

Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month

March 27, 2015

March is Intellectual Disabilities Awareness Month in Pennsylvania and the Department of Human Services (DHS) aims to raise awareness of the challenges and achievements of people living with an intellectual disability.

Pennsylvania currently serves over 30,000 individuals¹ through waiver programs for autism and intellectual disabilities. Governor Wolf's proposed 2015-2016 budget includes initiatives to reduce waiting lists for home and community-based services and expand opportunities for these individuals.

FY 2015-2016 Proposed Budget Initiatives

- \$19.3M for 1,050 individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism to receive services in their own homes and communities and \$12.9M to fully annualize the 2014-2015 program expansion
- \$6M to provide individuals an intellectual disability the opportunity to transfer out of private and public Intermediate Care Facilities and into home and community-based settings
- \$0.5M to provide additional supports to promote competitive employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities

Governor Wolf and DHS want to ensure more people with an intellectual disability are able to live and thrive in their communities, rather than institutional settings. "Today, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities play active roles in their schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods. They have more opportunities in education and employment and more protections in health care, the legal system, and other areas of human rights," said DHS Acting Secretary Ted Dallas.

Impact



Jimmy Mathews began working at Arc Human Services' (AHS) Distribution Center in July of 2014 and is now a model employee. Prior to joining the distribution center's team, Jimmy missed days of work, was uninterested in the job, and was frustrated with the small paychecks. Jimmy's team offered him a new opportunity through Discovery, a pilot program funded by the Office of Developmental Programs that matches his desire and ability to prove his strength. In his position with the distribution center, Jimmy sorts, packs, loads and delivers supplies to a majority of AHS' group homes and local businesses. Jimmy now regularly works 15 hours per week, earns \$10 per hour, and is thriving in his work environment.

Jimmy's story, just like that of many Pennsylvanian's thriving in their communities, illustrates DHS's commitment to providing greater independence, choice, and opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. For more information about the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, please visit www.dhs.state.pa.us.

¹ Includes enrollees in the Adult Autism, Consolidated, and Person/Family Directed Support waivers