What is the SIS®?

The Supports Intensity Scale (SIS®) is a strength-based, comprehensive assessment tool that measures an individual’s support needs in personal, work-related, and social activities in order to identify and describe the types and intensity of the supports an individual requires. The SIS® includes background information on health, medical conditions, activities of daily living, and cognitive, social, and emotional skills. The SIS® was designed to be part of person-centered planning processes that help all individuals identify their unique preferences, skills, and life goals.

What is the purpose of a statewide assessment tool?

A statewide standardized assessment tool for adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities should meet a variety of needs and have benefit for the individual, the case manager/supports coordinator, the family or guardian, the PIHP/CMHSP system and for the state.

- **For the Individual:**
  - Participative process to provide information on current and needed supports including identification of the activities that are important to the individual and amount of supports needed to enable participation in daily activities and community involvement
  - Understandable and consistent process regardless of who is conducting the assessment
  - Confidence in an objective and independent process for each and all persons served by the public mental health

- **For Case Managers/Supports Coordinators:**
  - To support the Person Centered Planning Process
  - The assessment provides essential information across multiple domains
  - Assists in establishing goals that are important to the individual
  - Establishes a baseline which allows for evaluation of progress and success

- **For the Family/Guardian:**
  - Understandable and consistent process regardless of who is conducting the assessment
  - Confidence there is an objective and independent process for each and all persons served by public mental health
  - Confidence that the assessment and individual plan of service developed through the person centered planning process will promote services and supports consistent with individual need

- **For the PIHP/CMHSP/Program:**
Frequently Asked Questions – Michigan SIS® Implementation

Promotes equitable access to services and supports
Promotes continuity of care across multiple providers
Assist in determining eligibility for specific services or for waivers, e.g. HAB waiver
Predict the types of resources needed – for planning purposes
Assists with determining future costs of services for financial planning

For the state/MDCH:

Actuarial analysis
Provides an understanding of the population served
Ensures there are consistent processes across statewide regions
the ability to describe the population served in Michigan
Assists with determining future costs of services

Who is required to have a SIS assessment?

A SIS must be conducted at least once every three years for all Medicaid-eligible individuals age 18 or older who have an intellectual or developmental disabilities, who are currently receiving casemanagement or supports coordination or respite only services. In addition, new Medicaid eligible consumers entering the CMHSP system should be assessed using the SIS at the time of initial eligibility determination.

The Michigan Department of Community Health is collecting data on Medicaid eligible individuals as described above. If a CMHSP/PIHP chooses to conduct SIS assessments on other individuals, the costs associated with licensing and data storage using SIS Online would need to be negotiated separately with AAIDD.

How should information from the SIS® be used?

Provide a standardized framework that assists in evaluating practical support requirements, promotes individualized planning and maximize potential for full participation in the community
Help individuals to use their resources in the most efficient and useful manner
Measure person’s support needs to successfully complete everyday tasks
Assist in navigating planned and unexpected transitions
Provide guidance in maintaining the least restrictive environment while minimizing health and safety risks
Be used to enhance and support the person-centered planning process. Assessing service needs in the context of a team approach helps focus on a person’s potential
Assist with allocating resources in an equitable manner at system, agency, and individual levels
Provide uniform expectations for service delivery best practices
Maximize positive outcomes
Captures support needs for an individual, which may differ from current supports
Be a planning tool, including items the individual hasn’t taken part in or isn’t currently engaged in. This should be inclusive of activities and life domains common to any other adult
The SIS Implementation workgroup is developing additional Use Guidelines to clarify how data from the SIS should be used in the context of person-centered planning. In addition, a training plan is being developed to assist Casemanagers/Supports Coordinators in using the results of the SIS in planning for services with individuals and family members.

Who will conduct the SIS® assessments and what are the criteria for these staff?

The PIHP is responsible to ensure an adequate cadre of recognized SIS® assessors to complete the SIS assessment for all Medicaid eligible adults with developmental/intellectual disabilities within a 3 year period. The assessors will be specially trained in interviewing and information gathering using the SIS®. These staff will be independent from the current supports and services staff. The SIS® process relies on not just the individual, but also family members, case managers, and others who have personal knowledge of the individual to ensure that the information gathered during their assessment is thorough and complete.

