



**Supports Intensity Scale™ (SIS™) and PA Plus Assessment
(Including Process Changes)
Informational Packet #006-09**

PURPOSE: This Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Informational Packet is to provide an update on the progress and changes to the SIS™ and PA Plus Assessment Process. This will include:

- Scheduling Process
- Urgent Requests
- Supports Coordinator Expectations
- Provider Expectations
- PA Plus
- HCSIS Updates/Summary Report
- Future Directions

AUDIENCE: Individuals and their Families, Administrative Entities (AEs), Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs), Direct Services Providers, other Interested Parties.

INTRODUCTION: In March of 2008, the first SIS™ was administered by our vendor, Ascend Management Innovations (Ascend). We completed 29 assessments that month. In March of 2009, we added the PA Plus and completed 630 assessments and our total to date is 6,594 – no small feat!!

Over the course of the year, we've seen tremendous improvements to the scheduling and assessment processes. We've been able to track trends and issues; and as a result, make changes to our current process to better enhance the flow of the assessment implementation.

Because of all we've learned, some parts of the SIS™ and PA Plus implementation have changed from what was first envisioned, as we continue to fine-tune the process. Outlined below are several updates and changes, as well as some exciting possibilities for the future. We hope you will find them helpful and thank you for your continued diligence in helping ODP as we continue to implement the SIS™ and PA Plus assessment process.

SCHEDULING PROCESS: ODP recently sent Ascend the demographic data of all individuals in both waivers so that they have the most up-to-date information from Home and Community Services Information System (HCSIS). Using this data, Ascend will generate lists for the Administrative Entity (AE) as needed. Ascend determines the number of assessments needed, per AE, based on the AE's population and the total population of the state, and

schedules accordingly. To validate, AE's will review the lists and may make substitutions, additions, and deletions as needed. Once Ascend has scheduled all individuals on the validated lists, new lists will be generated.

Once validated by the AE, Ascend begins the actual scheduling process for each individual by calling his/her Supports Coordinator (SC) to verify contact information in HCSIS and to identify possible respondents. The Ascend scheduler will also obtain the SC's availability for the assessment at this time. The Ascend scheduler will then begin to call the individual, family members, providers, and other possible respondents to schedule the assessment.

As in the past, individuals entering the Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) waivers will take priority over ongoing waiver recipients in scheduling SIS™ and PA Plus Assessments. All efforts should be made to complete a SIS™ and PA Plus Assessment prior to the individual's enrollment in the Consolidated or P/FDS waiver. If that's not possible, the assessment should be completed in conjunction with the next Individual Support Plan (ISP) annual review update date. However, an individual's enrollment will never be delayed because a SIS™ and PA Plus could not be scheduled.

The scheduling process will change slightly with the release of the Ascend Scheduling Assistance Program (ASAP). ASAP is a web-based scheduling system that will allow for fast and easy participant selection, information updates, and SIS™ and PA Plus-related schedule reporting (see "Future Directions" below).

URGENT REQUESTS: The urgent request process was developed to allow for priority/emergency situations to be assessed using the SIS™ and PA Plus within a short timeframe. The process is initiated by the SC or SC Supervisor and goes to the AE SIS™ point person, then to the ODP Regional Office, and finally to ODP Central Office. Central Office makes a determination whether the request can be accommodated and forwards the information on to the Ascend schedulers if approved (see Attachment 1).

SUPPORTS COORDINATOR REVISED EXPECTATIONS: ODP recently issued a letter from Deputy Secretary Casey regarding a modification to the expectation that SCs attend all SIS™ and PA Plus assessments (see Attachment 2).

There is great value for the SC to attend the SIS™ and PA Plus assessment meeting as a respondent or observer, as the information gained at the meeting will provide valuable insight for the ISP team meeting. ODP highly recommends that the SC attempt to attend as many assessments as possible, either as a respondent (if he/she meets the respondent criteria) or an observer.

It's not always possible for the SC to attend assessments. If an assessment is scheduled and the SC must cancel, the assessment may proceed without the SC if there are two respondents and if the family concurs. The SC will continue to aid Ascend schedulers by verifying information and suggesting possible respondents. SCs should continue to document all actions performed as part of the scheduling and attending SIS™ and PA Plus assessments in HCSIS Service Notes.

PROVIDER EXPECTATIONS: ODP recently issued a letter from Deputy Secretary Casey regarding the provider's role in the SIS™ and PA Plus Assessment (see Attachment 3).

