State of Michigan
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
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Frequently Asked Questions – Michigan SIS® Implementation
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What is the SIS®?

The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS®) is a strength-based, comprehensive assessment tool that measures an individual's support needs in personal, work-related, and social activities in order to identify and describe the types and intensity of the supports an individual requires. The SIS® includes background information on health, medical conditions, activities of daily living, and cognitive, social, and emotional skills. The SIS® was designed to be part of person-centered planning processes that help all individuals identify their unique preferences, skills, and life goals.

What is the purpose of a statewide assessment tool?

A statewide standardized assessment tool for adults with individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities should meet a variety of needs and have benefit for the individual, the case manager/supports coordinator, the family or guardian, the PIHP/CMHSP system and for the state.

- *For the Individual:*
  - Participative process to provide information on current and needed supports including identification of the activities that are important to the individual and amount of supports needed to enable participation in daily activities and community involvement
  - Understandable and consistent process regardless of who is conducting the assessment
  - Confidence in an objective and independent process for each and all persons served by the public mental health
- *For Case Managers/Supports Coordinators:*
  - To support the Person Centered Planning Process
  - The assessment provides essential information across multiple domains
  - Assists in establishing goals that are important to the individual
  - Establishes a baseline which allows for evaluation of progress and success
- *For the Family/Guardian:*
  - Understandable and consistent process regardless of who is conducting the assessment
  - Confidence there is an objective and independent process for each and all persons served by public mental health
  - Confidence that the assessment and individual plan of service developed through the person centered planning process will promote services and supports consistent with individual need
- *For the PIHP/CMHSP/Program:*

  - Promotes equitable access to services and supports
  - Promotes continuity of care across multiple providers
  - Assist in determining eligibility for specific services or for waivers, e.g. HAB waiver
  - Predict the types of resources needed – for planning purposes
  - Assists with determining future costs of services for financial planning
- *For the state/MDCH:*
  - Actuarial analysis
  - Provides an understanding of the population served
  - Ensures there are consistent processes across statewide regions
  - the ability to describe the population served in Michigan
  - Assists with determining future costs of services

Who is required to have a SIS assessment?

A SIS must be conducted at least once every three years for all Medicaid-eligible individuals age 18 or older who have an intellectual or developmental disabilities, who are currently receiving casemanagement or supports coordination or respite only services. In addition, new Medicaid eligible consumers entering the CMHSP system should be assessed using the SIS at the time of initial eligibility determination.

The Michigan Department of Community Health is collecting data on Medicaid eligible individuals as described above. If a CMHSP/PIHP chooses to conduct SIS assessments on other individuals, the costs associated with licensing and data storage using SIS Online would need to be negotiated separately with AAIDD.

How should information from the SIS® be used?

- Provide a standardized framework that assists in evaluating practical support requirements, promotes individualized planning and maximize potential for full participation in the community
- Help individuals to use their resources in the most efficient and useful manner
- Measure person's support needs to successfully complete everyday tasks
- Assist in navigating planned and unexpected transitions
- Provide guidance in maintaining the least restrictive environment while minimizing health and safety risks
- Be used to enhance and support the person-centered planning process. Assessing service needs in the context of a team approach helps focus on a person's potential
- Assist with allocating resources in an equitable manner at system, agency, and individual levels
- Provide uniform expectations for service delivery best practices
- Maximize positive outcomes
- Captures support needs for an individual, which may differ from current supports

- Be a planning tool, including items the individual hasn't taken part in or isn't currently engaged in. This should be inclusive of activities and life domains common to any other adult

The SIS Implementation workgroup is developing additional Use Guidelines to clarify how data from the SIS should be used in the context of person-centered planning. In addition, a training plan is being developed to assist Casemanagers/Supports Coordinators in using the results of the SIS in planning for services with individuals and family members

Who will conduct the SIS® assessments and what are the criteria for these staff?

The PIHP is responsible to ensure an adequate cadre of recognized SIS® assessors to complete the SIS assessment for all Medicaid eligible adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities within a 3 year period. The assessors will be specially trained in interviewing and information gathering using the SIS®. These staff will be independent from the current supports and services staff. The SIS® process relies on not just the individual, but also family members, case managers, and others who have personal knowledge of the individual to ensure that the information gathered during their assessment is thorough and complete.

