

Supports Intensity Scale -Adult™ (SIS-A™) and Pennsylvania (PA) Supplement Assessments – Supports Coordination (SC) Participation and Scheduling Guidance

ODP Announcement 23-014

AUDIENCE:

- Intellectual Disability/Autism (ID/A) Supports Coordination Organizations (SCOs)
- ID/A Provider Agencies
- Administrative Entities (AEs)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this communication is to provide new guidance to SCOs on Supports Coordinators' (SC) participation in the SIS-A™ and PA Supplement assessments, as well as clarification and new guidance on virtual assessments. This announcement obsoletes ODP Announcement 22-090.

DISCUSSION:

The SIS-A™ and PA Supplement assessments are important tools utilized by individual support teams to identify needed services and supports. The SC's role is essential to this process and participation is best practice. In response to the growing backlog of past-due 5-year reassessments and the current staffing crisis, ODP developed the following criteria to determine whether the SC's presence is required at the SIS assessment, and guidance on when assessments can be completed virtually.

Criteria for SC Participation and Virtual Assessments:

First Assessments

- SC participation is required for all first assessments. The SC's presence not only provides comfort to the individual and their family, but it also allows the SC to learn more about the individual and gather information useful in developing the Individual Support Plan (ISP).

Regular 5-Year Reassessment

- SCs are welcome but no longer required to participate in 5-year reassessments if they are not identified as a valid respondent or if there are already two valid respondents participating. A valid respondent is defined as someone who has known the individual for at least three (3) months and has recently observed the individual in one or more environments for at least several hours per environment.
- ***If the SC does not attend the 5-year reassessment, it is ODP's expectation that the SC review the finalized family-friendly report, update the Individual Service Plan (ISP) to reflect any changes in support needs, and conduct follow-up activities as needed.***

Significant Life Change Assessments

- SC participation is required for all Significant Life Change assessments. A Significant Life Change is any major change in an individual's life that has a lasting impact on support needs that may cause the individual's support needs to increase or decrease.

Virtual Assessments

- Virtual assessments are permitted during inclement weather and when an individual or respondent is ill and able to participate virtually. Additionally, SCs now have the authority to decide whether an assessment should be scheduled virtually based on what is best for the individual and other valid respondents. It is ODP's expectation that all valid respondents and observers who participate in a virtual assessment must have both audio and video on for the duration of the assessment.
- Assessors do not have the ability to perform virtual assessments when in the field, so it is imperative to communicate preferences when scheduling. If a previously scheduled in-person assessment must be changed to a virtual assessment (i.e., inclement weather or illness), Kepro must be contacted as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Reminders:

- SIS-A participation should be prioritized, with all efforts made to minimize cancellations. ODP closely monitors the scheduling and completion of assessments and has requested that Kepro report issues that cause delays.
- Calling into an assessment by phone is only acceptable when arrangements are made due to an out-of-town family member or when video connectivity cannot be established during a virtual assessment.
- All valid respondents are required to participate for the duration of the assessment (in-person and virtual assessments).
- The SIS-A is not appealable. It is the support team's responsibility to ensure that the respondents are people who know the individual best, are aware of the

individual's support needs, meets the definition of a valid respondent, and will actively participate and communicate information during the assessment.

- All in-person assessments must follow the guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

CONTACT:

ODP appreciates your commitment to the individuals and families we serve. Please contact your Regional Program Office (RPO) if you need more information or have questions about the SIS process.

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