

# **DDS** EXECUTIVE BRIEFS

## **An Update on CT DDS Initiatives**

September 19, 2008

Issue 25

### **A Year of Accomplishments**

With the many day-to-day issues and problems we confront, many of us do not take enough time to review our accomplishments. Through DDS and Private Sector collaboration many new people were supported at home and at work. Among our accomplishments last fiscal year were:

- 371 people were served from our residential waiting list.
- 118 other people received enhanced family supports.
- 248 new or recent school grads were served

These numbers do not measure the thousands of positive experiences that people had through the efforts of private agency staff. People were helped to have new jobs, new friends, and new experiences. Families were provided the security of knowing that other people were helping to support their loved one.

We thank you and your staff for making fiscal year 2008 a successful one!

### **DDS HCBS Waivers Update**

In June, Commissioner O'Meara and David Parella, the DSS State Medicaid Director submitted the DDS Comprehensive Waiver renewal application and the IFS Waiver amendment to the Human Services and Appropriations Committees of the Connecticut General Assembly. Approval by these committees prior to the submission to CMS is required under Section 17b-8 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The members of the committees voted unanimously to approve the submission of the waivers to CMS.

The two waiver applications have been submitted to CMS for their review and approval. We are hopeful that both will be approved with an effective date of October 1. The draft waiver applications are posted on the DDS website. The Department is preparing a document for the DDS Website that will give an overview of the changes in the Comprehensive Waiver renewal and the IFS Waiver amendment. In addition we will be developing Fact Sheets about the new waiver services to assist individuals, families, and team members when they are developing plans and budgets.

Please contact Debbie Duval, DDS Director of Waiver Planning, Policy and Evaluation at 860-418-6149 or [deborah.duval@ct.gov](mailto:deborah.duval@ct.gov) if you have any questions.

## Employment News

**Employment Training Opportunities for Provider Employees:** DDS is continuing to offer funds to support training in the area of Supported Employment. The funds may be used to pay for training and to cover costs associated with replacing direct staff who would not be able to attend the training without a substitute taking their place. Announcements about pre-approved trainings are disseminated as we learn of them. An agency may request to send their staff to other training programs that directly relate to enhancing employees' skills in job development and supporting people at work. Training that are not pre-approved will be reviewed by the regions. The training must occur this fiscal year. One time funding provided to agencies will be included in the cost settlement process consistent with other one-time funding. This initiative may be discontinued or modified in the future based on available funds. Please contact your resource manager with questions regarding processing. Contact Robin.Wood, Director of Self-Determination at [robin.wood@ct.gov](mailto:robin.wood@ct.gov) or (203) 806.8770 regarding questions relating to e-learning or other training opportunities.

**Transitional Employment Supports:** Regional resource managers are interested in discussing ways people can be supported to move from group settings to individual jobs in the community. One time funds may be requested for transitional supports for the person while they learn their new job. Contact your regional resource manager for more information.

**2008 Employment Outcomes for High School Grads and Age Outs:** 26% (72 individuals) chose individualized supported employment, 34% (94 individuals) chose group supported employment, 1% (4 individuals) chose sheltered work, and one person found competitive employment.

**Newsletter on Employment and Benefits:** Be sure to check out the most recent issue of the Self Determination Newsletter on Employment and Benefits.  
[http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/self\\_determination/newsletters/sd\\_newsletter\\_september\\_2008.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/self_determination/newsletters/sd_newsletter_september_2008.pdf)

**Upcoming Events:** October is **Disability Employment Awareness Month** and October 15<sup>th</sup> is **Disability Mentoring Day**. The DDS Self Advocacy Coordinators and Self Determination Directors will be participating in Mentoring Day by sponsoring consumers who are interested in job shadowing the Coordinators. For more info <http://www.dol.gov/odep/programs/ndeam.htm>

The first **“Employment Idol”** contest was held at the CT People First Self Advocacy Conference last October. This contest was held to showcase employment success stories of people with intellectual disabilities. Ten contestants were selected to be part of an “Employment Idol” video that was created through support provided by Connect-Ability a federal grant to the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS). The video was so popular that Connect-Ability has agreed to support the development of a second “Employment Idol” video. DDS will use this second video to continue to promote the employment of people with intellectual disabilities.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Employment Idol contest is accepting applications until November 14, 2008. Winners will be notified by January 2, 2009 and will be guests at the People First Conference on April 18, 2009 where we will begin making the videotape. We encourage all people with intellectual

disabilities who have overcome challenges to becoming employed and who currently work in a real job for real pay to submit a contest application. Contact Beth Aura Miller, Self-Determination Director at [BethAura.Miller@ct.gov](mailto:BethAura.Miller@ct.gov) or 203.805.7430 if you know someone who is interested in becoming a 2009 “Employment Idol.”

