



ASHTABULA COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Board Office

2505 South Ridge Road East
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004-4493
Phone: (440) 224-2155
Fax: (440) 224-0678
Anne M. Zeitler, Superintendent

Adult Services/
Ash/Craft Industries
5959 Green Road
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
Phone: (440) 224-2177
Fax: (440) 224-2375

Community Support Services
Service and Support
Administration
500 West Main Street
Geneva, Ohio 44041
Phone: (440) 466-7110
Fax: (440) 466-7047

Happy Hearts School
2505 South Ridge Road East
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004-4493
Phone: (440) 224-2157
Fax: (440) 224-3696

Help Me Grow
Early Intervention
2505 South Ridge Road East
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004-4493
Phone: (440) 224-2157
Fax: (440) 224-3696

Investigative Support Services
2505 South Ridge Road East
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004-4493
Phone: (440) 224-2155
Fax: (440) 224-0678

Transportation
5959 Green Road
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
Phone: (440) 224-2177
Fax: (440) 224-3175

The Ashtabula County Board of DD is currently facing multiple challenges that are complex in nature and appear to be moving very fast, that will jeopardize the provision of our services.

WAIVERS

1. Historically, we have had no choice but to enroll individuals on waivers and pay the match.
2. The CMS rule states that individuals on waivers/receiving federal funds cannot receive services in segregated settings.
3. It is also being interpreted that agencies providing direct services cannot also provide SSA services.
4. As a result, individuals enrolled on waivers may no longer be allowed to attend the workshop because it is a segregated setting and the board currently provides SSA services.

There is a current initiative to begin eliminating service by significantly reducing direct services in general.

Many county boards are implementing "Shutting the Front Door" = they are not enrolling any new individuals for direct services. We are not supportive of this, but we may be faced with not having a choice.

Last week, our Board adopted a "Position Paper on the Provision of Direct Services".

1. Freedom of choice should remain intact for individuals with developmental disabilities.
2. County boards should have local control as to the services they wish to provide.
3. County boards must continue to work with both public and private providers to meet the needs of individuals.
4. We do not believe that our current system needs to be dismantled and eliminated to allow the integration of individuals with disabilities in our community.
5. We have always promoted and encouraged integration within our community and will continue to do so.
6. Community employment has always been a strong focus for individuals with developmental disabilities.
7. All direct services have always been based upon the desires of each individual and what is important to them.

The troubling aspect of the upcoming challenges jeopardizing services to individuals with developmental disabilities is that providing services in segregated settings is possibly being viewed as a civil rights issue.

Anne M. Zeitler
9/22/14



ASHTABULA COUNTY BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Board Office

2505 South Ridge Road East
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004-4493
Phone: (440) 224-2155
Fax: (440) 224-0678
Anne M. Zeitler, Superintendent

Adult Services/ Ash/Craft Industries

5959 Green Road
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
Phone: (440) 224-2177
Fax: (440) 224-2375

Community Support Services and Support Administration

500 West Main Street
Geneva, Ohio 44041
Phone: (440) 466-7110
Fax: (440) 466-7047

Happy Hearts School

2505 South Ridge Road East
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004-4493
Phone: (440) 224-2157
Fax: (440) 224-3696

Help Me Grow Early Intervention

2505 South Ridge Road East
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004-4493
Phone: (440) 224-2157
Fax: (440) 224-3696

Investigative Support Services

2505 South Ridge Road East
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004-4493
Phone: (440) 224-2155
Fax: (440) 224-0678

Transportation

5959 Green Road
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
Phone: (440) 224-2177
Fax: (440) 224-3175

Position Paper on the Provision of Direct Services by County Boards of Developmental Disabilities

The new rule promulgated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) earlier this year has generated more questions and debate than answers and consensus for Ohio's County Boards of DD when it comes to Medicaid waiver services. In question is whether County Boards of DD can continue to provide both direct services for people with developmental disabilities AND service support administration.

Many have interpreted the CMS rule to mean agencies that provide direct services cannot also provide support administration. Some here in Ohio have concluded, therefore, that County Boards of DD must resolve this perceived conflict of interest by eliminating their direct services and transforming into agencies that fund and monitor services via support administration. We at the Ashtabula County Board of DD disagree. We strongly believe that taking such a path would profoundly diminish the lives of the children and adults we support by eliminating the high quality direct services that County Boards of DD have provided since the Ohio General Assembly created a County Board of DD in each of our state's 88 counties in 1967. It would deny a choice that many people with developmental disabilities have made to receive their direct services from a County Board of DD. In short, it would eliminate an option that is trusted and tested.

County Boards were created as a result of the lobbying efforts of parents whose children local school districts refused to serve. Since their establishment they have continuously evolved to meet the changing needs of the boys and girls and men and women they support and to incorporate the best practices in the field of developmental disabilities. They have grown to offer early intervention services for young children, vocational and activities services for adults, residential services for those who can no longer live with their families and a wide range of therapies. Parents, families and people with developmental disabilities have shaped these programs. County boards are directly accountable to them and to the voters who support the local levies that, in our case, provide more than half of the funding for the services and supports we offer. Eliminating the choice of receiving services from us would truly limit opportunities and choice and would not be in the best interest of individuals with developmental disabilities.

We fear that the rule writers at CMS do not understand Ohio's unique system of funding services for people with developmental disabilities at the county level. In Ashtabula County, for example, we receive less than five percent of our annual funding from the state of Ohio. It is local voters and property tax payers who fund the robust system of developmental disabilities service here and in other counties throughout Ohio. County Board of DD programs are visible, concrete examples of tax dollars at work. We believe that eliminating those services would jeopardize future efforts to pass the levies that are so key to continuing opportunities.

Further, as a public entity, County Boards of DD are truly accountable to the public. It is our belief that this accountability can not be maintained with private providers as the sole option. Since the County Board of DD system is based on local funding and local control, we believe it is in the best interest of people with developmental disabilities to let County Boards of DD decide whether to provide direct services.

If there are conflicts or perception of conflict, as CMS implies, we recommend that the Ohio Department of DD can intervene to moderate them. DODD already does this very thing in other areas such as investigations of major unusual incidents and disputes over eligibility determinations.

In an effort to continue to provide opportunities, better services and freedom of choice for those who have developmental disabilities, we must cultivate as many options for quality services as possible. A wide array of opportunities for individuals and families means better lives for people with developmental disabilities. A well-designed system of both private and public providers ensures just that.

Adopted September 18, 2014