

# Remote Monitoring and Developmental Disabilities Services

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Technology has impacted the lives of everyone in one manner or another. Most of us take technology for granted, often not even noticing the extent to which our daily activities are reliant upon technology and technological advancement. Technology has in many ways increased our independence and autonomy in our professional and personal lives. The same is true for people with developmental disabilities.

In health and human services we have often relied on people to support individuals with developmental disabilities to live, play, and work independently in the community of their choosing. We face, however, in all parts of our state – a challenge in hiring, training, and retaining direct support professionals. And the gap between the availability of people to fill these important jobs and the level of support needed by adults with developmental disabilities is only going to increase in coming years.

Technology can provide powerful tools, both for enhancing independence and enabling cost-effective care alternatives, to help fill this gap. Remote monitoring – as it is commonly referred to – uses technology to provide remote supports that can ensure that people with developmental disabilities have the support they need and are safe and stay safe in their home. Remote monitoring uses real-time sensor technology, radio frequency identification, web-based monitoring systems, audio and video feeds, or other devices. This technology can also provide two-way audio and/or video communication with the individual with developmental disabilities. Remote monitoring is an alternative to having the constant physical presence of staff in someone's home. Although it perhaps seems intuitive to think that we can provide the best support by increasing the use and presence of staff – in some instances increasing the presence of staff in the homes of people with developmental disabilities may at times be counter-productive as it can inadvertently foster dependency rather than promote independence and is also often not the most cost-effective approach to providing care

While support in the home from paid or unpaid people, is necessary in many areas of health care, remote monitoring can provide the opportunity to deliver a higher quality of service while simultaneously enabling individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve a higher quality of life. This technology has been shown to be effective in providing the necessary supports to individuals with developmental disabilities wanting to become more independent. Remote monitoring is one important component to solving the impending crisis resulting from the lack of availability of sufficient numbers of qualified direct support personnel.

We applaud Director Martin and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities for their support of remote monitoring and their leadership in making this service available through Ohio's Home and Community Based Services waivers for people with developmental disabilities. We look forward to the future expansion of remote monitoring to support more Ohioans with developmental disabilities.