

4. Social Support Services

A. Social/Community Support

39

- Local Support Groups
- Brain Injury Association of Kansas and Greater Kansas City
- Kansas Traumatic Brain Injury Medicaid Waiver
- Independent Living Centers
- Community Developmental Disability Organizations

B. Employment Support

41

- Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS)
- Working Healthy
- Work Opportunities Reward Kansas
- Client Assistance Program
- Volunteering

C. Housing Support

47

- Subsidized Housing

D. Educational Support

49

E. Other Support

50

- License Plate or Placard Accessible Parking Permit
- Assistive Technology and Adaptive Equipment
- Driver's Adaptive Assistance and Evaluation Programs
- Medication Management

Notes Page



4-A. Social/Community Support

— *Local Support Groups*

Support groups provide personal support and information to individuals with brain injuries and their families. Many times people who feel they do not need a support group decide to attend one and find it beneficial.

Benefits of attending a support group include:

- Understanding and companionship by members;
- Recognition and acceptance of personal strengths and weaknesses;
- Sharing problem-solving strategies and solutions to daily challenges;
- Improving members' coping skills and adjustment;
- Improving members' communication and social skills;
- Increasing self-esteem;
- Education about brain injury consequences, treatment, and resources; and
- Social and recreational opportunities.

— *Brain Injury Association of Kansas and Greater Kansas City*

The Brain Injury Association offers supports and services to individuals and their families in the greater Kansas City area and throughout the state of Kansas who are recovering from traumatic brain injury. The Association has a full-time resource coordinator who networks with other social service agencies, rehabilitation programs and hospitals to provide options to many challenges these families face, including employment, medical care and counseling.

The Association also staffs a toll-free “helpline” to provide referrals and emotional support to survivors of brain injury throughout the state of Kansas.

There are many support groups and contact people throughout the state that provide support and resource information to survivors.

For more information, call 913-754-8883 or 1-800-783-1356 or visit them on the web at www.biaks.org.

— *Kansas Traumatic Brain Injury Medicaid Waiver*

The Kansas Traumatic Brain Injury Medicaid Waiver program was originally established because, previously, the only option for persons who incurred a brain injury and were Medicaid eligible was discharge to a nursing home or other institutional setting. The

Medicaid Waiver allows eligible individuals with TBI the option to remain in their home and community while receiving comparable services.

Eligibility

To be eligible, the individual must:

- be 16 to 65 years of age;
- have an injury to the brain caused by an external, physical force;
- meet the criteria for in-patient care in a traumatic brain injury rehabilitation hospital (determined through an assessment conducted by a qualified TBI Targeted Case Manager)
- meet Medicaid financial eligibility requirements (determined by a Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) eligibility worker);
- meet Social Security Administration disability determination standards; and
- have the capacity to make progress from rehabilitation in the form of Transitional Living Skills (independent living skills) training.

Available Services

TBI Waiver services include:

- Transitional Living Skills training
- Personal Services
- Assistive Services (i.e., home modifications and adaptive equipment)
- Sleep Cycle Support
- Personal Emergency Response System (medical alert)
- Oral Health services
- Rehabilitation Therapies (physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, drug and alcohol therapy, cognitive rehabilitation, behavior therapy)

Application Process

To apply for services, contact a TBI Waiver Targeted Case Management agency. (See Section 7B for the list of agencies.)

Independent Living Centers

An Independent Living Center is a non-residential center that aims to empower people with disabilities to participate in community life to the greatest extent possible and to experience a productive and dignified life. In order to accomplish these goals, the independent living center engages in advocacy for people with disabilities and provides direct services to people with disabilities. Offices are based throughout the state. Services are provided at no charge to persons with disabilities.

