



# **Feasibility of Creating an Online Portal for the Medicaid Waiver Interest List**

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**As Required by  
Texas Government Code,  
Section 531.0501**

**Texas Health and Human Services  
January 2023**



**TEXAS**  
Health and Human  
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## Executive Summary

In compliance with Texas Government Code, Section 531.0501, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) assessed the feasibility of creating an online portal for individuals to request and check placement on a Medicaid waiver program interest list, in consultation with the Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) System Redesign Advisory Committee (SRAC).

As part of the study, HHSC assessed the most cost-effective automated method for determining the level of need of an individual seeking services.

The study recommends the creation of a self-service online portal, which is currently being developed. The study concludes that the most cost-effective method to gather information related to level of need is to allow individuals or their authorized representatives to respond to and update information on the interest list questionnaire.

## Introduction

Section 531.0501 requires HHSC, in consultation with the IDD SRAC, to study the feasibility of creating an online portal for individuals to request to be placed on an interest list for Medicaid waiver programs and to check the individual's placement on a Medicaid waiver program interest list.

In addition, HHSC must determine the most cost-effective, automated method of determining the level of need of an individual seeking services through a Medicaid waiver program.

This report must be submitted by January 1, 2023 to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and the standing legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over health and human services.

## Background

House Bill 2658 and Senate Bill 1648, 87th Legislature, Regular Session, 2021 amended Texas Government Code, Section 531.0501 to require HHSC, in consultation with the IDD SRAC, to assess the feasibility of creating an online portal for individuals to request to be placed on an interest list for Medicaid waiver programs and to check the individual's placement on a Medicaid waiver program interest list.

HHSC maintains an interest list for the following Medicaid waiver programs:

- STAR+PLUS Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)
- Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP)
- Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD)
- Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS)
- Home and Community-based Services (HCS)
- Texas Home Living (TxHmL)

Individuals or their representative may request placement on an interest list for one or more of these waiver programs by contacting HHSC for HCBS, MDCP, DBMD, and CLASS or the Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority (LIDDA) for HCS and TxHmL. Interest lists are maintained on the HHSC enterprise portal. LIDDAs are required to use the HHSC enterprise portal to update records for the HCS and TxHmL interest lists. HHSC updates records for the other interest lists (HCBS, MDCP, DBMD, and CLASS).

The individual or their representative completes a questionnaire which captures information about the person who is being added or continuing on the interest list. This questionnaire is completed when an individual is placed on an interest list and annually or bi-annually thereafter. This questionnaire is not a level of need determination but provides HHSC with additional information about the individuals situation and their needs.

Currently, individuals or their representatives do not have a self-service option to request placement on an interest list, review interest list placement status, provide annual or bi-annual contact responses or updates, complete the questionnaire, or report changes.

## Online Portal

HHSC, in consultation with the IDD SRAC, assessed the feasibility of creating an online portal for individuals or their representatives to access and update Medicaid waiver interest list information, and revised the interest list questionnaire to capture additional information about the individual and their needs. This questionnaire is completed when an individual is placed on an interest list and annually or bi-annually thereafter.

HHSC facilitated a series of meetings comprised of members of the IDD SRAC who volunteered to participate in workgroup sessions along with internal HHSC staff (described as “the workgroup” in this report).

In these sessions, the workgroup discussed the feasibility of creating an online portal and how this would improve the experience of interested individuals or their representatives by including an online self-service option to add, view, and update interest list information.

HHSC included funding for a self-service portal in the state’s home and community-based services spending plan, authorized by Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act. HHSC received approval for the project from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in January 2022. The self-service portal is scheduled for implementation in August 2023.

HHSC expects offering an online portal will increase response rates to annual and bi-annual notifications for individuals or their representatives to update questionnaire responses, thereby ensuring the agency has current information on file for individuals on the interest list.

The workgroup discussed ways to update the questionnaire to capture additional information about the individual’s unique needs.

In consultation with IDD SRAC, the questionnaire was updated to comply with [House Bill 3720](#), 87th Legislature, Regular Session, 2021, which requires HHSC to gather the following information:

- Contact information for the individual, the individual’s parent, or other legally authorized representative,
- Demographic information,

- Types of assistance required,
- Caregiver supports and circumstances, and
- When delivery of waiver services should be received to ensure the individual's health and welfare, making sure the individual receives services in the least restrictive setting possible.

The updated questionnaire includes comprehensive questions to estimate the individual's needs and captures current caregiver supports. The questionnaire also captures information on barriers and potential loss of supports.

HHSC expects to implement the updated questionnaire in summer 2023.

## Conclusion

The workgroup recommends the creation of an online portal to add, view, and update interest list information and capture information about the individual's opinion of their needs.

At the time of this report, HHSC is developing the online portal on the HHSC website [www.yourtexasbenefits.com](http://www.yourtexasbenefits.com). When the online portal is launched, interested individuals or their representatives may create an account, request placement on an interest list, and complete the interest list questionnaire. Placement information will be accessible in real-time. Information, such as demographic information, may be updated using the online portal. Annual or bi-annual contacts may also be completed using this online portal.

HHSC, in consultation with the IDD SRAC, determined the most cost-effective method to gather information related to level of need is to allow individuals or their authorized representatives to respond to and update information on the interest list questionnaire. While a true level of need determination requires an assessment, this method allows HHSC to gather information on the individual's opinion of their needs.



## List of Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name</b>
CLASS	Community Living and Support Services
DBMD	Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities
HCBS	STAR+PLUS Home and Community Based Services
HCS	Home and Community-based Services
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission
IDD	Intellectual/Developmental Disability
IDD SRAC	Intellectual/Developmental Disability System Redesign Advisory Committee
LIDDA	Local Intellectual and Developmental Disability Authority
TxHmL	Texas Home Living