

Waitlists and Unmet Needs

Waitlist Discussion

Why We're Revisiting Waitlist Tracking

- Continued emphasis from federal and state partners on tracking, data quality, and ROI
- Recent inquiry from the Deputy Secretary of HHR about Meals on Wheels waitlists
- Opportunity to reconnect on how AAAs are capturing unmet need
- This topic was last reviewed two years ago — time for a refreshed conversation

What We've Done So Far

- Held discussions with AAAs and DAS on waitlists and unmet needs
- Conducted a survey to understand current tracking practices
- Shared findings and gathered more in-depth input
- Made PeerPlace improvements: Added waitlist tracking enablement; Created a one-click New Encounter button; Developed supporting user guides
- Analyzed post-implementation usage and trends

What We're Seeing

- New PeerPlace features are not being used as expected
- Utilization decreased from 2024 to 2025
- Not aligned with anticipated increases due to declining ARPA funds

What We Need From You

- We're asking again for your perspective and insights
- Questions to consider for the upcoming discussion:

- How can DAS better support consistency and uniformity?
- Would additional PeerPlace training help?
- Should we formalize an annual waitlist reporting form?
- What other solutions or needs do you see?

Regulatory Expectations

What the OAA Final Rule Requires (1321.65(b)(3))

- AAAs must submit objectively collected, and where possible statistically valid, data on unmet need
- Applies to: Supportive Services, Nutrition Services, Evidence-based disease prevention & health promotion, Family caregiver support, Multipurpose senior centers
- Evaluation must consider all services, regardless of funding source

How DARS Interprets This (1321.65(b)(3))

- As part of the Area Plan, AAAs must provide a narrative/analysis of unmet need using
- PeerPlace data (as available)
- Other objective datasets (e.g., DARS Community Assessment Survey, local data sources)
- AAAs have flexibility in format and approach
- DARS **does not** prescribe a specific methodology, but expects clear data sources and evaluative conclusions

What's in Current Area Plan Guidance

- Summarize unmet needs in the PSA
- Use PeerPlace plus external datasets

- Cite all data sources clearly
- Identify unmet needs by service category (and by specific services where possible)
- Unmet needs should inform: The AAA's service menu and Planning and strategy for the FFY area plan cycle

Next Steps

- Waitlist is one objective piece for assessing unmet need.
- DARS shared expectations from a regulatory perspective [1321.65\(b\)\(3\)](#)
- V4A Prepping for conversation, including outline April meeting