Personal Choices

Offering Consumers Choice and Flexibility
Consumer-Directed Care in Alabama

Alabama first state to make consumer-directed (also known as self-directed) care for Medicaid home and community-based services a permanent part of its State Plan.

Alabama worked closely with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to ensure successful completion of the application.
The state plan option is available to states under the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005, Section 6087 or 1915(j)

- 1915 (j) is specific to self-directed care, such as the Personal Choices program, to offer consumers more control in managing their daily lives
Program Value

• Budget-neutral
• Offers consumer satisfaction and enhanced quality of life
• Reduces unmet care needs, and
• Increases access to authorized services
Expected Consumer Outcomes

• Increased access to paid personal care
• Increased satisfaction with services
• Increased overall quality of life
• More of consumers’ day-to-day needs met
• Decreased stress on families and informal caregivers
Expected Outcomes for the State

Making consumer-directed care a permanent part of the State Plan will relieve Alabama of the intensive and repeated waiver renewal process.
Program Validity

Personal Choices program based on “Cash and Counseling” model.

Model tested over the past decade in Arkansas, Florida, and New Jersey in partnership with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and CMS.
Cash and Counseling Model Results

The positive results of the extensive and carefully controlled research design have been well documented.

CMS and Congress have encouraged states to make self-directed services more available as an option for people receiving home and community-based services.
Do Consumers Really Want to Manage Their Services?

A 2002 AARP survey of people over 50 also found that more than 75% preferred to be involved in the management of their own services.

The U.S. Administration on Aging has made increased choice and control a key element in its *Choices for Independence* campaign.
Personal Choices Program

• Allows participants of two of Alabama’s HCBS Waivers to self-direct certain services

• Up to 700 older adults and people with disabilities in seven west Alabama eligible to participate

• Program to begin August 1, 2007
Working Together for Consumers

• Administering Agency
  Alabama Medicaid Agency

• Operating Agency
  Alabama Department of Senior Services
  in partnership with Alabama Department of Rehabilitative Services
Program Design

Program offers consumers more choice, flexibility and control in managing their daily lives.

Self-direction means:
• The consumer decides who provides their care
• The consumer decides when the care is needed
• The consumer decides what help they need
• The consumer decides how much responsibility they want
Eligible Individuals

• Must currently receive personal care or personal assistance services under Elderly and Disabled (E&D) Waiver or State of Alabama Independent Living (SAIL) Waiver

• Live in one of the seven pilot counties
Fraud and Abuse

• No evidence to show that program will increase fraud and abuse over the present system

• *Personal Choices* program designed to prevent fraud and abuse

• “Counseling” system plays a crucial role in working with the consumer to prevent fraud and abuse
Preventing Fraud and Abuse

- Clear definition of goods and services that may and may not be purchased
- Close review of budgets to ensure that only authorized goods are included, and
- Review of workers’ time sheets and participants’ check requests before payment to ensure consistency with the budget plan
Personal Choices Information

Personal Choices program information is available at www.medicaid.alabama.gov
One's philosophy is not in best expressed in words; it is expressed in the choices one makes ... and the choices we make are ultimately our responsibility.

Eleanor Roosevelt