

FACTS ABOUT:



CHAPTER 171 OF THE ACTS OF 2002 AN ACT PROVIDING SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES.

PURPOSE: ***This is not just about respite care!*** It's about giving individuals with disabilities and their families a voice in crucial decisions being made about their lives. It's about providing a variety of flexible home and community supports that help families stay together and help people with disabilities or chronic illness live in their own home within their community.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

- **Chapter 171 – Individual and Family Support law** requires each of the seven (7) named agencies to develop an annual Individual and Family Support agency plan with specific objectives and with substantial consultation from individuals and families.

The seven (7) named agencies included in this law:

- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind
 - Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - Department of Mental Health
 - Department of Developmental Services
 - Department of Public Health
 - Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
 - Masshealth
- Each agency, after substantial consultation with individuals with disabilities and their families, are required to develop an Individual and Family Support “action” plan that explains how the department intends to provide flexible supports to individuals and families.
 - The plan must include information on the agency-specific background, an overview of individual and family supports and the process for obtaining substantial consultation from the individuals with disabilities and their families they serve.
 - The plan must be used by the agencies to coordinate, enhance and expand individual and family support addressing the focus areas of Self-Determination and Family Empowerment (current and new initiatives), Family Leadership Development Opportunities, Resources and Supports, Accessing Services and Supports, Cultural Competence and Outreach, and Interagency Collaboration.
 - The law requires the agencies to seek creative and innovative ways to serve individuals with disabilities and chronic illnesses and provide flexible supports.

Chapter 171 – An Act Providing Support to Individuals with Disabilities and their Families is intended to ensure individuals with disabilities or chronic illnesses and their families are provided with a variety of flexible home and community supports to live and participate in their own community.

