

## Overview of the 1915(c) Community Alternatives to Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility Demonstration Grant Waiver

### **What is a 1915(c) Home and Community Based Services Waiver?**

As the name indicates, these programs are designed so an eligible person may obtain needed services at home or in the community instead of receiving care in a Medicaid-reimbursed institution, such as a nursing home, hospital, or intermediate care facility for the mentally retarded. The term “waiver” is applied to the programs because the federal government permits the State to operate these programs under special rules and regulations instead of the requirements that usually apply to Medicaid recipients and Medicaid services.

Each home and community-based services waiver program is designed for a specific group of people, and each program has its own special eligibility requirements and package of services. The eligibility requirements relate to such factors as a person’s age, diagnosis, level of care needs and income. A waiver establishes a limit on the number of persons who can participate in the program, and there may also be a limitation on the amount of money the program will spend on home and community-based waiver services.

### **What is the PRTF Demonstration Waiver and how is it different?**

The definition of “institution” has never included Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities, so States could not use the waiver option to serve youth in their communities while receiving federal financial participation (Medicaid reimbursement). The competitive Demonstration grant program for Community-based Alternatives to Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities was created by section 6063 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-171).

The PRTF Demonstration Waiver is a five-year demonstration project in ten states. Since it is a demonstration project, there is an evaluation component to the Waiver. Each state is participating in the national evaluation, which is looking to answer two primary questions:

- 1) Is the Demonstration Program effective at improving or maintaining a child or youth’s functional level?
- 2) Is it cost neutral to serve youth in the community under the Waiver as compared to serving them in a PRTF?

The service delivery model for the Demonstration Waiver includes an emphasis on systems of care values and the provision of Wraparound services. Each state has identified its own array of services and supports to be provided under the Waiver.

### **Who is participating in the PRTF Demonstration Waiver?**

Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, South Carolina, and Virginia have received Demonstration Grant Awards. As of May 2009, Florida’s application is in abeyance and the remaining 9 States have approved 1915(c) PRTF waivers.

### **How can I learn more?**

Contact the Project Officer in your state or your Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Regional Office. For information on Maryland’s PRTF Demonstration Project (known as the RTC Waiver), contact Deborah Harburger at [dkharburg@psych.umaryland.edu](mailto:dkharburg@psych.umaryland.edu) or 410-706-1868 or go online to [www.medschool.umaryland.edu/innovations/RTC\\_Waiver.asp](http://www.medschool.umaryland.edu/innovations/RTC_Waiver.asp)