

# ***Medicaid Matters***

## **ACT Waiver recipient gains home, independence, sense of community**

Like most 37-year-old guys, Cameron Thompson of Saraland likes to watch sports on TV, work on the computer and keep tabs on friends and family via a Smartphone.

A 2005 accident nearly changed all of that. Serious injuries sustained in the accident left him a quadriplegic, with only limited movement in his shoulders and upper body. His medical needs were enormous, too much even for his supportive family. So for the next six years, Thompson lived at a Mobile-area nursing home.

Even though the nursing home met his medical needs, Thompson still wanted a place of his own in which he could be as independent as possible. The only problem was the lack of programs that could adequately provide for his needs outside the nursing facility.

In March 2012, Thompson's mom saw an article in the local newspaper about a new Alabama Medicaid program for recipients who want to move from a nursing facility to the community – the Alabama Community Transition (ACT) Waiver – and told him about it.

Thompson was immediately interested. He asked questions and did research. Polly Jones, his independent living specialist with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, encouraged him. Once he qualified for the ACT waiver, ADRS case manager Ron Butler became involved. And on June 29, he moved to his new home.



*Cameron Thompson at his new home with Polly Jones, independent living specialist, and Ron Butler, case manager.*

"I love the feeling of being independent," Thompson said of his first days at home. "You feel like you are part of the community."

Moving home was neither a simple or quick process, but Thompson says it's been worth the effort. Moving out of the nursing home meant that a suitable and accessible home or apartment be located, and that a support system be in place to provide the necessary services.

As Thompson's case manager, Butler used the flexibility built into the ACT waiver to help Thompson make a smooth transition. Services and equipment were lined up, while a ramp was built to accommodate his wheelchair. [Read more >>](#)



**Inside:** • ACT Waiver helps patients move from institution to community  
• New programs move Alabama toward "Patient-Centered Practice"

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## ACT Waiver helps patients move from institution to community

Six Alabama Medicaid recipients are now living at home, thanks to a new Medicaid waiver program for people with disabilities or long term illnesses who wish to live in the community instead of an institution.

Offered statewide, the Alabama Community Transition (ACT) Waiver is one of seven Home and Community-Based Service waivers offered by the Alabama Medicaid Agency for qualifying



*Mattie Jackson (right), ACT Waiver program manager, visits Cameron Thompson, ACT Waiver recipient, along with Ron Butler, case manager, and Polly Jones, independent living specialist.*

recipients who desire to live in the community. The ACT waiver resulted from the Long Term Care Rebalancing Advisory Committee's recommendations and to comply with federal requirements such as MDS Section Q (return to the community). To qualify, the recipient must have been living in an institution for at least 90 days and be able to live safely in the community.

"The four recipients range widely in terms of location, age, and medical needs, but have one thing in common and that is a desire to live at home," said Ozenia Patterson, Medicaid Director of Long Term Care Services.

Medicaid ACT Waiver Program Manager Mattie Jackson says she is excited about the opportunities and

uniqueness of the ACT waiver in that it funds transitional services that are not covered in the other HCBS waivers. [Read more >>](#)

## New programs move Alabama toward "Person-Centered Practice"

New programs such as Medicaid's PACE program, Alabama Community Transition (ACT) Waiver and other initiatives are important steps being taken in Alabama to move toward Person-Centered Practice, according to State Health Officer Dr. Don Williamson.

Speaking August 29 to participants at the 2012 Health and Human Services Leadership Conference at Auburn Montgomery, Dr. Williamson emphasized that moving to Person-Centered practice requires attention to the six "Aims for Improvement" issued by the Institute of Medicine more than a decade ago. Those concepts – that patient care is safe, effective, timely, efficient, equitable and patient-centered – are all hinged on the idea that the patient is in charge.

"Person-Centered Care means not just providing a prescription to someone in the ER, but identifying what the real problem is and gauging the patient's ability to self-manage their health," Dr. Williamson said. "Many times the patient comes to the emergency room and you find out that the patient never got their prescriptions filled or that they have untreated behavioral health issues. All of these things tell you something is wrong." [Read more >>](#)



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