

## Medicaid Buy-In & Medicaid Infrastructure Grant

Many Americans with disabilities want to work but are discouraged from doing so by barriers in the current system of benefits and supports. The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 seeks to address many of these barriers. This Act expands Medicare and Medicaid coverage for certain categories of employed individuals with disabilities because people with disabilities have continually identified the loss of health care coverage as one of the major obstacles that they face as they return to work. The Act also provides improvements in employment supports from other federal agencies. Most importantly, the Act is a commitment to people with disabilities that they can and should be productive members of the country's workforce.

The Act provides states the option to offer Medicaid buy-ins to employed people with disabilities through two optional eligibility groups. The first optional group is for individuals from age 16 through 64 who would meet the eligibility requirements for the Supplemental Security Income program but for higher earnings or resources. The second optional group, referred to as the Medical Improvement Group, is for people who, at one time, were eligible under the first optional group but who are determined to have medically improved at a regularly scheduled continuing disability review (CDR).

Medicaid Infrastructure Grants (MIG) were created to provide financial assistance to states to facilitate the competitive employment of people with disabilities through (a) Medicaid buy-in opportunities under the Medicaid state plan, (b) significant improvements to Medicaid services that support people with disabilities in their competitive employment efforts, and (c) providing comprehensive coordinated approaches across programs to removing barriers to employment for individuals with a disability.

Key elements of the MIG in PA include:

- Coordination of the Advisory Committee for Employment (ACE);
- Demonstrations projects for a one-stop model through the Career Link System in Pittsburgh and Schuylkill County;
- Major marketing campaign for the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD);
- Administered mini-grants to local grass roots organizations as a means of promoting MAWD;
- Study on a backup model for personal attendant services;
- Coordinate direct mailings of the "Customer Guide to the Ticket to Work" and MAWD information kits to working-aged Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities in PA.