

DDS EXECUTIVE BRIEFS

An Update on CT DDS Initiatives

November 21, 2008

Issue 26

Update on the Commitment to Workforce Development

We are excited to announce the launch of the new CTHealthJobs.org. This website was developed by DDS as a result of a collaborative effort between DDS and Private Providers as a response to the shortage of qualified direct care professionals in Connecticut. CTHealthJobs.org serves two groups – Job Seekers and Employers. The website gives Job Seekers a place to submit an online application expressing their interest in working in the field of developmental disabilities. The applications go into a database that can be accessed by multiple Private Provider employers and by DDS when searching for qualified candidates. Besides the capability to search for candidates, employers will also be able to post their jobs.

We've been busy recruiting job seeker candidates since the new CTHealthJobs.org website went "live" at the end of June. Currently, we already have more than 800 registered job seekers who have submitted applications on the website. Private Provider employers can have access to all of these job seeker applications, but they must first register as New Employers on the website.

Registration and use of CTHealthJobs.org is FREE! To register on the website, employers need a Validation Code and PIN (Provider Identification Code).

Check out the website at www.CTHealthJobs.org. Please contact Daimar Ramos – CTHealthJobs.org Coordinator – at 860-418-6121 or via email at Daimar.Ramos@ct.gov in order to learn more and to obtain the Validation Code and unique PIN necessary to register as an employer. Training for employers on the use of the website is also available. Please share this information with your Human Resources Directors.

DDS Administrative Policies and Procedures

In the past, it has been the practice to post on the DDS Internet website only those DDS Policies and Procedures that pertain to Services and those Advisories that pertain to private agencies. DDS has recently issued new or revised Administrative Policies and Procedures that pertain to employees of private agencies as well as to DDS staff. Copies of newly issued Administrative Procedures have been e-mailed to the private agency Executive Directors. Providers have asked to have access to all of the DDS Administrative Policies and Procedures. Plans are underway to have all of the DDS Administrative Policies and Procedures posted to the DDS Internet website in early 2009.

Providers will be notified when the posting is complete.

Waiver Implementation Update

DDS and DSS received approval from CMS for renewal of the Comprehensive Waiver and amendment of the IFS Waiver effective October 1, 2008. Both documents can be found on the DDS website along with a document that highlights the major changes to the waivers. Both waivers now offer some new services including Healthcare Coordination and Live-In Caregiver. In addition, both waivers reflect a change in the required qualifications for Behavior Specialists. We are now working on a plan for full implementation of the waivers including:

- ❖ Healthcare Coordination
 - Define the criteria for individuals to be eligible for this service.
 - Define the necessary qualifications for the RNs providing the service.
 - Develop documentation requirements.
 - Establish rates for an initial nursing assessment and for on-going support.
 - Enroll Qualified Providers.

- ❖ Live-In Caregiver
 - Establish protocols for reimbursement of expenses to the individuals using this service.
 - Develop operational guidelines and fact sheet for consumers/families on the use of this service.

- ❖ Behavior Specialist Qualifications
 - Establish a Clinical Review Panel to qualify applicants who do not have the required Master's Degree.
 - Establish criteria for qualifying those providers who do not have the required Master's Degrees.

- ❖ Additional Tasks
 - Revise DDS Waiver Manual and post to the website in November.
 - Update Consumer/Family Waiver Guides.
 - Incorporate service changes into the automated IP 6.
 - Finalize DDS Waiver Regulations.

Updates will be posted on the DDS website as work is completed to fully implement the changes in waiver services.

Quality Service Review (QSR)

Non-Licensed Private Provider Reviews:

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Quality Management Services Division, began implementing the Quality Service Review (QSR) for qualified private providers that deliver only Day and/or Individual Support services. Providers are selected for review from the department's list of qualified providers.

Individual quality reviewers or a small team of reviewers from the DDS Quality Management Services in Central Office conduct the QSR at a provider's service location. Samples of individuals who receive supports at each type of service are included in the review.

The non-licensed service types that are subject to a QSR include:

- Day Service Option
- Group Supported Employment
- Sheltered Workshop
- Individual Supported Employment
- Individualized Day Supports
- Individualized Home Supports

The QSR is designed to determine the quality of services and supports delivered by providers for each type of service. A personal outcome review will assess individual consumers' achievements and their satisfaction with services and supports. Other review components evaluate the safety and accessibility of the setting and support staff knowledge at the service location.

Prior to the start of the review, providers receive a written "Notice of Quality Service Review," followed by a request to schedule an orientation meeting. Providers are asked to have key staff who represent each type of service attend the meeting and to designate liaison staff for reviewers to interact with during review activities. Appropriate DDS regional staff are informed of QSR scheduling and review activities, as necessary, for provider support, review, or follow-up.

Quality Service Reviews for six providers from the North and West Regions began in September 2008 and will continue during November. Other West Region providers will also be scheduled for November. South Region providers will be selected and scheduled for review after the November 18, 2008 go-live date for the QSR data application. All Non-Licensed Provider QSRs, as well as, the Regional Quality Monitor, Case Manager, and Case Manager Supervisor QSRs are now conducted and managed by using the QSR Data Application.

