quickly).
7. New Council members will be notified of their appointment to the Council by the Operating Agency.
8. The Membership Committee and Operating Agency will serve as a resource to orient new members including sharing membership documents, expectations and previous meeting minutes to ensure the new member is properly prepared to fulfill his or her QIA Council obligations.

Membership Terms

Voting members will agree to serve three (3) year terms. In the event that a Council member is unable to fulfill the remainder of the term, they should contact the Council chairperson or Operating Agency contact person immediately so that the position can be posted and filled. Following the three (3) year term, a voting member may serve in an ancillary position for one (1) year. No Council member may serve greater than four (4) consecutive years in either a voting or ancillary position. If a Council member wishes to reapply after having served in any capacity for four (4) consecutive years, he or she may only do so after sitting out for at least one year.

Term Expiration Mid-Project

In the event a member's term expires while participating in a council project, the project in progress may be completed upon approval by all Council members.

Involuntary Membership Term Expiration

In the event that a voting or ancillary Council member's contribution becomes so disruptive to the overarching intent of the Council, the voting Council members have the option to expire that member's term. Members wishing to pursue this option will contact the Operating Agency to begin the process of establishing a voting forum. All voting Council members will receive a ballot outlining the involuntary membership expiration details. A majority vote is required to remove an existing Council member.

Membership Attendance

In order for a council to be successful, members must attend and participate. Upon the second consecutive QIA Council meeting missed they will be vacating their position. After the third consecutive absence, the vacancy will be replaced due to inactivity. This protocol will be followed regardless of the notification provided for absences. It is understood that life brings about unexpected occurrences, but a council can only be as effective as the members attending and participating.

A conference call option will be provided on the agenda, however, if there are no attendees after 30 minutes the call will be disconnected. *Exceptions can be made with advanced notification.*

Officers

Council officers (Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson) will be elected to serve a one year term. The officers will be elected by a majority vote of members present. The duties of these offices are:

- **Chairperson:** Work with WV/BMS and the Operating Agency to plan Council meetings; act as a Chairperson for the meetings, and; appoint ad-hoc and standing committee chairs.
- **Vice-Chairperson:** Chair meetings when the Chairperson is unavailable; fill the Chairperson position should that individual leave the Council in mid-term, and; complete the term until elections.

Meetings

The I/DD Waiver Quality Improvement Advisory Council will meet four times each year (per quarter) typically in January, April, July, and October. Meetings will typically be scheduled for 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. Council members representing current or former Waiver members (or their legal representatives/family members) will be eligible for a mileage-travel reimbursement for meeting attendance (pending availability of funding).

Each meeting will contain the agenda item “public comment” to solicit feedback from members and their advocates and allies on the performance of I/DD Waiver services. All meetings will be open to the public. Members of the public may only provide comment during the time designated as “public comment.”

The WV/BMS Operating Agency will maintain minutes of all Council meetings. Minutes will be distributed to Council members within one month following the meeting. At a minimum, the minutes of Council meetings shall include:

- Council members present/absent,
- Discussions and recommendations made by the Council,
- Responses to any questions or recommendations made at the previous Council meetings and
- Specific assignments to be carried out following the meeting including what is to be done, who is responsible and date of completion.

Agenda

Council meetings will follow an agenda to be developed by the Chair and Operating Agency.

Decision–Making Process

A minimum of eight members must be present at Council meetings in order to conduct business. A simple majority vote of those present is required to approve any item.

Responsibilities and Expectations

It will be the responsibility of WV/BMS Operating Agency staff and the Council Chairperson to plan and conduct all meetings. Staff will provide Council members with the information they need in accessible and appropriate formats. The Bureau for Medical Services (BMS) will assist and support Operating Agency staff in all necessary aspects of planning, preparing for, and conducting Council meetings. It will be the responsibility of the Council members to:

- Have knowledge of the I/DD Waiver program and the services it provides,
- Become familiar with the Waiver's quality management system and initiatives and
- Study any problems or issues brought to the Council
- Prepare for, attend, and fully participate in Council meetings.