



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE**  
P.O. BOX 2675  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17105-2675

**KEVIN T. CASEY**  
Deputy Secretary  
Office of Developmental Programs

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May 4, 2009

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of this letter is to communicate the Office of Developmental Programs' (ODP's) revised expectations regarding the participation of Supports Coordinators (SCs) in the statewide needs assessment.

In March of 2008, the first Supports Intensity Scale™ (SIS™) was administered by our vendor, Ascend Management Innovations (Ascend). Over the course of the year, we've seen tremendous improvements in the scheduling and assessment processes. We've also been able to track trends and issues. As a result, we are making changes to our current process to better enhance the flow of the assessment implementation.


We strongly believe that 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 Individual Support Plan (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.

There are several situations where the SC's presence at the assessment would be particularly beneficial. For example, if the individual is new to the waiver or the SC is new to the team, the SC would benefit from hearing the in depth discussion that the assessment elicits about the individual. Or, if the assessment is being requested via the urgent request process due to a significant and lasting life change for the individual, the SC's attendance at the assessment interview may be crucial in planning for different supports to make the individual's transition easier. Finally, if the SC is aware of a potentially difficult situation, his/her presence as a familiar and supportive team member could ensure the success of the assessment process. The SC should take these, and other similar situations, into consideration when deciding whether or not to take part in the assessment.

We realize that 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 scheduling and attending SIS™ and PA Plus assessments in HCSIS Service Notes.

We appreciate your support and dedication to the individuals we serve. For further information or concerns, please contact your Regional Program Office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kevin T. Casey".

Kevin T. Casey

- c: Ms. Rita Zimmerman, Central Region Program Manager
- Mr. Robert Conklin, Northeast Region Program Manager
- Ms. Vicki Stillman-Toomey, Southeast Region Program Manager
- Ms. Sandy Schalcosky, Western Region Program Manager