**Recommended Qualifications for Interviewers:**

- Bachelor’s Degree in human services or four years of equivalent work experience in a related field
- At least one year experience with individuals that have a developmental or intellectual disability
- A belief in a strengths-based, inclusion focused perspective of individuals with disabilities
- An optimistic, collaborative approach to problem-solving
- Multiple year commitment to the project
- Excellent communication and group facilitation skills, including the ability to build rapport with people of all backgrounds
- Computer experience and accessibility
- Willingness and ability to travel to all service locations necessary

**Hiring and employment criteria and considerations:**

- Assessors/Interviewers should report to a department other than supports coordination/case management where the individual is served.
- Assessors should not facilitate a SIS® interview for an individual for whom they are providing another ongoing clinical service
- In order to avoid potential for conflict of interest, SIS assessors should not hold a concurrent role or position that includes responsibility for authorization of services or utilization management functions.
- Assessors skills will be evaluated as part of quality framework that includes AAIDDA/MORC/Online reports and future PIHP regional trainers
- It is acceptable for Interviewers to contract with or be employed by a PIHP, CMHSP, or other provider agency as deemed appropriate by the PIHP and consistent with avoidance of conflict of interest.
• Typically the individual would be responsible to conduct 8-10 SIS® assessments per week.
• Must meet the Quality Assurance requirements (as defined below)

**How will assessors be selected and trained?**

Each PIHP must identify 2 persons (meeting the criteria noted above) to be trained in May 2014 to conduct SIS assessments for the region. This training will be conducted via 4 days of classroom training followed by a process for practice and direct feedback. Arrangements will be made to offer each PIHP the opportunity to have a third person participate in the 4 day training. This will provide an additional person with more expertise and the information would be useful for persons who supervise the person centered planning process, persons who provide quality oversight or utilization management and/or a person who could complete the additional practice trainings to become an assessor, due to the potential for attrition in the process.

The SIS® implementation workgroup together with MDCH have developed an approval process for individuals who have been trained and meet current SIS® assessor requirements. Once approved by MDCH, an assessor may access SIS Online and conduct assessments.

**What are the Quality Assurance Requirements for SIS Assessors?**

Persons with AAIDD recognized training and new persons who complete the training will participate in ongoing Quality Assurance which includes:

- Participation in a minimum of one Periodic Drift Review per year (recommend quarterly) conducted by an AAIDD recognized SIS® Trainer
- Maintain annual Interviewer Reliability Qualification Review (IRQR) status at “Qualified” as determined by an AAIDD recognized SIS® Trainer
- Attend quarterly Michigan SIS® Assessor conference calls
- Attend annual Michigan SIS® Assessor Continuing Education

**What are the requirements to become a SIS trainer?**

MDCH will pay the training fees for a total of 40 individuals to become SIS assessors. From this initial cadre of assessors, regional trainers will be developed to ensure adequate numbers of trained assessors across the state. In order for a candidate to be considered for Train the Trainer, an interviewer must meet the following criteria:

- Passed (at the Qualified: Excellent or higher level) an IRQR conducted by AAIDD
- Have experience conducting assessments for a range of individuals with varying needs and circumstances
- Participated in regular Quality Assurance and Drift Reviews to develop their skills

**Are consumers required to participate in the SIS assessment? Is the SIS Mandatory?**
This is a sensitive issue and ongoing education and information is important. The experience in other states is that all but a very few agree to participate when the invitation provides information and comes from a trusted source. The policy will allow for an assessment to be completed in cases when the individual is not interested but informants are available. The number will be tracked and monitored as this should occur rarely. In addition, an assessment may be completed even if the consumer decides he/she is no longer interested in the process but the informants continue to provide information. Again, this will be tracked. These assessments, like others that are part of eligibility/needs assessment are a necessary part of service planning.

**Which payment codes will be used to report this activity?**

**Billing Code** – H0031 (HW) will be used to report the SIS assessment. The HW modifier will be used to demonstrate that the staff conducting the SIS meets the state criteria (as outline in this FAQ). Assessors must be on the approved state list in order to use this code.

When reporting this service, the code chart found in the MDCH Reporting Financial Requirements document shall be followed. If the SIS assessor has an NPI #, the rules that apply to any other professional shall be used. If the SIS Assessor does NOT have an NPI #, then the rules under the non-professional rules shall be followed. When billing provider and rendering provider are the same, billing provider is reported and rendering provider is blank.

**Concurrent Billing** – May other staff who attend and participate in the SIS interview concurrently bill for their time?