Recommended Qualifications for Interviewers:

- Bachelor's Degree in human services or four years of equivalent work experience in a related field
- At least one year experience with individuals that have a developmental or intellectual disability
- A belief in a strengths-based, inclusion focused perspective of individuals with disabilities
- An optimistic, collaborative approach to problem-solving
- Multiple year commitment to the project
- Excellent communication and group facilitation skills, including the ability to build rapport with people of all backgrounds
- Computer experience and accessibility
- Willingness and ability to travel to all service locations necessary

Hiring and employment criteria and considerations:

- Assessors/Interviewers should report to a department other than supports coordination/case management where the individual is served.
- Assessors should not facilitate a SIS® interview for an individual for whom they are providing another ongoing clinical service
- In order to avoid potential for conflict of interest, SIS assessors should not hold a concurrent role or position that includes responsibility for authorization of services or utilization management functions.
- Assessors skills will be evaluated as part of quality framework that includes AAIDDA/MORC/Online reports/and future PIHP regional trainers

- It is acceptable for Interviewers to contract with or be employed by a PIHP, CMHSP, or other provider agency as deemed appropriate by the PIHP and consistent with avoidance of conflict of interest.
- Typically the individual would be responsible to conduct 8-10 SIS® assessments per week.
- Must meet the Quality Assurance requirements (as defined below)

How will assessors be selected and trained?

Each PIHP must identify 2 persons (meeting the criteria noted above) to be trained in May 2014 to conduct SIS assessments for the region. This training will be conducted via 4 days of classroom training followed by a process for practice and direct feedback. Arrangements will be made to offer each PIHP the opportunity to have a third person participate in the 4 day training. This will provide an additional person with more expertise and the information would be useful for persons who supervise the person centered planning process, persons who provide quality oversight or utilization management and/or a person who could complete the additional practice trainings to become an assessor, due to the potential for attrition in the process.

The SIS® implementation workgroup together with MDCH have developed an approval process for individuals who have been trained and meet current SIS® assessor requirements. Once approved by MDCH, an assessor may access SIS Online and conduct assessments.

What are the Quality Assurance Requirements for SIS Assessors?

Persons with AAIDD recognized training and new persons who complete the training will participate in ongoing Quality Assurance which includes:

- Participation in a minimum of one Periodic Drift Review per year (recommend quarterly) conducted by an AAIDD recognized SIS® Trainer
- Maintain annual Interviewer Reliability Qualification Review (IRQR) status at “Qualified” as determined by an AAIDD recognized SIS® Trainer
- Attend quarterly Michigan SIS® Assessor conference calls
- Attend annual Michigan SIS® Assessor Continuing Education

What are the requirements to become a SIS trainer?

MDCH will pay the training fees for a total of 40 individuals to become SIS assessors. From this initial cadre of assessors, regional trainers will be developed to ensure adequate numbers of trained assessors across the state. In order for a candidate to be considered for Train the Trainer, an interviewer must meet the following criteria:

- Passed (at the Qualified: Excellent or higher level) an IRQR conducted by AAIDD
- Have experience conducting assessments for a range of individuals with varying needs and circumstances
- Participated in regular Quality Assurance and Drift Reviews to develop their skills

Are consumers required to participate in the SIS assessment? Is the SIS Mandatory?

This is a sensitive issue and ongoing education and information is important. The experience in other states is that all but a very few agree to participate when the invitation provides information and comes from a trusted source. The policy will allow for an assessment to be completed in cases when the individual is not interested but informants are available. The number will be tracked and monitored as this should occur rarely. In addition, an assessment may be completed even if the consumer decides he/she is no longer interested in the process but the informants continue to provide information. Again, this will be tracked. These assessments, like others that are part of eligibility/needs assessment are a necessary part of service planning.

Which payment codes will be used to report this activity?

Billing Code – H0031 (HW) will be used to report the SIS assessment. The HW modifier will be used to demonstrate that the staff conducting the SIS meets the state criteria (as outline in this FAQ). Assessors must be on the approved state list in order to use this code.

Concurrent Billing – May other staff who attend and participate in the SIS interview concurrently bill for their time?

- CLS – ***May*** bill concurrently if they are providing a CLS service at the same time as the assessment.
- Casemanagement/Supports Coordination – **May NOT** bill concurrently according to the code rules. These staff could account for their time as indirect/pre-planning activity, but they cannot report a CM/SC Service during the same time as the SIS assessment.

How long does the SIS assessment take?

Once a SIS assessor gains some experience, typical assessments take approximately 1 ½ - 2 ½ hours. Consumers and family members should be told to expect up to 3 hours.

Is Video conferencing an Option?

This is still being considered. There are some concerns and potential barriers to use of video conferencing. Appropriate planning, education and support for using video conference for SIS assessments will be needed.

How is the SIS report shared with individuals and family members?

The Supports Coordinator/Casemanager would typically be responsible to share the SIS report with the individual and family members/guardian. The workgroup is developing Use Guidelines which will provide some guidance on how SIS results should be shared and discussed with family members and the Implementation Workgroup is working with the vendor on finalizing the report formats to be used.

What will happen to existing data and contracts for CMHSPs or programs that have already implemented the SIS® ?

