



Waiver Programs Offer Specialized Services to Eligible Participants

Headway of WNY, Inc., a not-for-profit agency, has offered support and advocacy since 1985 for people and families dealing with brain injuries and, more recently, issues of aging and disabilities. Headway has regularly scheduled support meetings for groups including seniors, those with brain injuries, veterans, and families and a group for 16 to 30 year olds who have traumatic brain injury.

The New York State Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver Program (TBI Waiver) and the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Waiver (NHTD Waiver) are New York State Department of Health programs which are administered for Niagara County and five other Western New York Counties by Headway of WNY Inc. Headway is one of the Regional Resource and Development Centers contracted to the State of New York.

Both of these programs help individuals who have Medicaid and are either at risk of being in a nursing home or are living in a nursing home and wish to return to the community to receive services that allow them to live safely in their own homes or apartments.

To be eligible for the TBI Waiver, an individual must be between the ages of 18 and 64, be on Medicaid and have documentation of brain injury. For the NHTD Waiver, a person must have proof of disability if they are between the ages of 18 and 64 but do not need proof of disability if they are 65 or older. The NHTD waiver does not have an age ceiling.

The “Waiver” programs allow eligible people to receive specialized services that Medicaid would not fund if the person were not enrolled in the waiver program. These services come from agencies in the area that have contracts with the New York State Health Department to provide the special services that the program offers.

Referrals to the waiver programs can be made by an individual requesting the services, a family member or a professional, by calling 716-629-3633 for assistance. Possible providers of services can also call this number to start the process of being contracted to provide services. For referrals or information about the support groups, please call 716-629-3636. You can also get information about all programs on the Headway Web page at www.Headwayofwny.org.

NY Connects Niagara County can provide information about available programs in our community. Individuals in need of information regarding NY Connects Niagara County are encouraged to call (716) 438-3030 for assistance.

Ronald Fernandez is the Director of Waiver Services at Headway of WNY, Inc. and a member of the Niagara County Long Term Care Advisory Council. The NY Connects column appears in the Union-Sun & Journal the last Saturday of each month. Submissions for topics or agency spotlights for future articles are welcome. To recommend a topic or make a suggestion, call 438-3030 or email nyconnects@niagaracounty.com.