

FREEDOM OF CHOICE POLICY

The provider recognizes that every individual has freedom of choice. The provider emphasizes the right of an individual to make as many of his own choices as possible in life, particularly those which affect how life is lived in a significant way. Whenever possible, the individual should be given this same opportunity. When needed, staff may help to point out possible outcomes of a decision, as well as alternative choices. However, final choice will be in the hands of the individual, and the individual will live with the consequences of that decision.

It should be a goal of any staff working with an individual to provide a simple decision-making construct that the person can learn and use in day-to-day life. This may include something as simple as defining the problem or decision to be made, coming up with possible choices, looking at what could happen if a particular choice is made, and looking at each possible choice in this way so that an informed decision can be made. It must be stressed that this is a way for the individual to make better decisions, not to give up decision-making responsibility. Staff should assist the individual with making informed choices, but should only give opinions when asked.

As the provider begins service provision with an individual and annually thereafter, the concept of choice is explained when going over the form **Freedom of Choice** with the individual. The individual is asked in different ways if he or she understands his right to make choices and that staff are available to provide alternative choices and to assist the individual with making choices and with understanding the consequences of any choice made. Whenever possible staff will take the opportunity to encourage the individual to make choices and decisions.

The provider will ensure compliance with laws and regulations regarding freedom of choice as specified in the Florida Medicaid Developmental Disabilities Waiver Services Coverage and Limitations Handbook.

Freedom of Choice

The waiver is designed around recipient choice. Accordingly, recipients served through the waiver may select among enrolled, qualified service providers and may change providers at any time. Once a recipient has an approved cost plan, the funds allocated to that support plan follow the recipient. Within the funds allocated in the support plan, the recipient is free to change enrolled, qualified providers as desired to meet the goals and objectives set out in the support plan. Freedom of choice includes recipient responsibility for selection of the most cost beneficial residential environment and combination of services and supports to accomplish the recipient's goals.

Core Assurances – Compliance with Laws and Regulations

The provider will comply with Title 42, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 431.51, which states that each recipient served by the provider will be provided freedom of choice within the scope of available funding levels. Freedom of choice includes the opportunity for the recipient to:

- a. select non-waiver funded supports available to the general community from among those activities or experiences that meet the recipient's needs and preferences
- b. select providers of Medicaid State Plan services from among those providers enrolled in the Medicaid waiver program, and that also meet the recipient's needs and expectations
- c. select providers of waiver services from those eligible to provide waiver services and enrolled in the Medicaid program, meeting the recipient's needs and expectations
- d. change providers of supports and services
- e. work with a provider to find mutually agreeable times and settings for the provision of supports or services
- f. end his participation in the waiver

Staff will keep these concepts in mind:

"Your life is the sum result of all the choices you make, both consciously and unconsciously. If you can control the process of choosing, you can take control of all aspects of your life. You can find the freedom that comes from being in charge of yourself."
Robert F. Bennett

"Life is a sum of all your choices." Albert Camus

"Remember to be gentle with yourself and others. We are all children of chance and none can say why some fields will blossom while others lay brown beneath the August sun. Care for those around you. Look past your differences. Their dreams are no less than yours, their choices no more easily made. And give, give in any way you can, of whatever you possess. To give is to love. To withhold is to wither. Care less for your harvest than for how it is shared and your life will have meaning and your heart will have peace." Kent Nerburn

I have read and fully understand the Freedom of Choice Policy and agree to follow its dictates.

Staff Signature

Date