“My QSR” Data Application Roll Out and Training for Providers and DDS Employees:

The DDS QSR Data Application was successfully deployed on July 15 and is currently *live* in all three regions. Training in the North Region was held between July 29 and August 14; 227 public and private providers and 96 Case Managers were trained. The North Region went *live* on September 5. Training in the West Region was held between September 15 and 29; 123 public and private providers and 93 Case Managers were trained. The West Region went *live* on October 10. Training is just completed for the South Region staff and providers. The South Region went live November 18.

Over 400 QSRs have been completed at service locations thus far. The bulk of the reviews were completed by Regional Quality Monitors and Case Managers; reviews were also completed by State Quality Monitors, Resource Managers and Case Management Supervisors. DDS personnel and provider representatives are working together to improve the quality of services through the Corrective Action Plan process. We all look forward to the South Region providers' inclusion in the QSR process as the system goes live. Soon we will have full statewide participation in this effort to improve the quality of life and services for consumers.

For further information or questions, please contact Daniel A. Micari, Director, Quality Management Services, 860-418-6081 – daniel.micari@ct.gov or Fred Balicki, Quality Review Specialist Supervisor, Quality Management Services, 860-418-6088 – fred.balicki@ct.gov.

Disability Mentoring Day

Disability Mentoring Day is a national program that promotes career development for people with disabilities through job shadowing and hands-on career exploration. On October 15, 2008, more than 17,000 students and job seekers with disabilities across the nation participated in this event.

At DDS, the Self-Advocate Coordinators spent the day showing seven of their peers what they do in their jobs. The seven self-advocates attended meetings with the DDS Self-Advocate Coordinators, worked on E-Learning training on the computer, helped the Self-Advocate Coordinators prepare for their self-advocacy meetings and participated in a variety of other activities.

The Self-Advocate Coordinators and the self-advocates they mentored all reported that the Disability Mentoring Day was a resounding success. "It was outstanding, and the person I mentored loved it," said Jossie Torres of Wednesday's kickoff. Jessica Clark stated that, "I had a really good time with Joyce today. I have a better understanding of all that she does at her job. I'm thinking that someday I might want to work in a self-advocacy position too!"

The Self-Advocate Coordinators would like to expand on this event next year. They are forming a committee to work on making next year's mentoring day at DDS even bigger and better. They are especially looking for DDS and private provider employees who can serve as mentors for a day in October 2009. If you are interested in participating on this committee, or if you are willing to have a person with a disability job shadow you, please contact Jossie Torres at jossie.torres@ct.gov, or call 203-806-8736.

State Government Works to Develop a Budget for the Next Biennium

Excerpt from a recent statement issued by DDS:

"In these challenging economic times, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) certainly appreciates the economic realities of rising costs that our private providers face. We are at the beginning of the budget planning process for the fiscal year 2010 and fiscal year 2011 budgets. As required, the department has submitted options to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) to reduce our budget by 10%, \$96 million dollars. The options will be reviewed by OPM and the Governor and, if accepted, will be presented in the Governor's proposed budget to the General Assembly for debate and public hearings.

The fiscal year 2010 and fiscal year 2011 budgets do not start until July 1, 2009 and these options have not been adopted. If they are adopted it would result in a \$58.2 million dollar (60.6%) reduction in the public sector and a \$37.8 million dollar (39.4%) reduction in the private sector.

During this difficult economic time that faces our nation, our goal is to preserve as many services as possible. In order to do this we have made suggestions to reduce the cost of services, both in the public and private sectors. Currently, this remains as a proposal that is under consideration. If any of our ideas are included in the Governor's proposed budget, there will be the opportunity for public input through the Legislative public hearing process."

Besides preparing the required reduction options, DDS has been working to increase revenue from the ICF-MR and HCBS waiver programs. Working in partnership with the Department of Social Services, these efforts recently culminated with additional billing to the federal government of \$157 million, which helped to alleviate over 50% of the projected budget for the 2009 fiscal year. DDS continues to look for ways to increase revenue to help reduce the expected deficits in fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

Notes from the Operations Center

- ***The Webcast is now available on the DDS website.***

DDS is now doing monthly webcasts of the commissioner's meeting with the provider Trades organizations.

These webcasts are available in the video library on the right hand panel of the DDS website.

- ***Timeline for implementation utilization-based payment for day services is delayed to July.***

The implementation of utilization-based payments for day services and supported living has been moved to July 1, 2009. This will allow more time for providers to review potential impact and develop their internal management approaches.

- ***Individualized home supports update:***

A workgroup has been organized to look at a variety of issues in implementing the fee-for-service system for individualized supports, which was previously known as supported living. The group will be looking at a variety of issues including indirect time and specialized supports. Peter Mason will be chairing the committee, which will include representatives of the provider community.

- ***Provider profiles:***

Providers have been returning their profile information and DDS will be working to put the information in the final format that will be available on the Web.

Thanks to everyone who has returned their information

- ***Heating Assistance***

DDS will soon receive approximately \$1.5 million for distribution to non-profit agencies. We anticipate that providers will receive payments by the end of December. When we have a definite date for payment, providers will be notified.