

MY CHOICE MATTERS

Medicaid's promise to listen to what adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities have to say about what is and is not working for them in the system. Improving the system for adults so they can be the boss of their own life.

JANUARY 2018, INFORMATIONAL BRIEFING ON THE SUPPORTS INTENSITY SCALE-ADULT®

SUPPORTS INTENSITY SCALE-ADULT (SIS-A)®

What is It?

The Supports Intensity Scale-Adult (SIS-A®) is an assessment tool developed by a team of experts from the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). The team included people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), family members, and professionals in the field of developmental disabilities. The SIS-A measures individual support needs in personal, work-related, and social activities in order to identify and describe the types and amount of support a person with an I/DD needs to successfully participate in life at home and in the community.



Why is Idaho using the SIS-A?

There is a lawsuit, known as K.W. v. Armstrong, which impacts all adults with I/DD who receive Medicaid DD services. In that lawsuit, the court asked Medicaid to make changes to the adult DD program. Medicaid is now in the process of making those as well as other changes Medicaid thinks will help improve the program.

One of these changes Medicaid chose to make is to begin using the SIS-A instead of the Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised (SIB-R®) to decide who is eligible for the program and what help each adult needs to live successfully in their community. This means that the SIS-A will help to determine each adult's annual budget for supports. Medicaid heard from many adults with I/DD that the SIB-R was not person-centered. Medicaid listened and looked for a tool that that measured support needs, not deficits, and allowed the person receiving services to be fully included in the assessment process.

My Choice Matters is Medicaid's promise to listen to what adults with I/DD have to say about changes in the program and what is and is not working for them in the system. Medicaid is working to improve the system so that adults with I/DD can be the boss of their own lives. This includes working to ensure that planning and services are truly person-centered, service delivery is equitable and sustainable, and the entire process is transparent for everyone involved.

For additional information, contact:



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Visit us at:
www.mychoicematters.idaho.gov

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Over the next two years the SIS-A will be phased in and eventually replace the SIB-R. Some adults in the program have already begun receiving the SIS-A. All adults in the program will receive a SIS-A before the new way of assigning budgets goes into effect. Go to the **My Choice Matters** website to find out what is new and let Medicaid know what you think: www.mychoicematters.idaho.gov

How is a SIS-A assessment conducted?

The assessment involves a face-to-face interview conducted by an assessor who has been trained and certified by the organization that made the assessment. The adult, or person receiving supports, participates in the interview. Sometimes the adult chooses not to take part in the interview or to only stay for part of the interview. That's okay! At least two people are required to be present for the entire interview. This could mean the adult and another person, or at least two other people who know, understand, and can talk about the types of supports the adult needs. It's also okay if more people attend the interview. Attendees may include:



- Parents/guardians, spouse, or other family member
- Friends
- Support staff from the person's home, day program, or employment

Before the interview begins, the assessor will explain the interview process. This is a perfect time to ask questions, it is important that everyone involved understands how the assessment works before it begins. A detailed SIS-A interview usually takes between two and three hours to complete.

The SIS-A assessment is designed to be a conversation about the type and amount of support the adult needs to successfully participate in various life activities. The assessor's job is to facilitate this conversation. The SIS-A Assessor will ask the adult about his/her activities at home and in the community, friendships and relationships, and how much support he/she needs to do these activities. During the interview, adults may be asked to imagine doing things they may not have done before. Asking these types of questions allows adults to discover their potential and think about the goals they want to achieve. For example, even if the adult hasn't had a job, this is a chance to think about the supports he or she would need in order to work.

For each item on the SIS-A, the assessor will ask:

- What type of support is needed?
- How often is support needed?
- How much time is needed?

There are no right or wrong answers. It's important that all the questions are asked and responses are given even if certain questions do not seem to apply to the person.

There are no right or wrong answers. It's important that all the questions are asked, and responses are given even if certain questions do not seem to apply to the adult. It is also very important that all questions are answered honestly. Providing honest answers will help people get appropriate supports and services.

How will the SIS-A information be used?

The SIS-A was designed to be part of the person-centered planning process that helps each person identify their unique preferences, skills, and life goals. The supports approach used by the SIS-A recognizes that people's needs change over time and supports must change as well. Supports need to be developed and delivered in integrated settings, with the understanding that, regardless of possible limitations, people with disabilities should have the opportunity to engage in activities and life experiences just like any other person.

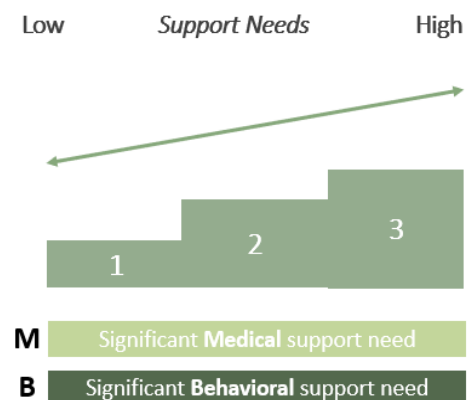
Supports refer to an array of resources and strategies that enable people with I/DD to live in typical community settings.

SIS-A information helps to determine a person's general need for support by assessing the type and amount of support the person needs to be successful in a series of activities. The SIS-A assessment is not intended to pinpoint all the specific supports a person needs day-to-day. Detail about specific support needs and preferences should be discussed during later planning meetings. However, sharing information about someone's wants, needs, and life goals during a SIS-A interview can sometimes help a team think about the supports a person needs to live a full life in the community.

In addition, the SIS-A information will help Medicaid understand the amount of support a person needs in relation to other people receiving services. Based on the SIS-A assessment and responses to two supplemental questions each person receiving services will be assigned to one of five support levels. A person's level assignment will, in turn, allow Medicaid to estimate the average type and amount of services a person might use, depending on his or her living setting. Using these estimates about support need, Medicaid will develop supports budgets tied to each support level and living setting. Adults in the program will all know exactly how Medicaid decided their individual budget.

What are the Five Support Levels?

Based on the SIS-A assessment adults will be assigned to a support level that captures his or her general support need (1, 2, or 3). People with the fewest general support needs will be placed in Level 1 while people with the most general support needs will be placed in Level 3. Levels M and B were developed for adults with significant medical or behavioral support needs. Adults will be assigned to those levels based on a record review process and specific criteria. Responses to two supplemental questions will help Medicaid identify adults who may need the amount of support designed for Levels M and B. Adults will also be able request review for Levels M or B.



When will the SIS-A be implemented?

Idaho is already in the process of conducting SIS-A assessments on a group of adults in the program. These SIS-A results will help confirm the support level criteria and help provide information for developing the supports budgets. As analysis of this data is completed and level criteria are finalized this information will be shared via the My Choice Matters website (www.mychoicematters.idaho.gov)

All adults in the program will receive a SIS-A once the new budget framework and level system is in implementation. This assessment will happen before each adult's planning meeting, so they can plan using their new budget. Until then, adult budgets will be calculated using the existing budget process and individuals will continue to get their K.W. budgets. Medicaid expects to have the new framework fully implemented within the next two years.



To learn more about the SIS-A, visit the AAIDD website at <https://aaidd.org/sis>

To learn more about the K.W. lawsuit or about K.W. budgets, or any other change happening with the adult I/DD program, go to the **My Choice Matters** website: www.mychoicematters.idaho.gov

You can also email Medicaid with questions at: KW@dhw.idaho.gov Or call Medicaid at: (844) 793-1286