

— A FAMILY GUIDE

Understanding Indiana's New InterRAI Medicaid Assessment

A practical family guide to preparing for Indiana Medicaid waiver assessments

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[PRINTABLE PREP SHEET](#)

[PLAIN-LANGUAGE GUIDE](#)

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Indiana Medicaid waiver policies, assessment processes, and interRAI implementation may change. Always confirm current requirements with Indiana FSSA, your case manager, Area Agency on Aging, or LCAR/Maximus as applicable.

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— SECTION 01

Understanding Indiana's New InterRAI Assessment

Indiana has been changing how it decides whether a loved one qualifies for certain Medicaid-funded home and community-based care programs. This section explains, in plain language, what's changing and what the assessment is really measuring — so you know what to expect going into it.

What's Changing

Indiana's official language is that LCAR provides nursing facility level-of-care assessments for individuals seeking HCBS waiver programs including PathWays, Health & Wellness and TBI.

The assessment process and tool are changing, but Indiana states that the underlying Nursing Facility Level of Care (NFLOC) eligibility criteria are not changing.

- For certain waiver programs, Indiana is using interRAI-based assessments as part of the level-of-care process. The specific interRAI instrument depends on the program and population being assessed.
- The assessment helps determine whether your loved one meets the “level of care” needed to qualify for at-home Medicaid services.
- This is different from a standard Medicaid financial renewal. The LCAR assessment focuses on functional needs and level-of-care eligibility, while Medicaid financial eligibility is a separate determination.

Good to know: Not every Indiana program uses the exact same version of the interRAI assessment. Programs like Family Supports and Community Integration & Habilitation use different, age-appropriate tools. Before your appointment, confirm exactly which program or waiver your loved one is being assessed for — Nova Home Care can help you find out.

What the Assessment Is Really Trying to Understand

The interRAI assessment isn't only asking what medical conditions your loved one has. It's building a full picture of how they function day to day — what they can do on their own, what they need help with, and where they may be at risk.

Physical Functioning	• Walking and moving around • Getting in and out of bed or a chair (transferring) • Eating, dressing, and personal hygiene • Bathing and toileting • Overall mobility and ability to complete daily tasks
Cognitive Functioning	• Memory and recall • Understanding and communication • Orientation — knowing the time, place, and situation • Decision-making ability
Mood & Behavior	• Signs of low mood or depression • Behavioral changes • Social engagement or withdrawal
Medical & Clinical Needs	• Diagnoses and health conditions • Medications and treatments • Nutrition, hydration, and skin health • Continence
Social Environment & Support	• Who is currently helping — family, friends, or paid caregivers • Safety of the home environment • Services already being received • Ability to function within the community

Understanding what the assessment measures is the first step. Next, we'll walk through exactly how to prepare — and how to make sure the assessor gets an accurate, complete picture of your loved one's needs.

This guide is not a copy of Indiana's official assessment form and is not intended to predict every question an assessor will ask. The topics below are examples of functional, cognitive, medical, and support-related areas families may need to discuss.

— SECTION 02

What to Prepare

Your goal is simple: give the assessor an accurate picture of what daily life is really like. Don't exaggerate your loved one's needs — but don't minimize them either. A common mistake is answering based on what someone can do once in a while, rather than what they can safely and reliably do every day.

Confirm Which Assessment You're Having

Indiana's Level of Care Assessment Representative (LCAR) process covers several different programs — including PathWays for Aging, Health & Wellness, and the TBI Waiver — using age-appropriate interRAI tools. Not every Medicaid member goes through the same assessment, so it's worth confirming the specifics before you prepare.

Ask first: “Which Medicaid program or waiver is my loved one enrolled in?” If you're not sure, ask their case manager, managed care entity, Area Agency on Aging, or the appropriate FSSA contact.

Think Through These Daily Areas

Before the appointment, walk through each area below and jot down real examples — not just what your loved one can do occasionally, but what's true day to day.

Bathing	• Can they get in and out of the shower or tub safely? • Do they need help washing certain areas, like their back, legs, or feet? • Have they become dizzy or fallen while bathing?
Dressing	• Can they choose appropriate clothing on their own? • Can they manage buttons, zippers, or shoes? • Do they need reminders or physical help?
Toileting	• Can they safely reach and transfer on and off the toilet? • Do they need help with continence care? • Do they need someone nearby for safety?

Mobility & Transfers	• What device do they use — walker, cane, wheelchair? • Can they safely transfer from bed to chair? • Have they fallen or nearly fallen recently?
Eating & Nutrition	• Can they prepare food and eat independently? • Do they forget meals or need reminders? • Are there any swallowing or nutrition concerns?
Medication Management	• Can they remember to take the correct medication and dose? • Does someone need to prepare their medications or remind them? • Have there been missed or duplicated doses?
Cognition & Memory	• Do they forget appointments or medications, or repeat questions? • Do they become confused in familiar places? • Do they need frequent reminders or supervision for safety?