Services Provided

- Individual training and support
- Peer counseling
- Independent living skills training
- Assistance obtaining social security/other resources
- Personal assistant management services
- Vocational services, work skills, interview and resume help
- Information and advocacy
- Information and referral
- Housing
- Transportation
- Brain Injury Transitional Services (see Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) information

Application Process

For more information, or for an application, contact your local independent living center. (See Section 7-Directory) Self-referrals are welcomed.

— Community Developmental Disability Organizations (CDDOs)

A child who receives a brain injury before the age of 21, and it is determined it will have a lifelong impact, may be eligible for developmental disability programs. Community Developmental Disability Organizations (CDDO) have been established across the state as the single point of entry to the Developmental Disability (DD) Service System and determine a person's eligibility for services. A CDDO must provide or arrange to provide community services to everyone it determines meets the definition of developmental disability and who needs services to successfully remain in the community. A copy of eligibility criteria may be obtained from your local CDDO. (See Section 7 for a list of CDDOs).

It is important to understand that individuals receiving services from developmental disability programs may not be eligible for funding under some programs including the TBI Medicaid Waiver program. Discuss these issues with your case manager to ensure that you are enrolled in the program which best meets your needs.

4-B. Employment Support

Many persons will return to work, or will find a job, with little difficulty after they have had a brain injury. In some cases, people who have had a brain injury encounter problems when they try to work. These individuals may need to consider compensatory strategies, part-time work, or a different type of work than they were doing before the injury. Keep in mind that returning to work after a brain injury may be a slow process.

There are some strategies that may assist the person with brain injury in returning to work. Some questions to consider are:

- What daily activities will the person be able to resume?

- How much and what kind of assistance will the person need?
- What safety factors should be monitored (driving, using sharp tools, money management)?
- What cognitive and/or behavioral issues will need further counseling or therapy?
- How does the injury impact upon future functioning?

Long-term success at work depends on quality compensatory skills training and environmental modifications, if needed. Compensatory skills training focuses on teaching a wide range of coping strategies.

Examples of compensatory strategies include:

- Memory aids such as calendars, daily planners, and hand held tape recorders
- Learning to break down tasks into smaller manageable parts
- Setting priorities--short-term and long-term goals
- Flexible hours to accommodate fatigue
- Extra time to complete tasks
- Audio tape instruction
- Minimizing distractions in the workplace

— **Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS)**

You may be entitled to assistance in finding employment through Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) through their vocational rehabilitation program or you can investigate private work assistance or work recovery programs. These programs offer evaluation, assessment of strength and physical condition, job skills training, and follow-up. KRS is a part of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are designed to help people with disabilities prepare for and achieve employment. VR services are provided by Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS).

Eligibility

To receive VR services, you must meet the following eligibility criteria that are specified by federal law:

- Have a physical or mental disability, which results in a substantial barrier to employment.
- Be able to benefit, in terms of employment outcome, from VR services; and

- Require VR services to prepare for, enter into, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

Your financial resources will not be considered when determining whether you are eligible. However, KRS payment for some services may be based on financial needs.

If KRS does not have enough resources to serve all eligible persons who apply, priority will be given to persons with the most severe disabilities. A waiting list is maintained.

Available Services

Services will be designed according to your unique needs. Therefore, not all people receive the same services. Services may include:

- Vocational assessments to identify skills, abilities and interests
- Counseling and guidance
- Physical and mental restoration services, such as artificial limbs
- Training and education to learn new skills
- Rehabilitation technology, telecommunication aids and other adaptive devices
- Work-related placement
- Referral to other services

There are area agencies that provide vocational rehabilitative services. See Section 7 for a list of agencies.

Application Process

Apply for vocational rehabilitation services at the Kansas Rehabilitation Services (KRS) office that serves your county. KRS has offices throughout the state. For referral to the office serving your area, call the Client Assistance Program 1-800-432-2326 Voice/TDD.

A counselor will meet with you to learn more about you, your disability and your abilities. Individuals who are blind or visually impaired will meet with one of the counselors in the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB). All other individuals will meet with a counselor in the General Program.

