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MEDICAID WAIVER LANGUAGE

Examples and Recommendations on the Integration of
Enabling Technologies

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OUR STORY

SimplyHome is on a mission to empower independence through innovation. By connecting innovative care providers and concerned caregivers, *SimplyHome* technology reduces costs, increases efficiency, improves communication, and most importantly, empowers individuals to be independent. Full of features that help you stay connected, *SimplyHome* products are designed to address concerns about health and safety, specific daily activities, independence, and medication compliance. For more information, visit www.simply-home.com.

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SUMMARY

The following document contains Medicaid waiver language from multiple states, and all language noted here is actively used in the noted state. Additional commentary and opinions are provided by SimplyHome based on our extensive experience in providing person-centered technology supports both as technology vendor and through our partner service provider organization, Innovative Services. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of all Medicaid waiver language being utilized on the topic of enabling technology, rather we have provided language that is flexible, person-centered, and mindful of creating a mutually beneficial and sustainable model of support for the future. We have also noted areas in existing language that fails to meet those standards. Finally, this document only focuses on the residential applications for technology supports. While we recognize the tremendous benefit for technology supports in the community and on the job, those topics are not covered here.

As provider organizations and state agencies navigate the Technology First movement, they are finding that Medicaid waiver language may not be evolving as quickly as enabling technology. As a result, funding can be limited and difficult to navigate.

We created this resource to support the efforts of organization associations and state agencies that are advocating for changes in waiver language and billing structure. We are providing additional commentary and guidance based on our extensive experience in providing person-centered technology supports. Our goal is to support your state in creating a sustainable funding model for the integration of community supported enabling technology in residential settings.

WHAT IS ENABLING TECHNOLOGY?

Enabling Technology focuses on supporting people as they create their lives – where they live, where they work, how they choose to spend their free time, what goals they have, and who they choose to be around. We prefer not to use the terms “monitoring” and “remote monitoring” when referring to enabling technology because, although some tools (such as cameras and sensors) can be used both for monitoring and enabling, we believe that terminology needs to embody the desire for independence and self-determination. As states broaden their definitions of “assistive technology” in their Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waivers, more individuals will have access to a wider array of technologies that support a variety of priorities, concerns, and outcomes.

Technology as a Tool to Reach Outcomes



Creates a natural support for practicing and learning skills



Expands opportunity for self-determination and independence



Empowers people to make their own choices

LANGUAGE

Monitoring vs. Enabling Technology

Enabling Technology Allows For:

- ✓ Support
- ✓ Proactive Responses
- ✓ Teaching of Skills
- ✓ Empowerment
- ✓ Dignity of Risk
- ✓ Possibility

Monitoring Allows For:

- ✗ Constant Supervision
- ✗ Reactive Responses
- ✗ Reporting of Change
- ✗ Protection
- ✗ Dependence
- ✗ Predictability

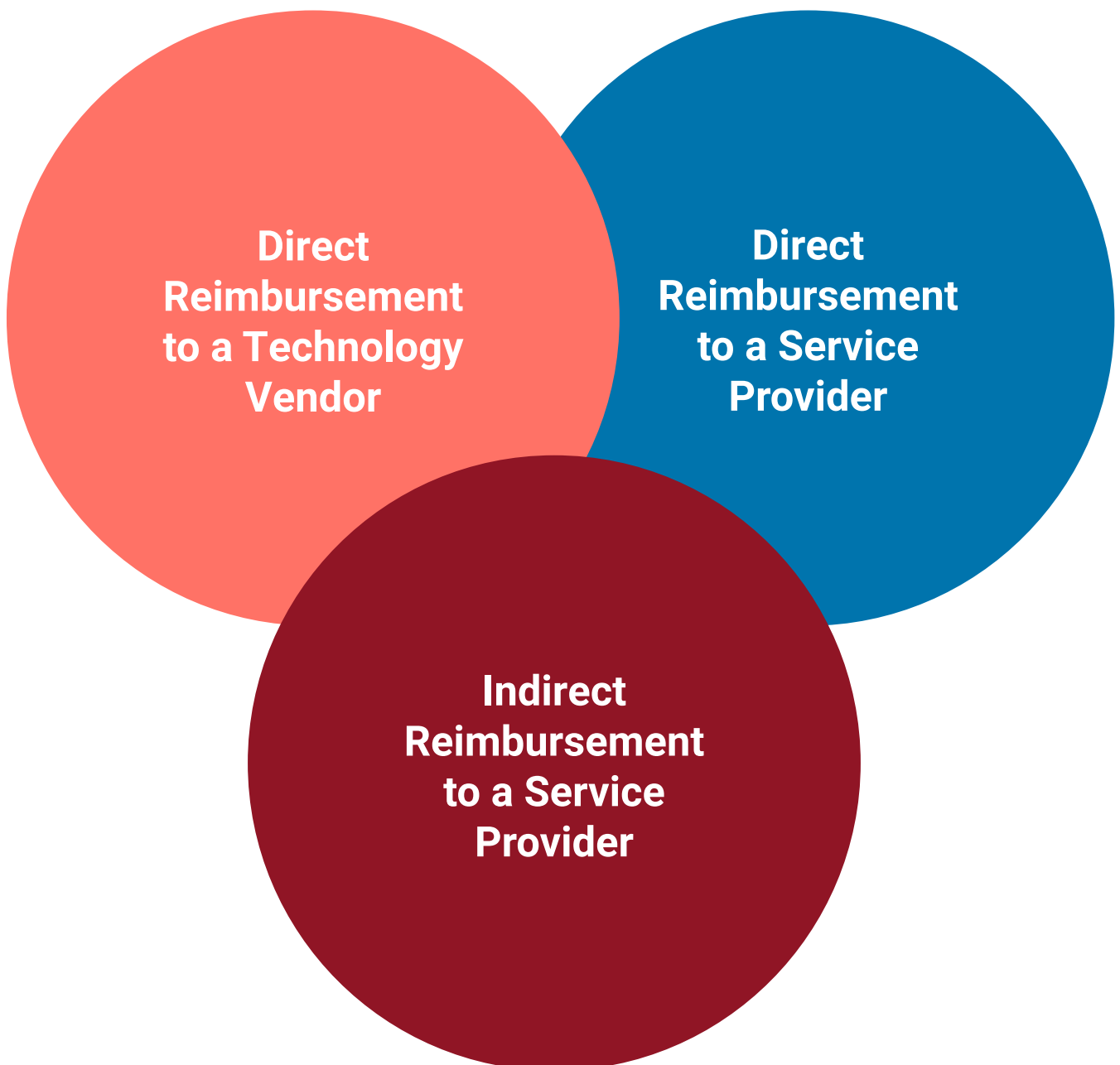
In some states remote monitoring is specifically written into the waiver language. We find that when states focus on remote monitoring the goal is caregiving efficiency and cost savings, which falls short of true empowerment for individuals.

