



**For Review and Comment Purposes Only – Not for Implementation**  
**DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMS BULLETIN**  
**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE**

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SUBJECT:

**Supports Intensity Scale® (SIS®) and PA Plus Manual**

BY:

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**SCOPE:**

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

**PURPOSE:**

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) has adopted the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) as the standardized needs assessment for participants in the Person Family Directed Supports (P/FDS) and Consolidated waivers (ages 16 – 72). The purpose of this bulletin is to describe the rollout and implementation strategy of the SIS and PA Plus and includes instruction 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 ISP's address assessed needs.

A standardized assessment helps us to understand what supports a person needs to have an *Everyday Life*. One standardized assessment for all waiver participants will enhance the consistency of the planning process and provides 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 CMS's 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 ODP's statewide standardized needs assessment to achieve this requirement.

Supports Intensity Scale® 2004 AAMR

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

**The Appropriate Regional Program Office**

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ODP includes a small number of additional questions, known as the PA Plus, that will be administered with the SIS in order to gather additional information that will be used for planning. ODP has contracted with a conflict-free, independent entity/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 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 an 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.

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 changing (increasing or reducing) services and supports to an individual.

The SIS and PA Plus 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 Entities, AEs, providers, independent entity/vendor, etc.).

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

Attachment: SIS® and PA Plus Manual