AAIDD and MDCH will develop plans for managing and transferring existing contracts and use of assessment data that was previously gathered by certified assessors

SIS® Online

SISOnline is a web-based application that states can use to collect data from any location with internet access. Also provided are tools for scheduling interviews, notifying recipients, and monitoring interviewer quality. Users can collect the assessment data on a laptop without Internet access, allowing faster interview times and local encrypted backup data, then upload the data using the Venture application when next connected. SISOnline can be customized to add features, supplemental questions, assist with linking data to other systems. Reports are provided on individual reports, or aggregate analysis in graphical reports or bulk exports in Access, Excel, XML and other formats. Integration services are available to interface SIS-A Online with case management systems. Services available for immediate integration are Single Login, Pre-population of assessment data, as well as report linking and data sharing between systems. Additional customized tools and features can be developed upon request. More can be found at http://aaidd.org/sis/sisonline or email the SISOnline Technical Manager jim.anderson@sis-online.org or help@sis-online.org.

Additional information will be provided about requirements for Data Use Agreements, the use of SIS® online and opportunities to exchange information electronically.

SIS® Online Technical Questions:

If web service is possible, are licensing permissions needed and who is responsible for this?

The licensing has been provided by the state, and there is no extra fee for that.

Where are the drop downs when completing assessments on line to indicate difference between regional (PIHP) and local (CMH)? If the assessor is at the regional level, how would an EMR at a CMH level be able to download and retrieve the correct data?

In the demo there is a drop down called "DDSD Regional Office" that would instead say "CMH or other subgroup:" where the assessor would assign the assessment to that CMH. Note: this label is defined at the Region level. Once the assessment is assigned to the CMH, the CMH can access that data. An agency serving multiple CMHSPs/PIHPs may have multiple user ids in order to access data.

Is the full SSN going to display on that initial log in page for all the customers?

No, the SSN won't be displayed on the first page, as per Michigan's requirements. Some states use SSN as their primary identifier, though only the last 4 digits will be shown for MI.

Will PIHPs be responsible for reporting any data from SIS assessments to MDCH?

The data will be collected by MDCH via SISOnline, the application assessors use web portal to enter or submit the assessment data, so the PIHP will not be responsible for additional SIS data reporting to MDCH.

Will basic demographic data be pre-loaded into SIS Online at the state level?

The state is working through the privacy/security issues and cost issues related to pre-populating data fields that will be available to assessors in the field.

Does the SISOnline system support web-services or similar technology so we can upload individual client assessments into our own EHRs?

Yes. Reports can be pushed to the system when assessments are completed or modified. Users can manually download batches of .pdf reports, get data delimited in XLS or CSV files, pull data into an Access file, pull down data in XML, or using web services to retrieve new assessment data in the form of the individual .pdf SIS report or as an XML export.

Who owns the data?

MDCH owns the data once it has been entered into SISOnline. PIHPs, CMHSPs, and their agents and contractors will be given appropriate access to assessment data in SISOnline, including the ability to download assessments and reports. PIHPs, CMHSPs, and their agents and contractors will be solely responsible for ensuring the information downloaded from SISOnline is used and disclosed in compliance with all applicable laws.

Who should conduct the SIS Assessment in cases where the individual is served out-of county or there is a COFR agreement in place?

The SIS should be completed by the CMHSP where the individual is currently receiving services. In instances where a COFR agreement is in place, the PIHP that includes the COFR is responsible to ensure that the SIS is administered and is responsible to report the data.

For individuals moving between PIHPs, the SIS Online system allows a new PIHP to be identified so that SIS data can be shared across PIHPs.

What is the timeline for all of these required activities?

The following is a draft timeline for year one activities:

March 2014	Initiate discussion to determine codes to be used for SIS assessment
March 24	Contract with AAIDD start date. Communication to PIHPs
April 1st	Details for 4 day training finalized and communicated
April 2th	Implementation workgroup meeting: Review SIS tool and ancillary questions, dialogue on SIS reports for consumers use. Discuss plan for prioritizing and random selection
Mid-April	Webinar introduction to SISOnline and IT requirements
May - 2nd week	4 Day Training at MORC
May/June	Practice interviews and feedback to assessors
July –Sept	Regional stakeholder meeting to introduce SIS and answer questions
July – Sept 30th	20 trained assessors begin conducting interviews: Goal 20 interviewers/8 per week=160 assessments completed per week

August – Oct 2014	Conduct 2nd training for an additional 20 persons (Workgroup input into need for equal distribution or based on other factors)
August 2015	Train 10 Regional Trainers (Train–the-Trainer session)

When will additional information be available and in what venues?

MDCH, TSG and the implementation workgroup are working with AAIDD and MORC to develop plans to provide detailed information to all stakeholders. Regional stakeholder groups will also be arranged to ensure opportunities to share information about the use of SIS® with consumers and family members. Regional trainings and/or webinars will be held specifically for case managers and supports coordinators related to their roles and responsibilities in this process.

Where should additional questions be sent?

Specific questions related to SIS® implementation should be forwarded to the workgroup representative for your region or sent via email to: Nora Barkey (BarkeyN@michigan.gov) or Laura Vredeveld (laurav@tbdsolutions.com).