

your **ACCESS ADVOCATES**



**Promoting independent living
for people with disabilities and
the Deaf and hard of hearing
since 1975**

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Independent Living Services (DHILS) provides a variety of services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers. We accept referrals from other agencies, or individuals may self-refer by visiting or calling our offices. Services provided are in the following areas:

Four Core Independent Living Services Offered:

- *Skills Training*

Deaf & Hard of Hearing individuals can learn or improve skills that help them live independently.

- *Peer Support*

Peer support is provided, helping increase self-esteem, and assisting in decision-making when requested.

- *Advocacy (both Individual and Community)*

Assist Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and help them to understand and exercise their legal rights as defined by the ADA and other acts of legislation. Educated consumers can become their own best advocates

- *Information & Referral*

We provide information and resources to individuals.

Other DHILS Programs and Services offered:

- **Crisis Intervention**
- **Problem Solving**
- **Outreach and Community Education**
- **Educational/ Social Events**
- **Volunteer Program**
- **Internship Program**
- **Assistive Device Training/Loaner Program**

Target Areas currently offered:

- **Safe Communities**
- **Jobs and Self Sufficiency**
- **Wellness and Quality of Health Care**
- **Emergency Preparedness**
- **Peer Parenting Training**
- **Transition to Adulthood**

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Main Line: 508-798-0350 Toll Free: 800-570-4020

TTY: 508-755-1003 VP: 508-762-1164

Or visit our website: www.youraccessadvocates.org

INSTITUTIONAL TRANSITION SERVICES & OPTIONS COUNSELING

Nursing Home Initiative & Moving Forward Plan (MFP)

Our Nursing Home Initiative and MFP programs are two services aimed at assisting consumers to achieve independent living in the community or the setting of their choice.

The **Nursing Home Initiative** is in line with the State's commitment to Community First, supporting residents of Massachusetts of all ages and disabilities offering additional support services so they can successfully return to living within their community for as long as they choose.

The **MFP** is a voluntary Medicaid program designed to help individuals in nursing homes, hospitals, and intermediate care facilities for people with intellectual disabilities, return to their homes and communities.

We have trained staff experienced in assisting individuals with a successful transition out of a facility back into the community.

Support offered includes:

- **Determine what kind of residential options are needed and available by working closely with the consumer**
- **Assist and provide support with housing searches**
- **Make referrals for in home care to include personal care management**
- **Explore, connect and explain community services available**
- **Advocate for needed resources when obstacles arise**
- **Continued support after the transition**
- **Financial assistance when transitioning, for household items, and/or assistance with initial housing related deposits**
- **Facilitate the transition**

Options Counseling

Options counseling (OC) is a statewide initiative supporting people and their choices of where to live and receive services. OC is offered as a free service through the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) of Central Massachusetts.

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INDEPENDENT LIVING (IL) SERVICES

We believe in the empowerment of consumers, encouraging them to take active roles in their lives and in the community in which they live. We provide comprehensive and innovative programs and services, which maximize individual independence and opportunities. Driven by the belief that consumers must always be equal members of society with equal access, we provide the following Independent Living Services throughout Central Massachusetts.

Four core services of Independent Living:

- *Skills Training*

People with disabilities can learn or improve skills that help them live independently.

- *Peer Support*

Peer support is provided, helping increase self-esteem, and assisting in decision-making as requested.

- *Advocacy (both Individual and Community)*

Educate consumers to understand and exercise their legal rights as defined by the ADA and other acts of legislation. Educated consumers can become their own best advocates.

- *Information & Referral*

We provide information and resources that best meets the consumer's needs.

Other IL services offered:

- **Housing Education**
- **Finances/Benefits**
- **Health Care/
Nutrition**
- **Self-Care/Daily
Living**
- **Personal/Self-Help**
- **Education/Training**
- **Problem Solving
Assistance**
- **Outreach**
- **Community Education**
- **Consumer/Legal
Rights**
- **Social/Recreational**

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TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD (TAP)

TAP provides services to young adults between the ages of 14 and 22 with the transition from an educational setting to independent living in the community.

TAP also provides guidance with the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and Individual Transition Plan (ITP) process. Utilizing the role model approach, the skills trainer and consumer will build a relationship through sharing real life experiences and develop an independent living plan together.

Four core services provided:

- **Skills Training**
- **Peer Counseling**
- **Advocacy (both Individual and Community)**
- **Information & Referral**

Services we offer:

- **IEP and ITP Advocacy**
- **Support to family**
- **Community Education and Recreation**

Additional areas of support:

- **Housing Education**
- **Transportation Training**
- **Problem solving**
- **Employment Readiness Training**
- **Organizational Skills**
- **Financial Literacy**

Our goal is to enable youth with disabilities in reaching a greater understanding of independence.

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PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION PROGRAM (PRE-ETS)

Pre-ETS programming is intended to emphasize vocational and educational awareness, exploration and preparation. The goals of Pre-ETS is to provide students with the skills needed to be successful for employment or education after high school.

To qualify for Pre-ETS, students must be 14 through 21 in high school or secondary-education with a disability. All students must have documentation to verify their disability. Documentation can include a 504 Plan, Individualized Education Plan (IEP or other medical documentation).

Areas of Support:

- **Job Exploration Counseling**
- **Self Advocacy & Mentoring**
- **Work Based Learning**
- **Post-Secondary Education Counseling**
- **Work Readiness**

Additional areas of support:

- **Community workshops**
- **In-school workshops (select schools)**
- **Internship opportunities**
- **College campus tours**
- **Local employment tours**

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MASSHEALTH PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT PROGRAM

This program is designed to offer qualified consumers personal care assistance (PCA) with activities of daily living (ADLs) such as:

- **bathing**
- **dressing**
- **toileting**

and instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) such as:

- **laundry**
- **shopping**
- **housekeeping**
- **meal preparation**

allowing them to be more independent regarding the choices that impact their lives.

Consumers receive education, training and ongoing support from our trained skills trainers on how to manage their own personal care program by hiring their own PCAs, which allows them both the right and the responsibilities of independence. PCAs assist with ADLs and the IADLs at the direction of the consumer.

The consumer is trained to be the employer and the PCA works directly for the consumer.

You may apply for the PCA Program if you are eligible for MassHealth Standard or CommonHealth.

Our trained staff includes skills trainers, registered nurses, LPNs and occupational therapists that will be available to help the consumer navigate through MassHealth approval process.

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Specialized ADA Consulting Services Americans with Disabilities Act

To ensure complete compliance within the ADA laws, we have the expertise to assist in navigating through complex laws to bring an organization or business into full ADA/AAB compliance. Your Access Advocates provides assessments and recommendations to:

- **Businesses**
- **Schools**
- **Cities and towns**
- **Recreational facilities**
- **Housing authorities**
- **Human service providers**

While following the ADA guidelines to

- **Surveying properties**
- **Current building access**
- **Review plans and operations for new construction projects**
- **Review policies and procedures**
- **Transition Plan**
- **Self Evaluation**

Our team will make recommendations on providing a reasonable accommodation to your employee, tenant or customer to ensure there are no barriers for people with disabilities.

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