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## **iBudget Ringing in the New Year**

TALLAHASSEE — Agency for Persons with Disabilities customers in the Tampa Bay and Fort Myers areas are beginning the New Year with a new way to manage their services that are funded by the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid waiver. Beginning this month, these customers will use the iBudget Florida waiver to direct their services and the money used to pay for them. The HCBS waiver is funded by state and federal tax dollars to help people with developmental disabilities remain and participate in their local communities.

These 6,138 customers join 13,319 other customers who are already enjoying the benefits of iBudget Florida in managing their waiver dollars. The new customers live in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, De Soto, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota counties. More than six months of preparation and training has occurred with customers, their families, their waiver support coordinators, and providers prior to the January 1 implementation.

iBudget Florida is a different way to deliver Medicaid waiver services. It has been approved by both the Florida Legislature and the federal government. iBudget provides greater ability to choose services that matter most to customers given their unique situations. It gives greater flexibility for customers to respond to their changing needs.

Many families in North Florida have been using iBudget for more than a year and are very pleased with how iBudget Florida has improved their self-direction and provided increased choice. APD has posted several interviews with families on iBudgetFlorida.org. Visit <http://apdcares.org/ibudget/videos.htm> to view the testimonials.

The next group of customers, who live in Palm Beach and Broward counties, will begin using the iBudget Florida system on April 1, 2013.

The final group of customers, in Dade and Monroe counties, will begin using iBudget on July 1, 2013. In addition, Consumer-Directed Care Plus (CDC+) participants will start using iBudget Florida on July 1, 2013.

iBudget Florida is designed to make the funding process fair and equitable for all Medicaid waiver customers. It has increased opportunities for customers to direct their own care. This system also provides for financial predictability within the waiver.

Some other customer benefits of iBudget Florida are:

- Ability to reallocate funds not spent on services in one month for future service needs within a fiscal year
- Access to dental services that were not available in the tier four waiver
- Greater control to change services or providers to fit the person's needs
- Support coordinators able to use iBudget technology to reduce paperwork requirements and communicate efficiently with providers and APD, and
- Greater opportunity for APD to use new funds to serve people on the Medicaid waiver waiting list.

APD annually serves more than 50,000 Floridians with the developmental disabilities of autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities, spina bifida, and Prader-Willi syndrome. For more information on iBudget Florida, visit [iBudgetFlorida.org](http://iBudgetFlorida.org). To learn more about the agency, call 1-866-APD-CARES (1-866-273-2273) or visit [APDcares.org](http://APDcares.org).