



Alliance for the Betterment of
Citizens with Disabilities

Empowering People: Providers Shaping Policies

How Remote Support Becomes Reality for Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental
Disabilities

Part 1: Policy

The purpose of Remote Support (RS) is not to reduce the number of paid staff, convenience the provider, or summarily give license for camera surveillance. The purpose of RS is to help maximize the level of self-dependence chosen by and appropriate for the individual.

RS is not a service, it is a service delivery system, a means by which to deliver DDD approved Waiver services.

In New Jersey, DDD Waiver services include community and family residential services, employment services, assistive technology assessment and community inclusion.

In New Jersey, DDD Waiver assistive technology devices (AT) include communication tools like security sensors, fall detectors, iPads, pagers, movement sensors and cameras.¹

If New Jersey's DDD Waiver was amended to permit RS, it would give individuals the option to use AT communication tools to receive pre-approved DDD Waiver services. For example, a motion-based sensor to identify a door that has been opened or to monitor general movement in a group home, a stove monitor to allow for safer cooking in a supervised apartment, and a bi-directional audio or video device to allow for immediate contact by the individual to a support professional. Prior to this, a formal process must have taken place which includes notification, consent, and assessment of the individual; ensuring the RS delivery system is aligned with the individual's person-centered plans and goals; ensuring the RS delivery system does not impede the plans and goals of others who live or work in proximity; identifying device location and control, data retention and access; transition planning and training for the individual and staff; and evaluation and reevaluation.

RS challenges the idea that individuals require around the clock on-site staff monitoring for health and safety and instead allows them to lead lives with greater independence. It represents both technological and moral progress. For the right individual, RS enables staff to move back, not out so that the individual may have more opportunities for growth and actualization.

¹ The Waiver does not include the cost of utilities or the internet, as per Medicaid.

Part 2: Promotion

The use of RS for some people with IDD will enable them to

- Live independently in the community
- Work in competitive integrated environments
- Participate in inclusive community activities
- Improve their quality of life
- Increase their safety, health, and privacy

In addition, considering the current and future workforce shortage, RS will help minimize passive staffing where appropriate and safe.

While the state considers initial steps of developing a policy and attaining federal approval to permit the use of RS in New Jersey for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, we turn our focus to the promotion and election of RS to the people who would benefit.

Though developing the particulars of RS is unique to each state, state colleagues from around the nation unanimously report that selling the concept of RS is harder than developing the policy.

Examples of Promotional Efforts in Other States

- Technology First State. Designating the state as “Technology First” which implies a commitment to using technology whenever and wherever possible and appropriate.
- Advisory Task Force. This exists within appropriate state department comprised of staff and stakeholders reporting to the state’s developmental disabilities director, commissioner, legislature, and the public. The task force is charged with assessing technology services and supports and advising on strategies to reduce barriers to individuals accessing, considering, and utilizing technology to increase self-dependence. Areas of review typically include systems and infrastructure, education and training, and support planning.
- Advisory Council. An on-going on-the-ground stakeholder group responsible to raise awareness of what RS is, how it can help, where to get it and how to use it, through live and virtual community events, training, etc.
- Assistive Technology (AT)/RS Resources Centers. Centers provide equipment demonstrations, training, loans, and exchanges. In NJ, AT/RS Centers could be created by expanding the responsibilities of the existing Medicaid approved AT Providers/Vendors.
- Legislation. Statutes incorporating discussion and consideration of the use of technology in the individual’s support plan

If we wish to make our system more effective by giving people more opportunities to be self-dependent, and efficient by optimizing our labor resource allocation, it is critical that promotional tools be established, and efforts be sustained. The idea alone won’t bring about the progress we wish to achieve.

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