

# 2022 Inter-rater Reliability (IRR) Study

## Bringing Greater Alignment to LTSS Processes Across Virginia

Beginning January 1, 2022, the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance (**DMAS**), in collaboration with Ascend Maximus, the vendor responsible for this initiative, will launch an **Inter-rater reliability (IRR) study** – as mandated by the General Assembly. This study will verify the consistency and accuracy of the Medicaid Long Term Services and Support (**LTSS**) Functional Eligibility Screening process, including the Uniform Assessment Instrument (**UAI**).



### Defining the Purpose

This IRR study is designed to demonstrate that current LTSS screening practices:

- Consistently and reliably assess the level of care for children and adults
- Provide individuals across the Commonwealth the same opportunity to obtain services
- Identify the most integrated and appropriate setting choice, minimizing unnecessary institutional placements



### Understanding the Process

The study will include identification of potential areas of data collection, measurement, analysis and reporting. Throughout the entire process, Ascend Maximus will collaborate with and report directly to DMAS, which will provide program oversight. At the end of the project DMAS and Ascend Maximus will provide a detailed summary of the findings and any recommendations to its partner agencies and stakeholders including the local screening team representatives. The screening teams will also play a critical role as key partners in this project. Their cooperation, understanding and participation in this study are critical for compliance with the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (**JLARC**) recommendations for the program and its overall success.

### Maintaining Data Integrity and Minimizing Disruptions

DMAS thanks you in advance for assisting Ascend Maximus staff as they pursue study-related processes. These processes will, in some cases, include their supplemental review of previously assessed Medicaid members and observation of real-time screenings.

Although the General Assembly has mandated an Inter-rater reliability study of Virginia's LTSS screening process, rest assured that no part of this study will negatively impact a completed screening and no changes will be made to any previously completed screenings, outcomes or services received.

DMAS and Ascend Maximus also recognize the importance of minimizing disruptions to normal day to day business processes. Although Ascend Maximus will need to access documentation that was available to the original screener in completion of the IRR screening, we anticipate that this will result in minimal provider and individual impact, particularly if we work together.

## MEASURING IMPACT

The results of this instrument-focused initiative will be used to:

- Ensure reliability across different settings
- Determine baselines
- Assure confidence in the LTSS screening process and the validity of the screening tools

Study findings may also be used to inform best practices and enhance training materials

As a valued partner in this process, DMAS recognizes and appreciates your ongoing commitment and partnership toward ensuring service excellence for Virginians. Be assured that DMAS is committed to ongoing transparency. We will continue to provide updates and will share additional summary information at the completion of the project.