**New Walgreens Bus Service:** Bus service will be available from downtown Hartford to the Walgreens Distribution Center beginning Nov. 3, 2008. CT Transit bus #34-Windsor will be diverted to stop at Walgreens. The current schedule for this route can be found at the CT Transit website, [http://www.cttransit.com/Uploads\\_Schedules/h\\_3436\\_wkdysched\(8\).pdf](http://www.cttransit.com/Uploads_Schedules/h_3436_wkdysched(8).pdf)

## Safeguarding Consumer and Staff Injury

DDS recently received a completed investigation done by the Office of Protection and Advocacy as the result of an untimely death of one of our consumers. Unfortunately an individual died after being hit by a motor vehicle at the end of his driveway as he prepared to go to work.

As a result of their investigation, OPA made the recommendation that ornamental plantings at homes and program sites be routinely checked to insure that they do not create a visual obstruction for traffic in the area.

We ask that you use agency communications or staff meetings to remind your staff of this important activity which could safeguard against consumer or staff injury in the future.

## Dental Services Update

There has been a great deal of media coverage regarding the increase in dental benefits for individuals who are covered by State Medicaid (Title 19). However, this increase in reimbursement primarily affects the individuals under the HUSKY Dental Program who are under the age of 19. This is great news for the children and young adults who are eligible.

In addition the Department of Social Services has engaged a private company, BeneCare to administer the reimbursement of the HUSKY Program and the adult individuals under Title 19.

BeneCare is actively recruiting dentists in Connecticut to participate in providing dental services. The biggest hurdle is the communication with the dentists. Most dentists presume incorrectly that if they decide to participate in the Medicaid program they have to treat every individual who calls their practice. This is incorrect. Each individual can set limits on how many patients they are willing to treat with Medicaid coverage. There is no minimum or maximum number of people that they are required to treat.

According to the Department of Public Health, there are about 2,250 practicing dentists in Connecticut, if each would treat two individuals a week with Medicaid coverage that would be 234,000 visits a year!

## Quality Service Review (QSR) Update

### ***QSR Data Application Training***

The DDS QSR Data Application was successfully deployed on July 15 and is currently *live* in the North Region. Training is underway for West Region staff and providers. The anticipated West Region GO-LIVE date is October 10. South Region training will be held from October 22 to November 20 with an anticipated South Region GO-LIVE date of November 21. South Region providers will receive information about QSR system administration responsibilities and training registration by mid-September.

All providers with service locations subject to QSR reviews must have at least one designated system administrator and one vendor user. Provider system administrators and vendor users must attend one half-day training session in their region. Multi-region providers who participated in training in the North Region are not required to attend training the West and South Regions.

You may contact Charlan Corlies, DDS Director of Quality Improvement at [char.corlies@ct.gov](mailto:char.corlies@ct.gov) or 860.418.6133 if you have questions regarding QSR Application Deployment.

### ***QSR Non-licensed Reviews***

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

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

The service types that are subject to a QSR include:

- Day Service Option
- Group Supported Employment
- Sheltered Workshop
- Individual Supported Employment
- Individual Support, Family Home
- Individual Support, Own Home.

The QSR is designed to determine the quality of services and supports provided by providers at each type of service provided. A personal outcome review will assess individual consumer's achievements and their satisfaction with services and supports. Other review components evaluate the safety, accessibility, and support staff knowledge, for example, 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 requested to have key staff

that 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.

In September, we will begin to conduct Quality Service Reviews for ten providers in the DDS North Region using the QSR Data Application. Providers in the West and South Regions will be selected for review as the QSR Data Application is rolled out.

For further information or questions, please contact Daniel A. Micari, DDS Director, Quality Management Services, 860.418.6081 – [daniel.micari@ct.gov](mailto:daniel.micari@ct.gov) or Fred Balicki, DDS Quality Review Specialist Supervisor, 860.418.6088 – [fred.balicki@ct.gov](mailto:fred.balicki@ct.gov).

## **Fire Prevention and Safety Grant Award**

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is pleased to announce a Grant Award in the amount of \$90,750 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), under the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program–Fire Prevention and Safety Grants.

