

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop S2-01-16  
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850



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## State Demonstrations Group

April 8, 2021

Jennifer Langer Jacobs  
Director, Department of Human Services  
Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services  
P.O. Box 712  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0712

Dear Ms. Jacobs:

Thank you to you and your staff for your work on the Implementation Plan (IP) for the Financial Eligibility Determination Process for Individuals under the Guardianship of the Office of the Public Guardian (referred as OPG), which is a component of the state's section 1115(a) demonstration, titled FamilyCare Comprehensive Demonstration (Project No. 11-W-00279/2). We are writing to approve the state's latest revisions of the OPG IP—which was submitted to CMS on February 4, 2020. A copy of the approved OPG IP is enclosed with this letter.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact your assigned project officer, Mr. Jack Nocito. His contact information is as follows:

Jack Nocito  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Mail Stop: S2-01-16  
Baltimore, MD 21244-1850  
Telephone: (410) 786-0199  
E-mail: [Jack.Nocito@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Jack.Nocito@cms.hhs.gov)

We look forward to continuing to partner with you and your staff throughout the course of the FamilyCare Comprehensive demonstration program.

Sincerely,

Angela D. Garner -S  
Digitally signed by  
Angela D. Garner -S  
Date: 2021.04.07  
16:41:44 -04'00'

Angela D. Garner  
Director  
Division of System Reform Demonstrations

Enclosure

cc: Michael Cutler, State Monitoring Lead, CMS Medicaid and CHIP Operations Group

NJ DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, DIVISION OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AND  
HEALTH SERVICES

**NJ FamilyCare Comprehensive Demonstration Implementation Plan**

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**STC 41 (5.) An Implementation Plan for Improving the Efficiency of the Financial  
Eligibility Determination Process for Individuals Under the Guardianship of the OPG**

**2/4/2020**

The New Jersey Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) is a state agency that serves as guardian for legally incapacitated individuals aged 60 and older. The Office makes all decisions for the protected individuals in its care, including medical, financial and legal decisions. All individuals served have serious cognitive issues that render them unable to provide meaningful information about their income and assets. Furthermore, in most cases there are no involved or helpful family members or friends to assist with this process. OPG staff must therefore attempt to piece together each individual's financial profile with minimal or no background information.

OPG currently serves as guardian for roughly 1700 individuals. Over the course of each year, hundreds of these individuals pass away and are replaced by other seniors who require protection. The need for OPG's services continues to grow as the population ages and the ranks of those impacted by elder abuse swell.

Once all of the required information is collected, if needed, OPG files a paper application and submits it for processing. To assist the OPG with Medicaid determinations, DMAHS has established two eligibility units in Salem and Cumberland counties to process Medicaid applications for OPG wards. These two dedicated units allow the OPG staff to establish relationships with the staff of the county eligibility units to ensure good communication to speed up the eligibility process instead of communicating with 21 different county offices across the state. Those two county eligibility units are typically processing between 150 and 200 applications for OPG clients at any given time. The eligibility units verify the information on the applications electronically and are able to provide the OPG with information on other found bank account, property, and other assets discovered during the verification process.

In addition to the demonstration authority requested, DMAHS' next step, to improve efficiency of the financial eligibility determination for OPG wards, the OPG will be to create a specific portal in which the OPG can apply online for Medicaid for their wards and attach any support documents then submit electronically to those eligibility units. DMAHS approximates access to the portal will be added for the OPG by April 2021 pending system and security functionality. The special portal will have an OPG attestation indicator so that OPG and the State can monitor the special timelines set forth in the Demonstration. The online application allows for more immediate electronic verifications (name, date of birth, SSN, citizenship/identity), and soon, alien status to validate the information provided and reduce the need for locating paper documents as proofs. The online system will have immediate access to the AVS system and therefore, the State

has the opportunity to help OPG identify any resources not known at the time of the application.

The special portal will allow any OPG application submitted, to be tracked by the State. Those applications can receive online notices and OPG can upload additional documents and monitor the status of the applications at any given time. All applications in the OPG Attestation program will be intensively monitored by both the State and OPG and tracked through to completion and access to health care.

OPG has also acquired a new database to improve efficiency and has obtained additional skilled staff to manage relationships with financial institutions that are historically reluctant to turn over client assets to OPG. Unfortunately, the OPG, in spite of having legal authority and improved efficiencies, will continue to have some issues with the time it takes to actually be able to access the assets in order to spend down. All of the above efficiencies are being pursued so that abandoned and confused seniors no longer languish inappropriately in acute care settings or remain at risk in isolated community settings pending Medicaid eligibility.