



Transforming Lives. Building Community Well-Being.

## Appendix K Innovations Waiver Adjustments during COVID-19 Outbreak

### **For Members Receiving Innovations Waiver Services and their Families:**

During the COVID-19 crisis, Trillium Health Resources is here to support you and your families. We understand that there is a lot of information that can be difficult to find or understand. By working with our partners, we are implementing changes to give you and your family the flexibility that you need. We want our members to continue to receive Innovations Waiver services in a way that helps to ensure your safety during this difficult time, while making the most sense for you and your family. As a result, we have outlined some questions and answers that will help to explain how Innovations Waiver services are being temporarily changed to be more flexible and useful for you and your family. **All of these flexibilities must be tied to some change in circumstances caused by the COVID-19 crisis.** Be aware that flexibilities are subject to review on a case by case basis.

### **Question: I need more help than normal during the COVID-19 crisis. Can I request more service hours?**

- 🌱 If you need additional services hours, your Innovations Waiver provider can temporarily deliver these services without having to go through the process of requesting them through Trillium (prior authorization) before the services can be provided. This means that additional services and supports are available now!\*

### **Question: I need to increase the hours that I receive. However, I receive the maximum amount of hours based on Innovation Waiver limitations. Is there any help for me?**

- 🌱 You are now able to receive services above the previous limits that were set for those services (includes amounts of hours, how often services are provided, and for how long) based on your specific needs.
- 🌱 Innovations Waiver services previously had an annual budget limit of \$135,000. This limit can be exceeded in certain instances based on the person's needs.

### **Question: I am currently displaced from my home and am out of state. What support is available to me?**

- 🌱 If you are out of state, you are able to receive Respite services for up to 30 days. Please contact your Care Coordinator who can help assist with finding a provider out of state to provide this support.

\* Staff must be available to provide these additional services.

\*\* Monthly monitoring will be in place.

**Question: The services that I receive require me to be at a specific location (e.g. Day Support Program, in the community, etc.), but I am no longer able to go to those places. How can I still receive the services that I need?**

- 🌱 Services that could previously only be provided in certain locations can now be provided in different locations (e.g. hotel, shelter, church, alternative facility-based setting, home of the person receiving services, or home of the direct care worker). For example, Community Networking services previously could only be provided in a community setting, but can now be provided in alternative settings as mentioned above.

**Question: I am an adult receiving Innovations Waiver services. I have chosen not to receive services at this time from staff with my provider agency due to COVID-19 related concerns. However, I need to continue to receive services. Are there any alternatives that could assist me in my situation?**

- 🌱 Family members (residing in and out of the home) can apply to provide services to you during this time. Your family member should speak to your provider agency about becoming your paid worker.
- 🌱 Family members are able to provide services (up to 90 days) prior to background checks and training being completed.

**Question: The staff and/or my family member that are providing services to me have CPR and NCI certifications that will expire soon. However, they are not able to renew their certifications due to the current restrictions in place. Is there a way to prevent services from stopping?**

- 🌱 Staff and/or family members who are providing services can continue to provide services (up to 90 days) after their CPR and NCI certification has lapsed.

**Question: I live with my adult family member (who receives Innovations Waiver services) and provide services to them as Relative as Provider. There are restrictions in place on the services that I can provide. My adult family member needs to access additional services. Are there other services I can provide during this timeframe to support my adult family member?**

- 🌱 Family members who are providing services to their adult family member can now provide additional services such as Supported Employment and Community Networking (up to 90 days). The limitation on the hours that Relative as Provider may provide has been lifted temporarily during this pandemic.

\* Staff must be available to provide these additional services.

\*\* Monthly monitoring will be in place.

**Question: It is time for my annual planning meeting to create my Individual Support Plan (ISP). However, I am not able to participate due to COVID-19 related issues. Are there any options available to me in my situation?**

- 🌱 For annual ISP that are expiring and currently meetings your needs, the plan and services can remain in effect for up to three months (starting from the last day of your birth month) to allow time for the annual Individual Support Planning process to be completed.\*

**Question: I am in an acute care hospital, but I still need help to meet my needs. Can I access services while at the acute care hospital?**

- 🌱 Yes, *Community Living and Supports* can be provided in acute care hospital or short-term institutional stays when you need assistance with activities of daily living (e.g. bathing, dressing, brushing your teeth, etc.), behavioral supports, or communication supports.

**Question: I have chosen to not receive services during this time due to COVID-19 concerns. I am worried for the well-being of the staff who were working with me and wonder if they will have to find another job during this crisis. What is being done to help Direct Care Workers?**

- 🌱 Trillium is working with providers to allow Direct Care Workers to continue to receive pay during this time when they are not able to provide services. This is called staff Retainer Payments.

**Question: My care coordinator comes to visit me regularly. Will these visits continue?**

- 🌱 Face to face monitoring visits are not required during the COVID-19 crisis. This includes quarterly and monthly monitoring visits that were completed by your care coordinator. Your care coordinator will remain in contact with you by phone calls and email.

**Question: I need to complete a Support Intensity Scale (SIS) reassessment by a certain timeframe. Is this still required?**

- 🌱 Support Intensity Scale (SIS) assessments/reassessments are not required during the COVID-19 crisis.

**Question: I receive Day Support services and had to be present at the Day Support program once a week. Am I still required to visit the Day Program?**

- 🌱 You are no longer required to be present at the Day Support program once a week.

\* Staff must be available to provide these additional services.

\*\* Monthly monitoring will be in place.

**Question: I am not receiving any Innovations Waiver services at this time due to COVID-19. I am okay, but I have heard that if I don't receive any services for more than 30 days I will lose the Innovations Waiver. Will that happen?**

🌱 The requirement that Innovations Waiver participants receive at least one service every 30 days has been lifted during the COVID-19 crisis. You will not lose the Waiver even if you don't use services during the pandemic.

If you or your family member could benefit from some of these flexibilities, please contact your Innovations Waiver service provider and/or your care coordinator to inquire further. To read the flexibilities in their entirety, please visit [Home and Community-Based Services \(HCBS\) Flexibilities for Waiver Beneficiaries Enrolled in NC Innovations Waiver and NC TBI Waiver](#). All flexibilities must be tied to a specific need that relates to the COVID-19 crisis. Be aware that flexibilities are subject to review on a case by case basis.

If you have any questions whatsoever, please email [IWCOVIDResponse@TrilliumNC.org](mailto:IWCOVIDResponse@TrilliumNC.org). Trillium also has a [COVID-19 Webpage](#) dedicated to sharing information from the state, CDC, and details for our providers.

\* Staff must be available to provide these additional services.

\*\* Monthly monitoring will be in place.