Your counselor will collect information about you, such as employment, medical or school records, to determine if you are eligible for services. You may also receive, at no cost to you, tests or assessments needed to determine if you are eligible.

If you are eligible, you and your counselor will work together to develop a program of services to help you achieve your goals for employment and independence. You may participate in additional assessments to help you identify interests and abilities, and to help identify your rehabilitation needs. You and your counselor will prepare an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP), outlining your vocational objective and listing the services you will receive.

Services will be provided according to your IWRP. The length of this process will vary, depending on your individual situation.

When you have completed the services that make you ready for employment, your counselor will help you find a job. Your counselor will guide you, but the primary responsibility to find a job is yours.

During the first few months that you are employed, your counselor will stay in touch to make sure everything is going well. When your job is stable and you do not need any additional services, your counselor will consider your program successfully completed. If you and your counselor feel that it is necessary, your counselor may check with you periodically to see if you need any services to help you keep your job.

— **Working Healthy**

Many people with disabilities want to work but worry doing so could jeopardize their vital health and long-term care coverage. *Working Healthy*, a program sponsored by the Kansas Health Policy Authority, offers people with disabilities who are working, or interested in working, the opportunity to keep their Medicaid coverage while on the job. Through *Working Healthy*, people can earn more, save more, achieve their career goals, and still maintain their health coverage.

Eligibility

You may be eligible for services if you meet the following criteria:

- Assets and income. You have assets of less than \$15,000 and net family income below the *Working Healthy* Program limits.
- Disability. You meet the SSI or SSDI disability standard, even if you don't currently receive SSI or SSDI.
- Employment. You have verified earned income from competitive employment.
- Residency. You are a Kansas resident.

Some people may be required to pay a monthly premium.

Services Provided

- Benefits are the same as those through Kansas Medicaid.
- The opportunity to earn more without the risk of losing health care coverage.
- Higher assets and income eligibility.
- Increased personal and financial independence.
- Help with Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage and plan choices.

Application Process

Your local SRS office can provide you with specific enrollment information, or you can contact a *Working Healthy* Benefits Specialist in your area. There are seven Benefits Specialists across the state who are available to help you with your benefits and answer questions. To contact the Benefits Specialist in your area, go to www.workinghealthy.org, or call toll free 1-800-449-1439 (V/TTY).

— Work Opportunities Reward Kansans (WORK)

The Kansas Health Policy Authority has also established *Work Opportunities Reward Kansans (WORK)*, a program that promotes employment of people with significant disabilities. The program is a result of a Medicaid State Plan Amendment that was designed to allow people with severe developmental and physical disabilities, and traumatic brain injury, to take advantage of job and career opportunities with the services available to support employment.

Eligibility Criteria

The following individuals are eligible for *WORK*:

- Eligible for the Kansas Medicaid Buy-In, *Working Healthy*, including:
- Age 16 through 64;
- Determined disabled by the Social Security Administration;
- Earned income verified by FICA/SECA payments;
- Countable net income no higher than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level;
- Assets no higher than \$15,000; and
- A Kansas resident;

And

- Individuals on the Developmental Disabilities, Physical Disabilities, and TBI waivers, or on the waiting lists for one of these waivers, or meet the same functional limitations as individuals on these waivers;

And

- Competitively* employed in an integrated** setting, earning the federal hourly minimum wage, and earning at least \$65.00 per month,
- Residing in a home or property that is **not** owned, operated, or controlled by a provider of services not related by blood or marriage.

* Competitively employed is defined as work performed in the competitive labor market on a full or part-time basis for which individuals are compensated at or above the federal minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid a non-disabled individual performing the same or similar work.

** Integrated setting is defined as a community setting where individuals with the most severe disabilities interact with non-disabled individuals, other than non-disabled

individuals who are providing services for them, to the same extent that non-disabled individuals in comparable positions interact with other persons.

