

## Questions and Answers

We received a variety of comments and emails about the 2/13/14 CM call. During the call we discussed the new Acumen fee structure, how DDP is addressing the Acumen fee line for the remainder of this fiscal year and Supports for Community Working and Living (1037) Waiver procedures. Below are some questions and comments we received with DDP responses. As we get more questions, we will update this document...so check back to be aware of any updates! Updates will be posted on the DDP website

**Comment/Question: Can individual/employers and support brokers have access to Therap?**

\*\*\*Yes- just contact Kathy Zeeck at 444-6952 and she can help get you set up in Therap. Kathy can also give assistance with filling out paper incident forms, or can help fill out the information online.

**Comment/Question: Does the employee enrollment fee apply to new vendors?**

\*\*\*No, it does not. There is no 'enrollment' fee to set up a vendor so the vendor can be paid directly.

**Comment/Question: What do I do if I don't have an alternative to self-directing respite, but I can't afford the new Acumen fee?**

\*\*\*There are a few things to look at. Have you and the team reviewed the cost plan to see if funding in other areas can be moved? Are all of your other services getting utilized as planned? If there haven't been any provider agencies in your area offering traditional respite, you and the Case Manager should check with your regional office. There may be some additional choices of providers that are now offering different services as Agency with Choice (AwC).

**Comment/Question: I do not have enough money in my Acumen fee line to get me through the rest of this FY year.**

\*\*\*On the call, DD Central Office explained a process to minimize negative impacts on cost plans and emailed the process to Case Managers. Contact your Case Manager for details.

**Comment/Question: Who do I call then if I have a question? Will there be a customer service department who will answer these questions now that they are getting paid so much more.**

\*\*\*Since the start of self-directed services in Montana, Acumen has had a customer service department for Case Managers, Employers, or Support Brokers to call with questions. That number is (877) 824-9356 and their website is: <https://www.acumenfiscalagent.com/Montana>

There is an Acumen representative in the state that is available for programmatic issues when contacted by State staff at DDP. If you don't feel you received appropriate assistance, then please document the details and let your Regional Manager know. But for individual questions, the number and website above are the first step for questions or issues.

**Comment/Question: I don't want to be the go between and possibly further confuse families. Let them get the information from the source!**

\*\*\*If you want to refer families to Acumen to answer questions about Self Direction in general, Acumen services, and/or what the new fees are now or were from July - Jan, then they are definitely an appropriate resource. However, Acumen will not be able to guide employers/individuals to determine if self-direction is a reasonable choice, nor will they be able to guide employers/individuals in choosing which type of self-direction (employer authority vs. agency with choice) might be more appropriate.

Case Managers (whether for an adult or child) are expected to be the resource for those questions. Case Managers need to understand the fees and how it will affect people they work with, in order to objectively discuss with a person's team, whether or not self-directing services with employer authority is an optimum choice.

**Comment/Question: Had it been considered to meet/contact providers in advance of the 1037 to develop a network of options/services for persons when they were selected for 1037 service?**

\*\*\*\*We did not consider provider availability to be an AwC or even a waiver specific topic. Access to providers is a potential issue that occurs in any waiver. Sometimes there is a lot of choice (larger cities) and sometimes there are really no providers in a smaller town (White Sulphur Springs, West Yellowstone, as examples). Per feedback from providers, we understood that several 'informal' versions of agency with choice were already occurring, and we are just formalizing that option for people. If a provider agency is not on the AwC list, the Case Manager could approach a provider and inquire if they might consider offering AwC. In addition, self-directing with employer authority is also an option. Although not the optimal choice for most, relocating to an area where there are more provider choices could be a reasonable option for specific individuals as well.

**Comment/Question: How long will a current provider have to become a 1037 Agency w/ Choice (AwC) Provider?**

\*\*\*\*Providers can request to add any service to their contract at any time, including AwC. Similar to providing traditional services, if or when a provider decides they want to formally provide AwC, they will need to follow the contracting process. In order to serve individuals who are in the 1037 waiver, a provider must formally elect AwC for the 1037 in their contract.