The Grant authorizes funding for the development of a standardized Fire Prevention and Safety Curriculum to support the department’s current Fire Safety and Emergency Guidelines issued in March 2004 and revised in March 2005. The guidelines are posted on the DDS’ Website at <http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=12&q=396320> and are currently under revision review.

The curriculum will be developed and produced by the Connecticut Fire Academy in consultation with the department and an advisory committee of DDS personnel, private providers, a consumer advocate, and representatives from the Department of Public Health (DPH), State Fire Marshal’s Office, and the Connecticut Fire Academy.

The curriculum will be designed for use by consumers and families, staff of public and private providers associated with residential and day supports, and Community Training Homes. A “Train the Trainer” model will precede full implementation. Training will be available in DVD format, and will include a menu for use in specific settings and for individual needs. The department is also exploring a web-based training format, which would be available for real time use.

The Grant requires that training of 200 trainers be completed by the end of May 2009. Upon completion, the curriculum will replace current fire safety training offerings used by DDS and private providers as a single and consistent educational offering on the topic of Fire Prevention and Safety.

For further information, please contact Grant Coordinators Dan Micari, DDS Director, Quality Management Services or Tim Baldwin, Chief, STS Fire Department.

## Voluntary Services Program Update

In an effort to provide the best quality of service possible to children enrolled in the Voluntary Services Program (VSP), DDS is making some changes in how services will be provided. The philosophy of the VSP is to support children within their family home and community. This is best done by strengthening the capacity of families to meet the behavioral and mental health needs of their children. The program is designed so that the family can learn the skills necessary to decrease the child's challenging behaviors while replacing them with positive behaviors and functional skill development.

Providers of services to children receiving in home supports through the VSP, should be aware of the following changes. All families will be required to incorporate behavioral consultation in the child's individual plan. Behavioral consultation includes the development and monitoring of behavior programs, along with training for family and support providers in the implementation of behavior programs. In addition, one adult family caregiver will be required to be actively involved while in-home services are taking place for at least 50% of the hours approved through Voluntary Services. When staff provide supports and services to the child and family, they also modeling correct interventions and coaching the family members in new ways of interacting with and teaching their child. This makes it easier for families to learn and carry over the skills when staff are not there to assist.

***There will be a Provider Forum to discuss the Voluntary Services Program on November 6<sup>th</sup> from 8:30-12 (location to be announced).*** This forum will go into more details about the changes taking place and the expectations for providing Voluntary Services. Please save the date. If you are not currently providing services to children in the VSP, please consider coming to the Provider Forum to learn more about the VSP and the services need to best support children and their families.

For more information, please contact Tammy Garris, DDS Children's Services Coordinator, at 860.418.6107 or [tammy.garris@ct.gov](mailto:tammy.garris@ct.gov).

## DDS Addresses Nursing Shortage

### ***Proposal Loan Forgiveness/Scholarship Program for BSN Nursing Students***

In response to the national and state nursing shortage which has and will continue to impact the Department of Developmental Services the DDS Commissioner has developed creative strategies to ensure that the department and its provider network maintain a stable nursing workforce.

One innovative strategy to attract nursing students directly into the DDS service system is to create a direct conduit from student to employee. In other words recruiting registered nursing students while they are completing their undergraduate nursing degree. This principle strategy will establish a stable nursing resource that will serve to provide an adequate number of registered nurses to ensure the health and safety of consumers supported by the department.

This strategy will be accomplished by establishing a proposal for a Loan Forgiveness/Scholarship Program with the University of Connecticut School of Nursing. This program will offer loan forgiveness and/or scholarships to junior level registered nursing students in exchange for at least 2 years of employment in the DDS service system upon graduation and subsequent licensure. These nurses will be assigned to work in critical areas of greatest need (public and/or private).

Commissioner O'Meara and his staff have recently met with the Department of Public Health Commissioner Galvin regarding this proposal and this month, Commissioner O'Meara will meet with Dean Bavier of the University of Connecticut School of Nursing to begin more in-depth discussion regarding the proposal.

For more information, please contact David Carlow, DDS Director of Health and Clinical Services at 860.418.6083 or [david.carlow@ct.gov](mailto:david.carlow@ct.gov).

## **Look For New Form Templates On The DDS Website!**

In the near future, forms associated with the water safety incident report procedures will be available in template format on DDS Website at <http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2053&q=389736>. Please remind provider employees that all HIPAA protected information must be transmitted through the Internet in a secure manner using the proper encryption software.