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|  | MENTAL RETARDATION BULLETIN COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA * DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE | |
| | SUBJECT Accessing Public Transportation for Individuals Enrolled in the Consolidated or Person/Family Directed Support Waivers | BY  Nancy R. Thaler Deputy Secretary for Mental Retardation |
| NUMBER: | 00-02-07 | |
| ISSUE DATE: | April 15, 2002 | |
| EFFECTIVE DATE: | Immediately | |

SCOPE:

County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program Administrators
 Targeted Service Management Program Directors
 Base Service Unit Directors

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to give direction to County MH/MR Program Administrators concerning the use of public transportation for individuals with mental retardation receiving Consolidated or Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) Waiver services.

BACKGROUND:

The Consolidated Waiver for Individuals with Mental Retardation states transportation services "are offered in order to enable individuals receiving services to gain access to waiver and other community services and resources specified in the individual plan." Transportation services in this waiver consist of purchasing or leasing provider agency vehicles, agency insurance, maintenance, and operational expenses of agency and agency staff vehicles, reimbursement for mileage to providers, family members and other licensed drivers in using their personal vehicles to transport the individual to services specified in the individual's plan.

The P/FDS Waiver for Individuals with Mental Retardation states transportation services "are offered in order to enable persons to gain access to waiver and other community services and resources specified in the individual's P/FDS plan which are not provided as part of the habilitation rate paid to a provider of habilitation services." Transportation services in this waiver consist of prorated costs of a leased agency vehicle in transporting the individual from his/her home to resources which are not funded as part of the habilitation services, insurance, maintenance, and operational costs of agency and agency staff vehicles used in the provision of services and support, reimbursement for mileage to transport the person to services and supports specified in the P/FDS plan, and reimbursement for use of emergency vehicles such as ambulances, when not covered through other funding sources.

Appropriate Regional Program Manager

This bulletin clarifies the use of public transportation including county para-transit for individuals with mental retardation receiving waiver services and describes the procedures to facilitate it through these waivers. The utilization of public transportation promotes self-determination and independence. Public transportation is also a cost-effective service, therefore, it is beneficial to encourage the use of public transportation.

POLICY:

Public transportation tokens, transit passes, or taxi services can be purchased from transportation vendors for the use of individuals enrolled in the waivers by the County MH/MR Program, county contracted service providers, supports coordination units, county contracted payment agents, or Intermediary Service Organizations (ISOs) as authorized by the County MH/MR Program. Payment arrangements will be made comparable to any vendor/county agreement. For the purposes of this bulletin, public transportation is considered any licensed and approved Public Utilities Commission (PUC) carrier including taxi cab companies and county para-transit providers.

Public transportation services may be purchased using waiver funding and can be categorized under transportation in both the Consolidated and P/FDS Waivers. Individuals or family members cannot be reimbursed for costs incurred in buying tokens, passes or taxi service, nor can they be provided with monies to buy tokens, passes or taxi service. Public transportation services can be provided to individuals receiving Consolidated and P/FDS Waiver funds on a daily/weekly/monthly basis.

This policy includes individuals deemed capable of being unsupervised in the community as per their plan as well as individuals whom require assistance and supervision. The individual's plan must also describe how their health and safety will be protected when using public transportation. When a support person accompanies an individual, said support person's token, pass or taxi ride will be paid by the agency for which they are employed. Public transportation services will be eligible for waiver funding only when identified in the individual's plan as necessary for the participation in a planned service and included within the individual's approved budget.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Appropriate Regional Mental Retardation Program Managers