Additionally, enabling technology can be used directly by an individual as a **natural support**. We all use technology in our daily lives for communication, connection, entertainment, and work. People with disabilities should also have access to technology as a natural support, even if that uses multi-purpose technologies (such as iPads or tablets). Funding should not restrict such accessibility due to the benefits received by having such resources.

Natural Support is any support provided by a person or technology that is a typical part of the daily routine for someone.

SERVICE STRUCTURE OPTIONS

There are three prevailing service reimbursement options related to the funding of technology supports, which are generally broken into the following models. Each of these models has advantages and disadvantages, from a state and a provider perspective.





Direct Reimbursement to a Technology Vendor

In this model, the technology and services provided by the technology vendor are paid directly to the technology vendor. Technology is treated as a completely separate resource for an individual, and can be seen as not working in tandem with paid and natural supports. Because technology is seen as separate from paid and natural supports, paid service providers are often less inclined to participate because this model can create a financial disincentive. However, the savings benefit the funder directly, and, when done properly, should create a better outcome for the individual supported.

In this model, the service provider that is providing community supported living, job coaching, residential habilitation, or other services, contracts with a technology vendor independently. The service provider purchases the necessary technology and services from the technology vendor, and the service provider is reimbursed through the appropriate funding source. One main advantage to this model is it helps service providers overcome the barrier of assuming the cost of technology. This model gives service providers greater flexibility because it creates more direct opportunities for building the technology into a specific service model, as the technology and services are provided together. Providers have more flexibility in how they structure support for technology, and they can share in savings generated. In total, the model creates a win-win-win for funders, service providers, and individuals. Supported individuals also receive a more holistic support system, with less opportunities for gaps between technology support and in-person support.



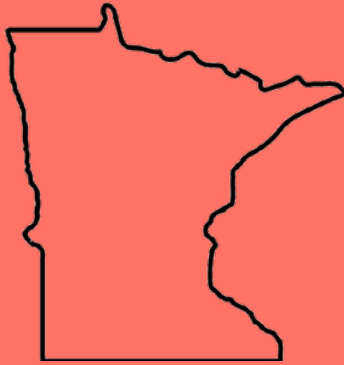
Direct Reimbursement to a Service Provider



Indirect Reimbursement to a Service Provider

In this model, the service provider contracts with a technology vendor independently. The service provider purchases the necessary technology and services from the technology vendor, but the service provider does not receive direct reimbursement. Rather, this cost is assumed by the provider and the provider creates new efficiencies with the technology to cover the upfront and ongoing costs of the technology. While this can often be seen as an initial hurdle for new providers, this model is often the most dynamic and impactful. Providers, funders and individuals can all benefit. Providers are able to share in savings from the new efficiencies, cost decreases for funders, and individuals gain more independence.

Direct Reimbursement to a Technology Vendor



One primary advantage to this model from the state perspective is enabling technologies can often be written into an existing service definition through an amendment.

In [Minnesota's waiver](#) the existing Personal Emergency Response service definition was expanded to include Monitoring Technology.

In their waiver, monitoring technology supervision is defined as "The use of equipment to oversee, monitor and supervise someone who receives waiver/AC services. It can help keep people safe and support independence. The equipment used may include alarms, sensors, cameras and other devices."

