

**QUESTIONS REGARDING THE SUPPORTS INTENSITY SCALE (SIS)  
POSED BY PARENTS & FRIENDS OF SEVTC PRESENTED BY ANN MARIE SIVERTSON  
APRIL 30, 2009**

**1. On what date did Support Intensity Scale (SIS) testing begin at SEVTC?**

*Testing began in late January and early February for those individuals moving out in April. April 1, 2009 was the start date for all of the remaining residents.*

**2. Who made the decision that Virginia would adopt SIS as a testing tool? How long has it been in use nationwide since its inception?**

*The decision to adopt the SIS as Virginia's standardized assessment for Medicaid funded services was a joint effort by DMHMRSAS and the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS). The use of the SIS was piloted at twelve Community Services Boards (CSBs) and one state-operated training center from 2006-2008. This was then followed by input from various stakeholder groups including TACIDD. All of this information was considered in the final decision to adopt the assessment tool.*

*The Supports Intensity Scale was published for the first time in January 2004 and today over 14 states and countries are using this standardized assessment.*

**3. How is the privacy of the individual resident protected when the information is input into the data bank? Who controls and has access to the data bank?**

*"SIS Online" ensures security requirements are met, including: administrative processes, physical security of the data center, management of operating systems, network equipment, and other data application services, data backup and recovery processes, and firewall protection. These security measures are part of the processes to assure compliance with the US Government's Privacy Rule (45 CFR Parts 160 and 164) that implemented the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996.*

*The staff of DMHMRSAS' Office of Intellectual Disability Supports (OIDS) has access to and control of the data bank. The CSBs have access to only the assessments that their case managers conduct.*

**4. Why is SEVTC on such a fast track for completing SIS when other Training Centers in the state have more time?**

*As you may be aware, the 2009 Appropriations Act requires the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services to establish a state and community planning team for the purpose of developing a plan for the rebuilding and resizing of SEVTC. The Act requires the plan to be developed based on, among other things, completed individual assessments and service plans for each*

*resident of the facility. A preliminary plan must be provided to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2009. (Item 315 CC.1) Because of the time frame imposed by the Appropriations Act, SEVTC is prioritized for conducting SIS assessments of all of its residents.*

**5. Do SIS results supersede previous ID team reviews for pre-discharge or discharge recommendations? What proof do you have that this measurement tool works? Why is SIS considered the "standard" when only 14 states are using it?**

*We believe that the SIS will be a valuable planning tool to determine the services and supports needed by each resident at SEVTC and will be a critical element in developing a quality plan for the coming year. The process for determining the services and the providers of the services for each resident at SEVTC is a team process that involves family, SEVTC staff, CSB case management staff, and others, along with each individual. In making the decisions that best meet the needs of each individual, all information is important which includes assessments and recommendations previously submitted.*

*The SIS is the only person-centered assessment tool for people with developmental disabilities and provides a reliable framework to quantify the support needs of people with disabilities. Unlike traditional assessments, SIS does not look at what a person lacks, but what daily supports an individual needs to live a successful life in society. The SIS directly measures the type of support, frequency of support, and intensity of supports required by an individual to participate in 57 distinct aspects of life in their communities. Twenty-three major behavioral and medical support needs are also considered. The Scale provides a straightforward basis for making decisions about personal goals, levels of care, or resource allocation. SIS has a .87 inter-rater reliability coefficient, which puts the tool in an "excellent range" of reliability in assessment instruments.*

*State agencies and providers across the country are using SIS scores to create individualized service plans for people with disabilities. Service decisions can be based on realistic and practical information. It is considered a "standardized" tool because it is norm-referenced, validated, and reliable through research procedures. States may elect to use the SIS, but currently it is not a singly-required tool. However, CMS is committed to person-centered thinking and they recently approved the use of the SIS as part of the renewal of Virginia's Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disabilities (MR/ID) Waiver.*

**6. How much does it cost to use SIS from the single-source provider? How much has been spent by DMHMRSAS or training centers to date on SIS?**

*The cost of using the SIS varies depending on the number of assessments, the number of interviewers, and the use of the SIS online. There is no standard cost per provider.*

*To date, DMHMRSAS has made a three-year commitment of approximately \$280,000 from state general funds made available to the Department to build service capacity*

*across Virginia's localities. As part of the three-year roll-out, this funding will provide assessments for all individuals on the MR/ID and Day Support Waivers and residents of all five training centers.*

**7. If SIS is being used only to support data collection - not a "definitive" ranking tool - why is there a rush to complete SEVTC testing?**

*As mentioned previously, there are specific time lines required by the 2009 Appropriations Act. The Act requires the plan to be developed based on, among other things, completed individual assessments and service plans for each resident of the facility. A preliminary plan must be provided to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2009. (Item 315 CC.1) Because of the time frame imposed by the Appropriations Act, SEVTC is prioritized for conducting SIS assessments of all of its residents.*