



# INFORMATION BRIEF

## The Basics about a Combined 1915 (b)/(c) Waiver

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The developmental disabilities system may be going through a BIG change. The state is planning to run the service system in a different way. You might have heard people talk about a “B-C waiver” or “managed care.” They are talking about the change the state is planning to make. What follows are answers to some of the questions you might have about what a combined “B-C waiver” is.

Will the changes take place all over the state? No. Not at this time. Right now, ONE area is doing things differently. The area involves the Piedmont Local Management Entity... LME. The state may try something similar in one or two more LMEs.

What is a “B-C” waiver? Most services in our state are paid for by Medicaid. Medicaid puts together state and federal money to pay for services. Community services are typically paid for using Medicaid through a special program called a “Home and Community-based Services waiver.” We call it the CAP waiver or Innovations waiver. This is how it works now. The federal government calls them “C” waivers because of a part of a federal law that they come from. The name of the federal law is the Social Security Act.

This law also lets states run another type of waiver at the same time. It is called a “B” waiver. In a “B waiver” the state lets a local company or organization run the service system. They would have a lot of power over how things are run. In other words, they will run or manage the community services system – the services in the C waiver – with a lot of power to make things work right. This is why it some people call it managed care.

So, when you put the two together... a “C” waiver and a “B” waiver you get a “B-C waiver.”

Why is the state doing this? States use B-C waivers for different reasons. Many times it’s because they want the service system to run better. They may want it to cost less per person so they can save money. Or maybe they want to save money so they can serve more people. Or maybe they want to deliver services in a way to improve their quality.

Who will run the local service system in a B-C Waiver? The Local Management Entity or LME will. They will have the responsibility to make sure people get the support they need.

How will it work? It can work in many different ways. Generally, the local LME will:

- Get a set amount of money. This is called a capitation. Or a capped amount of money.
- Set up a network or group of providers to deliver services. This is called a provider network.
- Talk with people who receive services to see what support they need and make a service plan. A care manager or service coordinator will help with this.

- Use the money they have to make sure that they can pay providers to deliver services to everyone. They will need to make sure that service providers get paid!
- Make sure that the money is used or utilized in a good way so that it is not wasted and people get the help they need. This is called utilization management.
- Look at things closely to make sure that they don't spend too much money altogether and that people get good, quality services.

Will people always get any services they want? Maybe yes. Maybe not. It depends on what people say they want and how much it costs. It is possible that the LME will change the type or amount of services people receive. Some people may actually get more services, but others may get less. The LME may also change the types of services that are available.

Will I have more control over the services I receive? Maybe yes. Maybe not. It depends on how the LME runs the system. Sometimes a B-C waiver can be run in a way to give self-advocates more power over their services... to increase "self-direction." Other times it can be run in ways where case managers or providers seem to have more power. It depends on how things work.

When you add it all up, is this good or bad? Again, it all depends on how things are run. Some important things to ask about have to do with:

- How well things are thought out and planned. It will take good leaders at the state level and at the local LME to make everything work really well.
- Whether or not there is enough money so that people can get good services. If there is not enough money, then people may not get good services.
- Whether or not the LME and the state can work together to make sure that the services available are the ones you want and need.
- Whether or not there are good service providers in your area to deliver the services and supports you need.
- Whether or not you have enough control over the services you receive. This includes planning them out, choosing the right service provider and receiving good services to meet your needs.
- Whether or not there is enough money to start serving more people so they don't have to wait.

Putting it all together, a B-C waiver is just another way to run a service system. Think about this way. We take a "C waiver"... the waiver that provides services... and combine it with a "B waiver." The B waiver allows a local company like the LME to run things with a set amount of money. They will need to be very careful about how they run the service system.

There can be some very good things that happen if it is all done well. If people get the support they need and are in charge of their lives, then it can be good. But if it turns out costing too much or people don't get the services they need, it can be a bad thing.

**Pay attention. Watch closely. Ask Questions.**

**Make up your own mind about it as you hear more about how it will work.**