

Family Forum on Potential Impacts of Budget Reduction

Following is a list of questions that were asked in the family forum survey followed by responses from forum panelists. Some questions are not included as the panelists do not have responses.

- Can this be overturned legally, federally?

The waiver is a part of Medicaid and as such is administered by the state. Most changes to the way that the waiver is administered require an amendment that must receive federal approval. The reduction to “enforce the consistent methodology”... IBA determined by Level of Service score would not require an amendment and therefore would not be subject to federal approval.

- Is there any justification being provided by the Wyoming Department of Health? If so, how is it being justified?

The justification is simply a reduction to the costs in the Wyoming Department of Health budget. Several options were provided to the Governor for consideration and this is among the ones that were chosen. The overall impact to the Department of Health’s budget was the consideration for the recommendations. Individual impacts are obviously much greater than the budget impact to the department. Some people will see up to 50% reductions to the Individual Budgeted Amount.

- How do these cuts affect me having services?

If you are someone whose Individual Budget is decreased based on the Level of Service “calculator”, your ability to purchase services from community-based providers will be limited.

- I need specifics on what bill this is, and how to reference it when talking with my legislators.

The proposed reductions are part of the “Budget Bill” (HB0001 and SF0001). They are included in the overall reductions to the budget, but they are listed in the “budget book” that contains the [Governor’s supplemental budget](#). You can find them on pages 888-893 or pages 120-125 of the Department of Health budget.

- What does this mean for individuals that are currently on the waitlist?

The proposed reduction to the waitlist is that it would be frozen until the end of the current biennium. So, no one will be funded from the waiting list through June of 2022.

- Where will people live? The Life Resource Center (institution) in Lander? Are they able to accommodate an influx of people, and will this prompt a lawsuit?

We do not have an answer to this question at this time.

- Is the Wyoming Life Resource Center taking a cut to their budget?

According to page 955 of the budget book the WLRC will receive no reductions to their current level of funding.

- How are the budget numbers calculated?

The Individual Budget “calculator” has been in existence since 2014. It was a result of the waiver redesign process that created the Support Waiver. At that time, several people were affected by the change in methodology, but the legislature put parameters that Individual Budgets could not increase or decrease by more than 7.5% thus providing for at least some maintenance of services. The current proposal does not have any parameters and some people will see reductions of up to 50% of their budgeted amount.

- How will this affect the waitlist for DD waiver kids?

The proposed reduction to the waitlist is that it would be frozen until the end of the current biennium. So, no one will be funded from the waiting list through June of 2022.

- How is the LOS Score calculated? Is this information made available to individuals and families?

A formal public records request has been made to the Department of Health to release this information.

- Why are we moving so fast to make this secondary budget cut?

This is a point that can be made to legislators. If there is a need to make this change, we should take a more methodical and long term look at the impacts to individuals and their families and guardians. Such a discussion should include all stakeholders.

- Is the legislature using any of the data they received from the cost study they did?

The information from the most recent cost study will be used for the rebasing of rates that will be brought to the legislature in the budget session of 2022.

- Where will all of these people with short IBA's go?

We do not have an answer to this question at this time.

- Are 24-hour service providers just expected to pick up the slack when there is no budget for day services?

That is a decision that will be up to each individual provider.

- Will the level rates stay at the Feb 1st rates or will they change?

One of the proposed reductions in the Governor's supplemental budget is an additional 2.5% decrease to rates.

- Will most individuals lose access to community services altogether or are there ways that agencies can shift and adjust in the services offered to continue to be providers?

There is a potential that some providers will not be able to continue to offer their current level of services or may have to shut down all together. With the reality that people could lose up to 50% of their Individual Budget Amounts, providers will be significantly impacted and will need to seriously look at if, and how, they can serve people with the reduced amounts.

- I know that the needs of individuals served through the Life Resource Center are typically significantly greater than those served in the community setting. Has a budget cost analysis of this impact been considered since services MUST be provided?

The average cost per person at the WLRC is \$238,924 and \$53,539 for the waiver.

- Why aren't we hearing more about this from the state agencies that are vested with the responsibility of protecting the well-being of our people with disabilities? The Department of Health and DD should be informing the public of these potential changes.

We can't speak for the Department of Health or the Developmental Disabilities Section, but the reductions that are being discussed are at this point recommendations. It is critical for the continuity of services that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families, guardians, providers, and advocates voice their concerns about these reductions.

- In what time frame will cuts take place, and how will they decide who will be the first to level or Individuals that are impacted?

If the proposed reduction were to pass the legislature it is not known how the reductions would be implemented. The supplemental budget would take effect on July 1st.

- Will they be closing the group-homes and moving to apartments of two or more participants?

That is up to the individual providers and the business models that they think will be most effective to deal with the reductions.

- How do we get the media involved in learning about these potential severe budget cuts?

Watch for opinion pieces in the statewide newspapers in the coming days. Families are welcome to contact media outlets in their communities.

- What is the time frame? When would this happen if it does?

The changes to the budget would be effective on July 1st. Implementation of the IBA/LOS reduction however is flexible.

- Will this survey help us? Will all these stories be read?

Your stories are being told! We are sharing the results of this survey with legislators to show the impacts of the proposed reductions.