Services Provided

WORK stands apart from previous programs in that it allows eligible enrollees to work, pay a premium for Medicaid, and provide those who need it with a “package” of services that support independent living and employment. This package includes assessments, personal assistance services, independent living counseling, and assistive services.

In addition to approving the package of services, CMS also approved the use of the “cash and counseling” model in this benefits package, the first in the country to be done with a Medicaid State Plan service. This allows direct cash payment to individuals, or their designated fiscal manager. This gives consumers control of their services through person-centered planning, management of their own funds, and flexibility in terms of how they purchase their services. They will be given the opportunity to choose how to obtain services in the most cost-effective and innovative manner.

Application Process

A referral for *WORK* can come from any source, e.g., self-referral, family member, Case Manager, Independent Living Counselor, Eligibility Worker, Benefits Specialist, etc. Consumers receiving services through HCBS Waivers, or consumers on waiver waiting lists, may contact their Eligibility Workers and indicate their interest in *WORK*. Eligibility Workers will refer interested individuals to the *Working Healthy* Benefits Specialist in their region.

Individuals not already receiving services may contact SRS and begin the application process with an Eligibility Worker. Benefits Specialists will be available to discuss *Working Healthy* and *WORK* with these individuals. Once their Eligibility Worker determines them eligible for *Working Healthy*, they will follow the same process as consumers already in the system.

Your local SRS office can provide you with specific enrollment information, or you can contact a *Working Healthy* Benefits Specialist in your area. There are seven Benefits Specialists across the state who are available to help you with your benefits and answer questions. To contact the Benefits Specialist in your area, go to www.workinghealthy.org, or call toll free 1-800-449-1439 (V/TTY).

Client Assistance Program

The Client Assistance Program (CAP) offers a variety of information, referral, and advocacy services for persons with disabilities, including brain injuries. CAP is a service provided by Kansas Rehabilitation Services.

CAP can help you:

- Learn about vocational rehabilitation services and eligibility guidelines.

- Learn about the rights and responsibilities of an individual applying for or receiving vocational rehabilitation services.
- Learn about other programs and services available.
- Learn about laws, rules, and regulations that may impact the worker with a disability.
- Help you resolve questions or concerns you have about services by advocating on your behalf, negotiating with counselors and service providers, and referring you to legal services.
- Answer questions about employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

For more information, call CAP toll-free at 1-877-776-1541 or 1-877-335-3725 (TDD) or email info@drckansas.org. Or visit their website at www.srskansas.org/rehab/text/CAP.htm.

— **Volunteering**

If you are unable to work or have been unsuccessful in getting a job, volunteer work can be a good way of keeping skills updated, gaining experience, and networking with contacts, which may lead to opportunities for employment. Volunteer opportunities are also good for persons who are unable to work full-time or part-time. Volunteering enables persons to make a worthwhile contribution, to receive appreciation, increase self-esteem, keep busy and avoid boredom, interact with others and learn new skills, just to name a few benefits. There are a variety of opportunities and places to volunteer which can accommodate how frequently and how much time you want to volunteer. Consider helping the brain injury association, local animal shelter, zoos, nursing homes, hospitals, public library, schools, daycare centers, health organizations, battered women's shelters, community centers, YMCA, churches, local agencies, and so on. Based on your interests, there is always a volunteer opportunity. If you are interested in volunteering, you may want to check with your local volunteer center or the United Way (www.unitedway.org) for opportunities.

4-C. Housing Support

Many people with a brain injury may experience mobility issues. Mobility issues may require structural accessibility, such as an entry ramp, modifications to the bathroom, grab bars, lever grab handles on doors or other interior modifications in order to live independently in the community. Affordable accessible housing is often a concern for people who have had a brain injury. There may be loss of income from employment or a person may be living on a low fixed income from disability or workers compensation. Most communities have a severe shortage of accessible and affordable housing. However, the Fair Housing Act allows for individuals to request a structural accommodation in order for all people to access housing equally. A person who needs accessibility modifications may request a reasonable accommodation in order to have ramps and other accessibility features adapted to the home of your choice.

