

## Revision to the Enhanced Communication Rate for Services ODP Announcement 20-011

### AUDIENCE:

Individuals and families, Supports Coordinators (SC), Supports Coordination Organizations (SCO) for the Consolidated, Community Living, and Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) waivers, Administrative Entities (AEs), Providers and all interested parties

### PURPOSE:

This communication provides a revision to the process for providers to request an enhanced communication rate for Consolidated, P/FDS, and Community Living Waiver services for d/Deaf individuals who use Sign Language to communicate

### DISCUSSION:

The enhanced communication rate is available for services from providers who have signing staff to serve d/Deaf individuals. In the Consolidated, P/FDS, and Community Living waivers, this rate is available for the following services:

- Small Group Employment
- Benefits Counseling
- Supported Employment
  - Career Assessment
  - Job Finding and Development
  - Job Coaching and Support
- Advanced Supported Employment
  - Discovery Profile Outcome
  - Job Acquisition Outcome
- Shift Nursing RN
- Shift Nursing LPN
- Therapies
  - Physical
  - Occupational
  - Speech/Language
  - Orientation, Mobility, and Vision
- Music Therapy

- Job Retention Outcome
- Respite
- Supports Broker Services
- Housing Transition and Tenancy Sustaining
- Residential Habilitation
- Companion Services
- In-Home and Community Supports
- Community Participation Supports
- Art Therapy
- Equine Assisted Therapy
- Behavioral Supports
- Communication Specialist
- Consultative Nutritional Services
- Family Caregiver Support Counseling (with participant present)
- Supplemental Habilitation
- Supported Living
- Life Sharing

**ENHANCED COMMUNICATION RATE REQUEST PROCESS:**

*Please note there are no exceptions to this process. All providers are required to follow the policy as written.*

1. Providers who wish to request an enhanced communication rate must complete the Enhanced Communication Rate Request Form and its required attachments. The form is attached to this announcement.
2. Submit the completed form to ODP’s Deaf Services Mailbox at [RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov](mailto:RA-ODPDeafServices@pa.gov).
3. Once ODP receives the form and ensures its accuracy and completion, the following documentation will be provided and requested to be completed:
  - Several questions to show the signing staff’s knowledge of the Harry M. training
  - A video of his/her signing skills through a Signing Skill Evaluation

Please note: To be eligible for the enhanced communication rate, the signing staff are required to answer nine out of ten questions correctly. The signing video must show that the signing staff person is at a higher level of signing skill than the individual that he/she supports.

4. Following receipt of the requested documentation, ODP will review the information submitted and determine whether the provider is eligible for the enhanced communication rate. If additional information or discussion concerning the request

is required, ODP will contact the agency's contact person identified on the Enhanced Communication Rate Request Form.

5. ODP will notify the provider, AE, assigned Supports Coordinator (SC), and ODP regional lead of the decision to approve or deny the rate. If approved, a formal notice of approval that should be maintained in the individual's file by the SC and provider will be attached to the notification.
6. The SC should document approval in a service note and create a critical revision to the Individual Service Plan (ISP) to add the U1 modifier to the approved service. The SC should also ensure that:
  - a. the "Harry M Indicator" in HCSIS is checked (even if he/she is not a class member)
  - b. his/her "Primary Language" under Demographics in HCSIS is listed as "Sign"
  - c. the individual has an "Additional Diagnosis" category of "Sensory" listed as either "Deaf (ODP)", "Hard of Hearing (ODP)", or "Deaf unable to understand or communicate verbal expressions (ODP)"
  - d. the individual has one of the following "Primary Modes of Communication" - American Sign Language (ASL), Mixture ASL & Signed English, Sign Exact English, Sign Language from Other Countries, Tactile Sign, or Visual-Gestural Communication

Questions about the contents of this memorandum may be directed to the ODP Deaf Services Mailbox at [RA-ODPDeafservices@pa.gov](mailto:RA-ODPDeafservices@pa.gov).

This communication obsoletes ODP Announcement 099-18, Requesting an Enhanced Communication Rate for Services for Individual's Who Use Sign Language.