

# MEMORANDUM

## Department of Aging and Disability Services Regulatory Services Policy \* Survey and Certification Clarification

**TO:** Regulatory Services  
Regional Directors and State Office Managers

**FROM:** Veronda L. Durden  
Assistant Commissioner  
Regulatory Services

**SUBJECT:** **S&CC 12-01** – Person First Respectful Language

**APPLIES TO:** Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability or Related Condition (ICFs/IID)

**DATE:** July 9, 2012

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House Bill (H.B.) 1481, 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislature, Regular Session, 2011, added Chapter 392, “Person First Respectful Language Initiative,” to the Texas Government Code and amended the Texas Government Code, Chapter 531 to require each health and human services (HHS) agency to use the terms and phrases listed as preferred under Chapter 392 when proposing, adopting, or amending rules, reference materials, publications, and electronic media. H.B. 1481 also directs the Texas Legislative Council to replace certain terms and phrases in current state statute with preferred terms and phrases as statutes are amended.

Until the Texas Legislative Council makes these changes, there may be situations when a person needs to use a term or phrase that is found in current state or federal law, regulation, or other standard documents used by the medical community. For example, agencies may need to continue the use of terms used by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in waiver approvals and those found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders and the International Classification of Diseases.

The Health and Human Services Commission has issued HHS Guidance Memorandum GM-12-002 concerning use of person first respectful language in response to H.B. 1481.

As outlined in H.B. 1481, person first terms and phrases, including appropriate variations, are preferred for use by HHS agencies. Staff in the Department of Aging and Disability Services Center for Policy and Innovation have developed guidance on [Person First Respectful Language](#) for use in all verbal presentations and written materials, including publications, agency rules, information letters and electronic media.

You can access additional resources on appropriate use of person first language at these links:

- HHS Style Guide for Consumer Materials  
<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/WritingTips/StyleGuide.pdf>
- Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities  
<http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/resources/publications/pfanguage.asp>
- Disability.gov  
<https://www.disability.gov/viewResource?id=13745768>
- American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, “The Language Used to Describe Individuals with Disabilities”  
[http://www.asha.org/publications/journals/submissions/person\\_first.htm](http://www.asha.org/publications/journals/submissions/person_first.htm)
- Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, “Language Matters in Mental Health”  
[http://www.hogg.utexas.edu/initiatives/language\\_matters.html](http://www.hogg.utexas.edu/initiatives/language_matters.html)

If you have questions concerning this memorandum, please contact a policy specialist at (512) 438-3161.