In order to continue moving forward with this successful implementation, it is crucial for Providers of Mental Retardation services in Pennsylvania to comply and cooperate with the scheduling, participation, and completion of the SIS™ and PA Plus Assessment. It is ODP's expectation that all Providers permit the use of their facilities, if requested, during normal working hours in the participation or completion of the statewide needs assessment and permit staff participation in the assessment.

PA PLUS: The PA Plus was developed by stakeholders to be used concurrently with the SIS™. It consists of a set of nine questions to provide additional planning information not covered in the SIS™ assessment. Topics include supports needed for mobility, transfers, vision, hearing, communication, and safety, as well as assistive technology, treatments, medications, and behavioral health.

After a brief pilot program, Ascend began administering the PA Plus with all SIS™ Assessments effective March 2, 2009. The PA Plus data has been added to the PA Universal Assessment Summary Report (Summary) in HCSIS and will be provided to ISP team members by the individual's SC to enhance the planning process. Ascend reports that the additional nine questions have added only 15 minutes to the time it takes to complete a SIS™ interview (see Attachment 4).

HCSIS UPDATES/SUMMARY REPORT: As of February 14, 2009, the PA Plus information was added to HCSIS and can be found at the end of the Summary report, following the individual, respondent, and SIS™ data. The date the SIS™ and PA Plus assessment was administered was also added to HCSIS and is found on the first page of the Summary report. On April 25, 2009, another upgrade to the Summary was made: the Ascend assessor's name was added to the first section of the Summary (see Attachment 5).

In addition, a tip sheet has been created to crosswalk the elements of the SIS™ and PA Plus Assessment information with the ISP (see Attachment 6). This document details the different sections of the Summary report and how they may be useful to the planning team in creating a meaningful ISP.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: There are two major initiatives in the works for the SIS™ program:

1. Web cast – An online training is being created to disseminate updated information about the SIS™ and PA Plus project from one centralized location. Specifically, the web cast will include information about changes to the SIS™ Bulletin and Manual, as well as other departmental initiatives. A link to the web cast will be housed on the ODP Consulting website, and it will be part of the 2009 SC Curriculum (see web address below). At a later date, this entire web cast will be housed on the ODP Consulting website and available for all to view. An announcement of its availability will be forthcoming.
2. ASAP – In order to simplify and expedite the scheduling process, Ascend has created a **secure** online scheduling system specifically for Pennsylvania's use. This means that the information used for scheduling is only available to those who are involved in the process (the individual's SC, SC Supervisor, and AE personnel), and they will only be able to see information about the individuals they serve. The data cannot be seen or intercepted by outside entities. Currently, Ascend is reviewing and updating demographic information

from HCSIS to upload into the program. Upon completion of a pilot program with several AEs and SCOs, we will commence to iron out any potential bugs. Then the program will be released to SCs, SC Supervisors, AEs, and ODP. Ascend will conduct all necessary training on how to use the system with each organization. ODP central office staff and regional program managers were given a preview by Ascend, and we're really pleased with this new system.

ASAP will allow SCs and SC Supervisors to:

- Identify available dates and times for their participation in assessments 24 hours a day.
- Identify potential respondents and their contact information.
- Note any special needs of the individual.
- Obtain an email notification confirming the scheduled appointment as well as a reminder notice prior to the appointment.

AEs will be able to:

- Add the names of individuals who should be scheduled for a SIS™ and PA Plus assessment, as appropriate.
- Confirm the appropriate SC for each individual.
- Reflect changes to status information for individuals who no longer need a SIS™ and PA Plus assessment.
- Reflect disposition changes in PUNS, planning and ISP dates, and waiver types.
- View reports of assessments completed in each AE.

ODP Regional and Central Offices will have functionality to:

- Manage statewide assessment status information.
- View assessment reports by region, SC, provider, or other variables.
- Affirm and approve any individuals added by the AE.
- Identify potential scheduling trends/barriers.

As always, thank you for your continued support. If you have any questions, please contact your ODP Regional Office.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

ODP/SIS: www.odpconsulting.net

SIS: www.siswebsite.org

Ascend: www.ascendami.com

ODP Western Regional Office: 412-880-0535

ODP Central Regional Office: 717-772-6507

ODP Northeast Regional Office: 570-963-3166

ODP Southeast Regional Office: 215-560-2245