

Self-Determination Amendments of 2007

This proposed legislation would simply direct the appropriate federal agencies to accept streamlined applications for a single simplified dual Medicaid and Social Security plan and/or Waiver that would under Medicaid:

1. Allow an allocation rate discounted in comparison to traditional services so that cost effectiveness is built in. Funding can be used for the following four purposes with no a priori rates set for any particular support:

- Control over a place to call home—with meaningful authority over hiring whomever provides supports
- Real membership in the community
- Support for the continuation, or the facilitation of long term relationships
- For adults with disabilities, the generation of private income through work or self employment

2. Within a person's Medicaid allocation allow for:

- supplements to room and board costs now totally dependent on inadequate amounts (for most recipients) of the monthly benefit payments administered by the Social Security Administration.
- various types of self employment including small amounts of funding for capitalization (start-up) and/or "resource ownership", and for paying employers and businesses directly.
- negotiating rates of pay for both companionship and support staff.
- purchasing technology.
- pursuing post secondary education.
- purchasing or leasing personal transportation.
- family assistance for families supporting children with disabilities.
- hiring both long term, and short term support broker assistance.
- all other typical administrative and necessary clinical supports.

3. In addition there will be no regulations defining who, or what type of organization from which one may make a purchase, with the provision that the total expenditure will be on average less than the per person cost of traditional services in that state.

Regarding benefits administered by Social Security, this proposed legislation would:

1. Increase the trigger amount for reducing SSI based upon earned income to \$350 per month. Currently SSI excludes the first \$20 of any income a person has, and the first \$65 of any earned income. After these two exclusions, SSI will reduce the SSI check by \$1 for every \$1 of unearned income, and by \$1 for every \$2 of earned income. The proposed legislation would allow a person to have \$350 of earned income/month excluded before any reduction would be made in the person's SSI check.

2. Institute a similar \$350 threshold for SSDI and then impose the \$1 reduction for every \$2 dollars earned. Currently an SSDI recipient can have unlimited unearned income and still receive their entire SSDI benefit, although high amounts of unearned income would render the person ineligible for Medicaid.. When an SSDI recipient has earned income under \$900/month (in 2007), they will continue to receive their entire SSDI check each month. If their earnings go over \$900/month for any length of time, they will at first not be eligible to receive their SSDI check at all, and will eventually lose SSDI

eligibility altogether. The proposed legislation would allow an SSDI recipient to earn \$350/month and receive their entire SSDI check. Earnings above \$350/month would reduce the SSDI check by \$1 for every \$2 earned.

While participating in this state plan, eligibility will be maintained for Medicaid, Medicare and other federal assistance.

2. Encourage targeted savings accounts of up to \$10,000 annually and \$30,000 over three years that will not negatively affect eligibility for either SSI or Medicaid (currently, countable resources over \$2000 for an individual and \$3000 for a couple result in ineligibility for SSI and Medicaid based on "excess resources.") These targeted accounts may be matched or supplemented by *any* private source including family. All income in these targeted accounts will not count toward eligibility for SSI, Medicaid, or other federal assistance programs such as Food Stamps, and the HUD housing vouchers, energy assistance, etc. The "targets" for these accounts will include home ownership, post-secondary education or training, self-employment/small business/micro-enterprise development, purchase of personal transportation, and any needed technology.

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