Federal, state and local agencies have a variety of housing programs that work toward the creation of affordable and accessible housing in our communities. Some examples of these are:

- Low interest loans and grants for accessibility modifications,
- Subsidized rental apartments for low or moderate income households,
- Affordable home ownership programs, and
- Assistance with civil rights housing laws.

Subsidized Housing

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) was established with the mission to increase homeownership, support community development and increase access to affordable housing free from discrimination.

Services Provided

The primary programs administered by HUD include:

- Public or subsidized housing for low-income individuals and families
- Mortgage and loan insurance through the Federal Housing Administration
- Rental assistance in the form of Section 8 certificates or vouchers for low-income households
- Homeless assistance provided through local communities and faith-based and other nonprofit organizations
- Community Development Block Grants
- Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities

Application Process

To locate subsidized housing in your area, contact the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD). The Director's Office in Kansas City is your first point of contact at HUD; please call 1-913-551-5644 or 1-913-551-6972 (TTY).

You then must file an application with the local housing authority during the application period. This should be done promptly as the application period may last for only a short period of time. The next application period does not take place until all the applications from the previous period are exhausted.

While income is the only qualification, there is an extensive interviewing process to qualify for low-income, subsidized housing. You should expect a waiting list anywhere from 6 months to a year. You will need to bring:

- A picture ID
- Social Security card, **and**
- Birth certificate.

4-D. Educational Support

As a result of a TBI, a child may experience physical, cognitive, or behavioral problems that effect how he/she learns, thus necessitating specialized assistance in school. Following a TBI, a student may qualify for these special school services through the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

IDEA defines TBI as follows: “Traumatic brain injury means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory; perceptual and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.”

Children who have medical documentation of an open or closed head injury, or a near-drowning episode, and have resulting impairments can qualify for special education services under the TBI category. Once the child has qualified for special education services an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) will be developed. The IEP is a contract between the school, parents, and the student. The IEP describes what is needed to support the student and how the school will provide those services.

Eligibility

Not all students with TBI need, or are eligible for, special education services even though a brain injury may affect learning. Those students who do not require direct special education services, yet still need some academic classroom adjustments and curriculum modifications in order to successfully participate in the general education program may receive those accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Under Section 504, a 504 plan is developed (similar to an IEP under IDEA) that documents the proposed adjustments and modifications to the regular curriculum and learning environment. Examples of accommodations provided through a 504 plan include extended time to complete assignments/tests, provision of notes for class lectures, preferential seating in the classroom, and special materials (e.g., large print books).

Setting up Services

As soon as possible following a TBI, parents should notify the school that their child has sustained an injury so school personnel can coordinate with hospital personnel and the family to begin the process of planning for the student’s return to school. Parents will need to provide the school with written medical documentation of their child’s injury. Also, copies of any cognitive or academic testing that was conducted while the child was hospitalized, as well as all reports from therapists, should be provided to the school. This information combined with a functional evaluation of the student’s skills will help the school obtain a comprehensive picture of the student’s abilities and difficulties.

Educational Resources

The Neurologic Disabilities Support Project (NDSP), which is funded by the Kansas State Department of Education, Special Education Services, is a statewide program providing professional development training, consultation, and technical assistance to Kansas educators serving students with TBI.

Services include:

- School re-entry planning for students transitioning from medical and rehabilitation settings;
- TBI professional development training for educators serving students with TBI;
- Consultation and technical assistance to educators serving students with TBI; and
- Dissemination of written information regarding the provision of services for students with TBI.

Kansas educators and school administrators may contact NDSP to receive professional development training regarding TBI and technical assistance for students with TBI.

