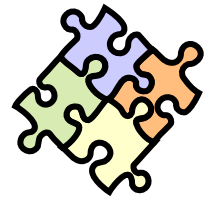




Natural Supports

Putting the Puzzle Together



- Family
- Neighbors
- Significant Others
- Friends
- Roommates
- Community (church groups, religious groups, service organizations, charitable groups, etc.)

Natural Support Considerations

1. Natural supports (NS) must have adequate skills and abilities to meet the consumer's specific service needs.
2. If a NS is available, the consumer has the choice to accept services by the natural support or by a Medicaid paid provider.
3. Natural supports are voluntary, meaning we cannot require or assume a person will provide unpaid services to a Medicaid consumer. The conversation should start at the point that the natural support will continue to provide the same level of service.

Example of conversation with NS: "You said you assist your mother (consumer) with one of her two showers each week. Can you continue to provide those showers? The HCW has been authorized 13 hours per month to bathe your mother the 2nd time each week." Note: Without the NS, the consumer would be eligible for up to 25 full assist hours. Because the consumer has a NS providing for ½ the bathing hours each week, the conversation would start at the point of what hours the individual is "authorized", not that rule permits up to 25 hours if a NS wasn't part of the service plan.

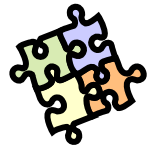
4. Payment and services are based on the consumer's assessed, unmet needs, not the unmet needs of the provider. Do not allow the focus of payment to be based on the financial needs of the HCW or other providers.



5. When a NS indicates they cannot continue to provide services without compensation by Medicaid:

- If the consumer and NS want the NS to be paid, remember to explain the HCW enrollment process and the employee/employer relationship to the NS and consumer. Let the NS know it is necessary to go to the local APD/AAA office to apply as a HCW.
- If the NS acquires a HCW provider number, the case manager may authorize paid hours to the former NS.
- If a NS wishes to continue to provide services while waiting for approval for a HCW provider number, they must do so as an unpaid natural support.

6. You can't put all the pieces together if you don't ask enough questions.



- **Assess** to determine if there are existing natural supports.
- **Explore** for potentially new supports.
- **Identify** community resources to decrease the need for Medicaid paid in-home services. Ask clarifying questions of both the natural support and the consumer.

7. **The following are 3 types of sample questions** to ask the consumer and their potential natural supports (NS) when assessing, identifying and exploring natural supports.

A. New to in-home services:

- Consumer: What does the NS do for you? How long has the NS been helping you? Do you want the NS to continue to do those things for you?
- NS: What do you currently help with? How long have you been helping?
- NS: Would you be able to continue assisting with bathing?
- NS: What services would you continue to provide if another provider assisted you with tasks?
- NS: Can you pick up some things from the grocery store and pharmacy when you pick up things for yourself?
- NS: Can you continue to help with housekeeping and preparing meals since you live together?

B. On-going in-home services with existing natural supports that wants to continue to be a natural support:

- Consumer: What does the NS do for you? How long has the NS been helping you? Are you willing for NS to continue helping you?
- NS: Would you be able to continue assisting with shopping?

- NS: Can you pick up some things from the grocery store and pharmacy when you pick up things for yourself?
- NS: What services would you continue to provide if another provider assisted you with tasks?
- NS: Can you continue to help with housekeeping and preparing meals since you live together?

C. New or on-going in-home services with natural support wanting to be paid:

- Consumer: Why do you think NS should be paid to help you now?
- NS: Why are you no longer interested in providing these services as a natural support?
- NS: Would you explain why you now want to be paid? What has changed?
- NS: Perhaps if you were paid for some tasks, you would still be interested in picking up some items from the grocery store and pharmacy when you pick up things for yourself (as a natural support)?
- NS: What services would you continue to provide as a natural support if another provider assisted you with some of the other tasks?
- NS: Can you continue to help with housekeeping and preparing meals since you live together? If not, what has changed?

8. Pitfalls – Do NOT ask leading payment questions!

For example, **do not ask:** “You are now providing care without paid. Did you know you could be paid to do these tasks?”



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9. Document your natural support results in the OACCESS narration. Your documentation needs to include:

- Whether natural supports exist
- What tasks they assist with that are unpaid
- Whether they will be able to continue providing those tasks
- Whether there are still unmet needs
- What has changed in their situation? For example: the natural support is no longer able to help due to their own health issues, going back to work, going to school, need money or will have to get a job or an additional natural support is now available, etc.)
- Why you made the decision to pay someone who would otherwise be considered a natural support. For example, the natural support can no longer afford to voluntarily assist the consumer with bathing, toileting, etc..... unpaid. However, has agreed to continue to do the shopping, medication management and some of the housekeeping unpaid, as he/she is living with the consumer and continues to be willing to provide for this need.