

WSC ADVISORY#2024-013

IBUDGET PROVIDER FLEXIBILITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF APD CLIENTS IN RESPONSE TO HURRICANES HELENE AND MILTON

ACTION REQUIRED

The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) appreciates the critical role that providers, Qualified Organizations (QOs), Waiver Support Coordinators (WSCs), and Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+) Consultants play in keeping clients safe during emergencies.

On September 24, 2024, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order (EO) 24-209, amending and ratifying EO 24-208, which declared a state of emergency for certain Florida counties due to **Hurricane Helene**. The counties under a state of emergency in EO-24-209 are:

Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Brevard, Calhoun, Charlotte, Citrus, Clay, Collier, Columbia, DeSoto, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highland, Hillsborough, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Monroe, Nassau, Okaloosa, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Santa Rosa, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington.

On October 6, 2024, Governor Ron DeSantis issued Executive Order (EO) 24-215, amending and ratifying EO 24-214, which declared a state of emergency for certain Florida counties due to **Hurricane Milton**. The counties under a state of emergency in EO 24-215 are:

Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Citrus, Clay, Collier, Columbia, DeSoto, Dixie, Duval, Flagler, Gilchrist, Glades, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Indian River, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Levy, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Nassau, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, and Volusia.

This advisory provides guidance regarding iBudget Waiver flexibilities to enable providers, QOs, WSCs, and CDC+ Consultants to continue to meet the needs of clients in response to the storms. The top priority of the Agency is the health, safety, and well-being of our clients and their families who are a vulnerable and sacred population.

Providers, QOs, WSCs, and CDC+ Consultants should take proactive steps to resolve any concerns identified for APD clients. Please immediately report identified concerns regarding the health, safety and well-being of APD clients and their families to the [APD Regional Office](#) in which the client resides.

Providers, QOs, WSCs, and CDC+ Consultants are required to follow the iBudget Waiver Coverage and Limitations Handbook, which is incorporated by reference into Rule 59G-13.070, Florida Administrative Code.

For counties listed in executive orders 24-209 and 24-215, the following flexibilities may be followed until further notice from the Agency is issued or at such time an emergency is no longer declared in those counties.

Quality Assurance Monitoring Conducted by Qlarant

For providers located within the State of Emergency counties, Qlarant reviews may be rescheduled. Providers who experience extenuating circumstances necessitating the review to be delayed are to contact Qlarant to discuss rescheduling the review.

Place of Service Requirements: Personal Supports, Respite, Nursing, Residential Habilitation, Life Skills Development 1, 2, 3, and 4 (Companion, Supported Employment, Adult Day Training, and Prevocational), Behavior Analysis, Behavior Assistant, Supported Living Coaching

If a client has to relocate to another setting to ensure safety either before or immediately following the storm, it may be necessary for services to be provided in an alternate community-based setting. In this situation, the provider must maintain service logs and required documentation that specifies why the alternate setting is being utilized and alert APD to the temporary location of the client.

Supported Living Quarterly Meeting

If the required quarterly meeting to monitor supported living services cannot be completed due to client evacuation or other extenuating circumstances related to Hurricanes Helene or Milton, the meeting may be held virtually/remotely in lieu of face-to-face meetings whenever possible. Every effort to contact the client to ensure safety and well-being must be documented by the Supported Living Coach in the progress notes in iConnect including attempts to call by video call, telephone, text messaging and efforts to meet the client in an alternate location.

Durable Medical Equipment and Consumable Medical Supplies

Individuals may exceed allowable limits if equipment and supplies are damaged due to Hurricanes Helene or Milton. This must be documented in the provider's service logs.

Face to Face Visits Required for WSCs and Consumer Directed Care Plus (CDC+) Consultants

If a pre-scheduled support plan or other face-to-face visit could not be completed due to Hurricanes Helene and Milton efforts should be made to conduct the visit virtually/remotely in lieu of face-to-face meetings whenever possible. If a visit cannot be completed due to extenuating circumstances, the QO must contact the Regional Operations Manager for case-by-case consideration to determine if visits can be completed in the following month to meet compliance standards.

HCBS Waiver Eligibility Work Sheets Completed by WSCs and CDC+ Consultants

The due date for the HCBS Waiver Eligibility Worksheets that are due in October 2024 are extended through November 2024 for situations where the WSC or CDC+ Consultant was not able to see the client in October 2024 to meet the 365-day requirements. This must be documented in iConnect progress notes.

Thank you for your continued service to APD clients. If you have questions related to this advisory, please contact your local [APD Regional Office](#).