Parents of Kansas students, as well as medical and community service personnel who serve those students, may contact the project to request school re-entry planning for newly-injured students. Parents may also contact the project for information regarding the education of students with TBI. Requests for school-based technical assistance and professional development training must be initiated by school personnel.

Contact: Neurologic Disabilities Support Project
1-913-588-5943
www.kstbi.org

4-E. Other Support

— License Plate or Placard for Accessible Parking Permit

The plate is a special license plate for your car or truck that has a wheelchair displayed on it. A placard is a card that hangs from your rear view mirror. These items allow you to park in spaces for people with disabilities ('accessible parking') in parking lots and to park free at metered spaces.

Not every person with a disability is eligible for a special license plate or placard, because the purpose of these tags is to help people with mobility, visual, or memory difficulties to park closer to stores, building, and offices. You may also be eligible if you have a severe lung or heart problem.

Application Process

You may pick up an application in person at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) at your local county courthouse, or you may call and request an application by mail. The application must then be filled out and signed by your physician. Return the signed and completed form to the DMV to receive your license plate or placard. Please check your local listings for the DMV in your area.

Please note: If you park in accessible parking, you must have an identification card. When you receive your special license plate or placard, you first will receive a receipt. Keep this receipt with you whenever you park in an accessible parking spot for persons with disabilities before you receive your identification card. The identification card will be sent to you in two to three weeks after you submit your application form.

Assistive Technology and Adaptive Equipment

Assistive technology is creating possibilities for persons with a wide range of cognitive, sensory, and physical disabilities. Assistive technology includes ideas, devices, and equipment designed to make it easier for persons to speak, hear, learn, see, write, be mobile, play, work, and function as independently as possible at home, work, school, and in the community.

Assistive technology includes a range of devices from low technology (e.g., door opener, special handled eating utensils) to high technology (i.e., a computer that understands voice commands) and software. Assistive technology includes: ramps, door openers, Braille printers, electronic page turners, power wheelchairs, talking books, talking calculators, adapted toys, and thousands of commercially available or adapted solutions to improve functional capabilities.

Funding or bank loans to provide direct or indirect financing for the purchase or refinance of assistive technology or home modifications may be available. Inquire at your bank about consumer loan products for assistive technology. For more information, see Section 7-G – Medical Supplies & Equipment.

Driver's Adaptive Assistance and Evaluation Programs

Many companies offer reimbursement toward the purchase and installation of adaptive equipment in new vehicles. Adaptive equipment for vehicles includes hand controls, lifts, electric seats that raise and lower and/or swivel; and car toppers for wheelchair storage. Reimbursement programs may be applied to the purchase of a new car, truck, full-sized van or minivan when either the driver or passenger requires adaptive equipment. See the directory in this manual for contact information. Contact your local hospital's rehabilitation department for additional information and availability. For more information, see Section 7H – Medical Supplies & Equipment.

— Medication Management

Pharmacy-Mail-out and Delivery

Most pharmacies in Kansas offer free delivery within the local area or within a limited area. In addition, pharmacies frequently offer mail-out service of prescriptions. Things to consider when choosing a pharmacy:

- Is the pharmacy accessible from where you live?
- What hours is the pharmacy is open?
- Do they offer drug interaction screening?
- Will they file your insurance claims for you?
- How much will the prescription cost after any applicable insurance deductible or co-payment is considered?
- Do they meet eligibility requirements for your insurance and/or Medicare?
- Can prescriptions be delivered or mailed? How long will it take to receive the prescription?

Before calling any pharmacy for price and delivery information be sure to have the following information ready:

- The name of the medicine.
- The dosage of the medicine.
- The name of the doctor prescribing the medicine.
- Availability of a generic brand for substitution.
- The delivery address for the medicine and a phone number where you can be reached.
- Insurance information (if applicable).

Look in the yellow pages of the phone book under “Pharmacies” for a complete and updated listing of pharmacies in your area.

Notes
