Priority of Need Tool

SC/TCM Training for the 2012 Revision of the PON
PON History

• When the Division of Developmental Disabilities is unable to serve all eligible individuals with the funds available through the appropriation process, the Division uses a Priority of Need (PON) assessment to determine the order in which Individual Support Plans will be funded. This action is taken in accordance with 9 CSR45-2.015.
• Individuals placed on most Medicaid Waiting Lists will be served as funding becomes available, based on needs assessed through the PON, and not in the order in which the individual’s name was added to the list.

• A PON score is not used, though, in determining the order in which individuals might receive services funded through the Partnership for Hope waiver.
• The Division of Developmental Disabilities began using the PON in 2000, and it was codified in state regulation in 2006.

• In late 2008, a Division initiative began to revise the instrument to address concerns about reliability and validity.
• The Lewin Group, a nationally recognized consulting group, was contracted to review the process and instrument, and to assess the validity and reliability of the existing and revised instruments.

• In 2009, a workgroup consisting of Division of Developmental Disabilities and Senate Bill 40 participants was formed to revise the existing Priority of Need instrument. This workgroup provided the data for the inter-rater and test-retest reliability studies investigated by the Lewin Group.
• This process resulted in the current (2012) revision of the PON.

• Effective September 30, 2012, an updated version of the PON included in a revision to the Code of State Regulations is to be used by the Division of Developmental Disabilities for funding prioritization.
What are the changes to the PON?

• The update:
  ➢ Improved the objectivity and comprehensiveness of the instrument.
  ➢ Improves the access to the instrument by making it available online.
  ➢ Improves inter-rater reliability (the similarity of scores between two independent interviewers).
  ➢ Improves test-retest reliability (the similarity of the score an individual gets over time) of the instrument.
  ➢ Reduces the probability of scoring errors.
Philosophical Change

- The updated PON tool focuses on the supports needed to function effectively in several environments.

- “Unmet Needs” are evaluated for each question.
What constitutes an “unmet need”?  

“Unmet need” refers to:  

- A current deficiency in the resources necessary to enable the individual to function in the area being assessed.

- Think of it this way: If you are nearsighted, you need corrective lenses to see clearly. If you have glasses or access to glasses (for example, through a private insurer), there is no “unmet need.” If you don’t have glasses or access to glasses, there would be an “unmet need.”
How does the updated PON affect individuals currently on a Medicaid Waiver List?

• “No Harm” transition:
  – An individual currently on a Wait List can keep their current PON score.
  – If individuals currently on the Wait List elect to be assessed by the updated PON, they can choose whichever score is to their advantage.
  – Individuals receiving a waiver-funded service may keep their previous PON score for as long as they continue to receive that service, but must use a score from the updated PON if they wish to receive a different service.

• For individuals coming on to a Waiver Wait List as of October 1, 2012, they must be assessed with the updated PON.
Administration of the PON

A Step-by-Step Guide
How do you get to the PON?

• It is intended that the PON will be completed electronically through CIMOR.
• When it would be more practical, an evaluator could begin the assessment on a paper copy and later enter the responses into the electronic program.
• Responses to the items are entered into the program and submitted to the Regional Office Chair for verification. SB40 Boards that have their own UR Committee may submit the PON directly to the RO Director or designee, rather than to the RO UR Chair.
• Following the verification, the PON score is available for viewing in CIMOR.
The Priority of Need (PON) program is accessed through CIMOR, under:

- **Consumer**

Then:

- **Screenings**
Select “PON” and then “ADD”
Note: Only individuals with an open Episode of Care can be accessed through the PON.
Add assessment date,
Select the Evaluator.
Status will remain “Incomplete” until submitted.
Answer each question in each tab:

(Some questions may be “grayed out” if the person does not fit an age requirement. See “d” in this example.)
For each rating:
- Independent,
- Monitoring,
- Partial Hands-on assistance
- Total Hands-on assistance

The evaluator must:
- Determine the existing supports available, and
- Make a judgment regarding any Unmet Need.

(It is unlikely that there would ever be an Unmet Need if “Independent” is selected.)

If there is an Unmet Need, the evaluator is to:
- Check that box AND
- Note the page and paragraph of the ISP detailing that need.
Why does the Evaluator have to specify the page and paragraph documenting an unmet need?

- Having the page and paragraph specified ensures that the verifier can quickly and efficiently find specifics about the unmet need, rather than searching through a document without any guidance.

- It also is intended to reduce the frequency of disagreements about whether or not the unmet need was documented.
• Remember: It may often be the case that an individual would require some level of assistance, but that no “Unmet Need” would be found because that assistance is available in the present environment or through other available resources.

• Only select “Unmet Need” if essential support is unavailable.
• If an individual is receiving support due solely to the provision of an emergency, short term service (no more than 30 days), the Evaluator is to score the item as if the emergency service was unavailable. In all other cases, the Evaluator is to score the assessment based on the needs and supports available during the last 30-60 days before the assessment.
When all items are complete, and the PON is ready to hand off for review,

- **First** - change the status to "Submitted" and
- **Then** click the "Save" button

(If you try another sequence, it won’t work!)
If there is an error on one or more items, an error message will appear when the evaluator attempts to submit the PON for review.

The PON cannot be submitted until those errors are corrected.
What happens after the PON is submitted for review?

• The Regional Office will review the assessment and change the status to “Verified”.
• The PON score will appear in CIMOR “Screenings” under the PON tab.
• The findings of the PON can be appealed through the existing UR appeal process, as defined in 9 CSR 45-2.017
How is the Regional Office notified that a PON is ready for verification?

An email notifying the RO of the PON should be sent to the relevant RO email addresses:

- PON.ARO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.CMRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.HRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.JRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.KCRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.KVRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.PBRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.RRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.SIRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.SpRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.STLCRO@dmh.mo.gov
- PON.STLTRI@dmh.mo.gov
Additional Resources

• You may access the “Frequently Asked Questions” documents available on the Division of Developmental Disabilities’ external website, under the “Trainings and Events” tab.

• In order to create a Step-by-step guide, it is recommended that slides 11-25 be printed for future reference.
Additional Resources, Continued

• Any guidelines related to the PON assessment tool will be available online on the DD Website at: http://dmh.mo.gov/dd/Guidelines.htm.

• A copy of the PON is included within the latest version of the CSR, at: http://www.sos.mo.gov/adrules/csr/current/9csr/9c45-2a.pdf