



MENTAL RETARDATION BULLETIN
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

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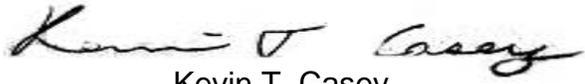
EFFECTIVE DATE
Immediately

NUMBER
00-06-03

SUBJECT:

Payment for Sign Language Interpreters

BY:


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Deputy Secretary for Mental Retardation

SCOPE:

County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Administrators
Non-State Administrative Entity
Supports Coordination Entities
Non-State ICF/MR Directors
State ICF/MR Directors

PURPOSE:

To advise counties and Intermediate Care Facility/Mental Retardation (ICF/MR) providers that sign language interpreters must be provided as needed for effective communication with individuals and families receiving services.

BACKGROUND:

The county Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MH/MR) program or the Department of Public Welfare will provide funding for sign language interpretation under the conditions contained in this bulletin for individuals receiving ICF/MR services, MR waiver services, Targeted Service Management (TSM) and Omnibus Reconciliation Act (OBRA) Services.

DISCUSSION:

Sign language costs for people receiving Consolidated and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) waiver services can be reimbursed by:

- Including the costs as part of the county MH/MR program or Administrative Entity (AE) administration costs when they contract directly with the interpreter or have an interpreter on staff.
- Other non-waiver funding sources as determined by the county or AE.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The Appropriate Regional Program Office

Sign language costs for people receiving OBRA Waiver services can be reimbursed by:

- Building the costs into the reimbursement service rate negotiated between the service providers and the county MH/MR program or Administrative Entity
- Including the costs as part of the county MH/MR program or Administrative Entity administration costs when they contract directly with the interpreter or have an interpreter on staff.

Counties are required to pay for necessary interpreter services; however these services are not eligible for funding under the Consolidated and P/FDS Waivers.

Sign language interpretation costs can be reimbursed for people receiving ICF/MR services by building them into the ICF/MR rate as a direct cost if costs are not covered by Medical Assistance (MA). Costs reimbursed in this manner are subject to federal financial participation at the federal service matching rate.

Sign language costs for people receiving TSM services can be reimbursed by including the cost as part of the county MH/MR program's administration costs.

Sign language interpretation costs reimbursed as a part of the ICF/MR service rate are subject to federal financial participation at the current federal service matching rate. Sign language interpretation costs reimbursed as a part of the county administration costs are subject to federal financial participation in accordance with the requirements of the Social Security Act. Costs for sign language interpreter services cannot be passed on to recipients or deducted from the individual's budget.

PROCEDURE:

Interpreters must be registered with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and must have a valid state licensure to perform interpreter services.

If necessary, other accommodations such as assistive listening devices or Computer Assisted Real-Time Translation should be provided to allow communication access for people who have hearing impairments and do not use sign language.

OBSOLETE BULLETIN:

MR Bulletin 00-94-31 entitled, "*Payment for Sign Language Interpreters*".