- **CLS** – *May* bill concurrently if they are providing a CLS service at the same time as the assessment.
- **Casemanagement/Supports Coordination** – *May NOT* bill concurrently according to the code rules. These staff could account for their time as indirect/pre-planning activity, but they cannot report a CM/SC Service during the same time as the SIS assessment.

**How long does the SIS assessment take?**

Once a SIS assessor gains some experience, typical assessments take approximately 1 ½ - 2 ½ hours. Consumers and family members should be told to expect up to 3 hours.

**Is Video conferencing an Option?**

This is still being considered. There are some concerns and potential barriers to use of video conferencing. Appropriate planning, education and support for using video conference for SIS assessments will be needed.

**How is the SIS report shared with individuals and family members?**

The Supports Coordinator/Casemanager would typically be responsible to share the SIS report with the individual and family members/guardian. The workgroup is developing Use Guidelines which will provide some guidance on how SIS results should be shared and discussed with family members and the Implementation Workgroup is working with the vendor on finalizing the report formats to be used.
What will happen to existing data and contracts for CMHSPs or programs that have already implemented the SIS®?

AAIDD and MDCH will develop plans for managing and transferring existing contracts and use of assessment data that was previously gathered by certified assessors.

**SIS® Online**

SISOonline is a web-based application that collects and stores SIS data. A detailed technical manual and separate technical FAQ is available for SIS Administrators at PIHP/CMHSP and provider sites. More information can also be found at [http://aaidd.org/sis/sisonline](http://aaidd.org/sis/sisonline) or email the SIS Online Technical Manager ([help@sis-online.org](mailto:help@sis-online.org)). [Reference for technical FAQ and additional IT guidance online?]

Who owns the SIS data?

MDCH owns the data once it has been entered into SISOOnline. PIHPs, CMHSPs, and their agents and contractors will be given appropriate access to assessment data in SISOOnline, including the ability to download assessments and reports. PIHPs, CMHSPs, and their agents and contractors will be solely responsible for ensuring the information downloaded from SISOOnline is used and disclosed in compliance with all applicable laws.

Who should conduct the SIS Assessment in cases where the individual is served out-of-county or there is a COFR agreement in place?

The SIS should be completed by the CMHSP where the individual is currently receiving services. In instances where a COFR agreement is in place, the PIHP that includes the COFR is responsible to ensure that the SIS is administered and is responsible to report the data.

For individuals moving between PIHPs, the SIS Online system allows a new PIHP to be identified so that SIS data can be shared across PIHPs.

What is the timeline for all of these required activities?

The following is a draft timeline for significant year one and two activities:

**SIS Implementation Time Line**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>Contract with AAIDD start date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td>Initial “cohort A” 4 day SIS assessor training for 20 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2014 &amp; ongoing</td>
<td>FAQ documents to guide implementation provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July –Sept 2014</td>
<td>Stakeholder meeting to introduce SIS and answer questions held in 10 PIHP regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td>Cohort A completes IRQR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
June 2014  PIHP and SIS Assessors begin registration and use of SIS Online and Venture

June 2014 & ongoing  Development of SIS assessor criteria, guidance for use of SIS online, Use Guidelines,

July 2014 and ongoing  SIS Online and Venture Adaptations

August 2014  Second state funded training for “cohort B”

September 2014  SIS PIHP Online Managers begin use of electronic transfer of information

October 2014  Cohort B complete IRQR

October 2014  Presentation to Board Association and other state wide conferences

November 2014  SIS Assessments merged into one state wide data set

November 2014  Common set of Communication and Orientation materials available

November 2014  Plan adopted for training of SIS for Support Coordinators and Care Managers

April  2015  Compile Draft policies into SIS manual

August 2015  Train 10 Regional Trainers (Train–the-Trainer session)

What are the available venues to get additional information about the SIS implementation?

MDCH is working with AAIDD and MORC along with regional representatives to provide consistent detailed information to all stakeholders about the implemntation of SIS statewide. Brochures and educational materials are being developed. Regional stakeholder groups are being arranged statewide to ensure opportunities to share information about the use of SIS® with consumers and family members. In FY 2015, regional trainings and/or webinars will be held specifically for case managers and supports coordinators related to their roles and responsibilities in this process.

Where should additional questions be sent?

Specific questions related to SIS® implementation should be forwarded to the workgroup representative for your region or sent via email to: Nora Barkey (BarkeyN@michigan.gov) or Laura Vredevel (laurav@tbdsolutions.com).