What to Bring

Only bring or provide documents requested or relevant to the assessment. The assessor may already have access to some information.

- Current medication list
- Current diagnoses
- Recent medical records
- Recent hospital or ER information
- Therapy records, if applicable
- Information about recent falls
- List of assistive devices used
- Current care plan
- Caregiver observations
- Information about any recent changes in condition

Consider a Simple Functional Needs Journal

A short journal can help you remember specific examples when it's time for the assessment. You don't need to log everything — just meaningful moments that show what help was needed and why.

Date	What Happened	Assistance Needed
Aug. 10	Needed help getting into the shower	Hands-on assistance
Aug. 12	Forgot morning medication	Reminder / supervision
Aug. 14	Needed help moving from bed to wheelchair	Hands-on assistance

Remember: Specific examples are always more useful than saying “needs help.” Note what help is needed and why.

Important: Record actual events as they occur. Do not create or alter examples for the purpose of influencing the assessment.

Assessment Prep Sheet

Print this page and bring it with you to the appointment.

Person being assessed: _____ Date: _____

Completed by: _____ Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Living Situation

☐ Lives alone ☐ With spouse/partner ☐ With family ☐ With caregiver

Daily Help Needed

Daily Activity	Independent	Needs Some Help	Needs A Lot of Help
Bathing	☐	☐	☐
Dressing	☐	☐	☐
Toileting	☐	☐	☐
Walking / Transfers	☐	☐	☐
Eating	☐	☐	☐
Medications	☐	☐	☐

Memory, Safety & Support — check anything that applies

☐ Frequently forgets things ☐ Repeats questions ☐ Confused about time/place
☐ Needs reminders ☐ Wanders or gets lost ☐ Needs supervision for safety
☐ Has fallen recently ☐ Uses a walker/wheelchair ☐ Needs help with medications

Falls in the past 30 days: _____ Main caregiver & relationship: _____ Hours of help/day: _____

The 3 Biggest Things They Cannot Safely Do Alone

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Biggest safety concern: _____

The Nova Golden Rule: Be accurate. Be specific. Don't exaggerate — and don't minimize.

Once you've gathered this information, the next step is learning how to communicate it clearly during the assessment — so the assessor gets the full, accurate picture the first time.

— SECTION 03

How to Accurately Communicate Your Loved One's Needs

Once you've documented your loved one's daily needs, the last step is knowing how to explain them clearly during the assessment. This is where families most often, without meaning to, give the assessor a less accurate picture than they intended — usually by underselling how much help is really needed.

What the Assessor Is Really Asking

For programs such as PathWays for Aging and Health & Wellness, functional eligibility includes meeting the applicable Nursing Facility Level of Care requirements, along with other Medicaid and program-specific eligibility requirements. A diagnosis by itself doesn't tell the full story. The assessor also needs to understand how the condition affects the person's day-to-day functioning:

What can this person actually do, how much help do they require, and how severe or frequent are those limitations?

The 4-Question Framework

Instead of saying someone “needs help,” walk through these four questions. Here's what that looks like for a mother who needs help walking:

- 1. What can she do?** *“She can walk approximately 20 feet with her walker.”*
- 2. What help does she need?** *“Someone needs to stay beside her because she loses her balance when turning.”*
- 3. How often does this happen?** *“This happens every time she walks to the bathroom.”*
- 4. What happens without help?** *“She has fallen twice recently.”*

That's the kind of specific, factual detail families should be ready to share — for every daily activity, not just walking.

Watch for This Common Mistake

Caregivers often say “she can do it” when what they really mean is “she can do it if someone is standing next to her, reminding her, or making sure she doesn't fall.” Those are two very different realities — and the difference matters.

Weak Answer

“He can dress himself.”

Better Explanation

“He can put on his shirt if the clothes are laid out for him, but he needs assistance with pants and shoes because he can't bend safely and loses his balance.”

Good to know: The better explanation isn't exaggerating anything — it's simply describing the actual level of assistance required.

What to Expect During the Interview

The assessment may be conducted through an interview with the individual and/or caregiver, depending on the assessment process and circumstances. Expect something closer to a structured interview than a typical doctor's visit — the assessor will ask about specific daily activities and how they actually go, not just what conditions are on a chart.

Don't prepare for your Medicaid assessment by memorizing diagnoses. Prepare by documenting what your loved one can — and cannot — safely do every day.

The goal of preparation isn't to “pass” the assessment. It's to make sure the assessor has an accurate picture of your loved one's everyday needs.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for general educational and preparation purposes only. Nova Home Care is not affiliated with, endorsed by, or acting on behalf of Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), Medicaid, Maximus, or interRAI. This guide is not an official Indiana assessment form and does not determine Medicaid or waiver eligibility. Assessment procedures and eligibility requirements may vary by program and may change over time. Families should confirm current requirements with the appropriate Indiana FSSA representative, case manager, Area Agency on Aging, or LCAR/Maximus.