Direct Reimbursement to a Service Provider



In [Pennsylvania's waiver](#) (starting at page 179), the assistive technology definition was expanded by way of an amendment to create flexibility and be more inclusive of other technologies. In addition, they created a new service definition, Supported Living, which also directly reimburses a service provider for assistive technology. It should be noted, remote support/independent living technology is specifically excluded from inclusion in Supported Living in PA. We see this as rather large missed opportunity for the state. The Supported Living definition creates rate bands for paid support, based on SIS group, to define the number of eligible hours a participant can receive. This flexible weekly support structure is ideal for technology inclusion, as support can be provided just in time instead of just in case.

Indirect Reimbursement to a Service Provider



[Missouri](#) has taken innovative approaches to this model. When remote supports are implemented into a care plan and reduce the number of direct support hours, service providers redirect the cost savings. In Missouri the provider is allowed to keep all of the savings generated from staff reallocation through the use of technology with the provision that any such savings be applied to increasing wages for direct care staff.

Indirect Reimbursement to a Service Provider



[Tennessee](#) takes a person-centered approach and specifies in their Supported Living model that "providers are responsible for providing an appropriate level of supports, including enabling technology, paid staff, and natural supports, as applicable, to ensure each person's health and safety, while maximizing personal choice and independence, and not restricting individual rights and freedoms." This gives the service provider flexibility as they determine the best care plan for each individual.

WHAT'S NEXT?

A Case for Education and Training: Inclusive Technology Plans for Your Organization

THE OPPORTUNITY

In a time when technology has become a common natural support in our daily lives, we are also experiencing a heightened awareness of the value of enabling technologies for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Support providers, families, employers and individuals are now advocating for the inclusion of technology at home, at work, and in the community.

THE CHALLENGE

According to the recent McKinsey Global Institute report, *Jobs Lost, Jobs Gained: Workforce Transitions in a Time of Automation*, 66 percent of the respondents in their survey noted that “addressing potential skills gaps related to automation/digitization” is at least a top ten priority with a third of the respondents placing it in the top five. Moreover, 62 percent of those surveyed believe they will need to “retrain or replace more than a quarter of their workforce between now and 2023.”

THE RESPONSE

With technology transforming the way organizations provide direct and natural supports, it is critical that they train and reskill staff, not only in the application of enabling technology but also in newly evolving job responsibilities. Organizations must be committed to leveraging learning and development (L&D) if they want to sustain a qualified workforce, attract new professional talent, and prepare for technological innovation.

THE SOLUTION

SimplyHome has developed an **online learning system** that is affordable, accessible, and relevant and explores the various aspects that service providers and their staff need in order to become successful “technology first” organizations. *SimplyHome* partnered with the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (TN DIDD) to pilot courses and resources as a part of the three-year Technology Transformation Project. Post-survey data indicated that training impacted attitude, interest, application and motivation.

BENEFITS

Benefits for Your Organization

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Learning and development align with the organization's mission: Providing training to staff indicates that organizations are not only enhancing the growth of the people they serve but also the skill development of those who provide the direct supports.

CONSISTENCY

Consistency in programming practices: With everyone trained in the same information, support practices and transitions can occur seamlessly.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Staff are more likely to engage in the application of technology as a natural support: Staff understand how to use the technology to address the outcomes stated in the Individualized Support/Service Plan (ISP).

STAFF OWNERSHIP

Staff take ownership of the new corporate culture and support model: Education creates opportunity for learning, discussion, and feedback so that staff are more likely to buy into the new procedures, processes, and practices.

AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE

Online learning is affordable and accessible: For what an organization would pay to send one person to a conference, multiple people can be trained in the same information. Staff take courses when it is convenient for their schedules and do not need to travel or secure substitute staffing.



BENEFITS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff are more likely to remain or advance when they understand the expectations for their position. Learning and development help staff feel valued in their positions, even when job responsibilities may be reallocated.

APPRECIATION FOR TECHNOLOGY

Staff understand the relevance of technology as one tool for support. Training creates appreciation for technology as one source of natural support rather than as a replacement for the direct support they provide.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

Staff become mentors, instructors, and support for each other. In the long run, an organization's L&D model can also be a source for professional advancement and leadership development as individuals grow in their skills, experiences, and knowledge.

JOB SATISFACTION

Staff who experience job satisfaction are more likely to be invested in their organization. As staff better understand their roles and responsibilities and the benefits of technology, they are more likely to be role models to others on the team. They may also become the best marketing tool for attracting new talent.

Benefits for Your Staff



CALL TO ACTION

With “technology first” taking center stage in the IDD world, organizations and states are asking what they will need to accomplish in order to attain this status. The key question in this discussion should be, “How are we going to prepare for the next five years and beyond?” Without education, learning and development at all levels of an organization, technology integration will be misunderstood or arbitrary, and success will be minimized. To move forward as innovative agencies and providers, we must empower and equip ourselves with the knowledge and experiences needed to maximize the possibilities that technology has to offer.

REFERENCES

Batra, P., Bughin, J., Chui, M., Ko, R., Lund, S., Sanghvi, S., Woetzel, J. (December 2017). *Jobs Lost, Jobs Gained: Workforce Transitions in a Time of Automation*. McKinsey Global Institute.