**Comment/Question: What happens if a provider has already been working with a person and doing Agency with Choice in the 0208 waiver?**

\*\*\*\*DDP is aware that there are existing 'informal' arrangements that are similar to AwC. Unless a provider accordingly adjusts their contract, these arrangements are considered to be traditional services, and will be measured and monitored according to standards of traditional agency delivered services and reimbursements. On a technical note, a provider does not HAVE to dissolve existing arrangements that look similar to AwC, but those informal arrangements are not recognized in the waiver and can leave gaps when monitoring provider performance or individual satisfaction. A person who is choosing self-direction and is opting for AwC as a service model can only consider providers who are recognized as delivering AwC.

**Comment/Question: There are a few comments indicating concern over the new Acumen fees. There is concern that the fees are excessive and that families may limit employees to save on the monthly check fees.**

\*\*\*\*However anyone looks at it, the July 2013 fee structure and the renegotiated fees affect cost plans differently...some negative and some positive. As stated on the Case Management call 2/13/14, our state has the widest range of small to large cost plans that Acumen serves. Although the provision of a Financial Management service is a mandatory component of Self Direct (when the person or family is the employer), per a comment from CMS, the percentage was against their guidelines and had to be changed. During implementation of the 14.5% and \$30.00 minimum fee structure, one could assume that families could similarly have limited employees and/or employee hours to save on their monthly fees as well. Montana's contract requires the Fiscal Management contractor to do more than just process checks. There are reporting requirements, monitoring requirements, Acumen accessibility/staffing requirements, enrollment in Workers' Compensation for all employees, and

potential training requirements that are part of the fees they charge to Montana. In reviewing some of the other proposals received last April during our RFP process, the new fees that DDP negotiated with Acumen were well within range of what other responders were proposing. Any fee structure has the capability to influence certain behavior, and will have a positive or negative effect on people. The new fees effective 2/1/2014 were discussed with stakeholders (including families) and have been agreed upon both by DDP and Acumen.

**Comment/Question: Are Supports Brokers required?**

\*\*\*\*Please refer to the Self Direct Employer Handbook, page 14, at the following link:

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/dsd/DevelopmentalDisabilities/DDPselfdir.aspx>

If a person is choosing AwC for their service option, then there is no Support Broker.

**Comment/Question: Does an ICP need to be built in AWACS before Acumen will complete enrollment paper work?**

\*\*\*\*Acumen will *work* on the enrollment paperwork at the same time the ICP is being built. Acumen will not give the 'good to go' for employees to start working until all the enrollment paperwork is complete AND the ICP is built and approved in AWACS.

**Comment/Question: Does a support broker have to be from the area of the client? Or can it be closer to the guardian who is the "employer"?**

\*\*\*\*There are no stipulations on whom the support broker should reside closer to the 'employer/guardian' or the individual receiving services.

**Comment/Question: Can one have an "out of state" employer (guardian)?**

\*\*\*\*There is nothing prohibiting this, however, it would be concerning that an out of state employer could adequately ensure the person received services and can appropriately verify timesheets and manage/train employees, as well as participate in team meetings and ensure the back-up plan is going to work. If the person's planning team agrees on an out of state employer, then it should be documented how some of these concerns will be handled.

**Comment/Question: Can one have an "out of state" non-paid support broker?**

\*\*\*\*As long as the 'out of state' non-paid support broker receives the Montana support broker certification, the support broker can reside out of state. It should be clarified how the person out of state is going to accomplish the Support Broker duties effectively.

**Comment/Question: If an individual gets a new waiver opening (in the 1037 waiver) and over time, realizes that self-direct is just "not for them" can they move into the "big waiver" (0208)?**

\*\*\*\*Yes, please see page 21 of the approved 1037 waiver.