

Minnesota's

Self Determination Project

A Developmental Disabilities Project Partnership -
Blue Earth, Dakota, Olmsted Counties and DHS

SEMI - ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

2/1/97 - 7/31/97

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The following report is a summary of activities and progress regarding Minnesota's Self Determination Project for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. The primary emphasis of the project during the past six months has been identifying elements/areas for redesign, developing project structure, identifying contracting needs, and work plan development to achieve outcomes.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Framework

A project framework was developed that included research and fact finding, establishing principles, identifying critical issues and drafting a workplan/action plan. The state project coordinator was hired, work groups were developed and the state strategic resource/advisory committee was established.

Research and Fact Finding:

- Travel to New Hampshire-visiting with state and area agency staff, project participants, and others
- Contacts and discussions with Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas
- Information gathering from the University of Minnesota, ARC, Advocating Change Together, People First, University of Pennsylvania, University of Wisconsin, and state of Wisconsin

Work Groups:

Consumer Education

Work group members: - Representatives from 3 project sites, consultants, DHS staff

Purpose/Functions: - To develop an education and outreach implementation plan to assure consumers, their supports and the community, receive and understand information regarding self determination, how to make informed choices, person-centered planning approaches, quality assurance issues and other relative topics.

Number of meetings this reporting period: 9

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Work Groups (continued):

System Redesign

Work group members: - Representatives from 3 project sites, consultants, and DHS staff

Purpose/Functions: To provide direction and strategies to change the status quo of service delivery, increase flexibility, shift consumer supports control to the consumer, address barriers and work on changes that are necessary to make self determination a reality for persons with developmental disabilities.

Number of meetings this reporting period: 7

Individually Controlled Resources/Liability

Work group members: - Representatives from 3 project sites, consultants, and DHS staff

Purpose/Functions: To provide direction, strategies and consultation for the technical development for individual controlled resources including dispersing and tracking funds, liability and other issues which will allow consumers to have control over their resources for purchasing individualized supports.

Number of meetings this reporting period: 5

DHS Support Staff Work Group

Work group members: DHS staff representing initiatives and key areas for targeted for re-design

Purpose/Functions: To work on targeted self determination action plans, provide a framework for change, build local capacity at the local level, introduce legislation, and provide a coordination link between state projects, local capacity building and statewide initiatives.

Number of meetings this reporting period: 6

Information and Resource Committee

Committee members: Project sites staff, consumer(s), provider, DHS staff, consultants, representatives from the Performance Based Contracting Project and the Demonstration for People with Disabilities Project.

Purpose/Functions: To 1) provide a forum for the state, counties and others to share information and provide updates, 2) initiate problem solving on identified issues, 3) to provide opportunities for consultant contacts/presentations.

Number of meetings this reporting period: 3

Work Groups (continued):

Strategic Resource/Advisory Committee

Committee members: Committee members represent key stakeholders including project sites staff, legal advocacy, provider organizations, consumer organizations, business, consumers, DHS staff, legislator.

Purpose/Functions: To support self determination activities on a statewide basis and provide a forum for sharing information and receiving input from stakeholders regarding the project.

Number of meetings this reporting period: Committee was organized, and will meet in August.

Principles

The following principles were developed by work group members and committee members:

Freedom: The ability of individuals, with freely chosen people, to plan and live a life with necessary support.

Support: The arranging of resources, both formal and informal, that will assist an individual to live a life he or she chooses.

Authority: Individuals will control resources, both formal and informal, that will assist them to live a life they choose.

Responsibility: Acceptance of the benefits and risks by an individual for choices made, and accountability for spending public money in ways that assure health and safety and that are life enhancing.

Contracts

County contracts for local site coordinators and supplies were completed. Contracting needs were assessed. Consumer education and support activities were identified and local sites will be submitting contracting plans in August 1997. The parameters of the evaluation contract and consultation for taxes and liability contract are being developed.

Communications and Public Relations

The Communications Division at DHS developed a framework for a communications plan. The following has been completed: One state-wide press release, one article in the disabilities newsletter, one article in the regional newsletter, a questions/answer fact sheet, a slide/overhead presentation for use at the local level and a provider presentation. Local sites have drafted brochures and flyers as part of their community connections efforts. A Web site is being created in conjunction with the Community Supports for Minnesotans with Disabilities home page.

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Local Site Coordination

Local site coordinators have been hired. Each local site developed an implementation structure/strategy which includes an education plan, procedures and criteria for consumer participation, assessment of technical assistance needs, and identification of commonalities across sites.

Coordination Related Activities

Because Minnesota has several initiatives and projects related to self determination, coordinating with those activities was a key focus during the past six months.

Quality Assurance/Enhancement - The Self Determination Quality Assurance Plan was developed. This plan encompasses activity involvement at not only the three project sites, but also statewide. It also includes links to the Region 10 Quality Assurance Demonstration Project which includes southeastern Minnesota and links to the Demonstration Project for People with Disabilities.

Performance Based Contracting - Project sites participated in the most recent activities supported by Minnesota's Performance Based Contracting Project (1115 waiver). These activities included extensive training in outcome-based performance, consumer satisfaction, and Accreditation Council system/certification. Service providers, county staff, advocates, consumers, families and interested persons have been working to develop alternative approaches to defining and monitoring quality, and implementing organizational changes which are consumer focused.

Demonstration Project for People with Disabilities - Work with the Demonstration Project has focused on assuring coordination across projects and identifying commonalities. Emphasis was placed on systems development, education, and public relations.

Waiver Allocation Resource Project (WARP) - Although the nine WARP counties are not project sites for the Self Determination Project, this west-central county alliance requested materials and information to begin to promote self determination principles in their areas. Because this group has been innovative in managing their waiver program for persons with developmental disabilities, continued coordination will be on-going in order to promote self determination principles and to expand the resource base and strategizing possibilities for systems change.

Evaluation

Local project sites developed their parameters for evaluation by integrating the statewide project goals into their local workplans. Contracting for a formative evaluation on a project-wide basis has been initiated.

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PROJECT ACTION PLAN PROGRESS

Consumer Education and Support

An education framework, which will be implemented by each of the three project sites, has been developed to assure that consumers and their support networks (providers, families, friends, advocates, service coordinators, case managers, and community members) understand the principles of self determination, and the meaning of choice and individualization of supports.

The six areas of the framework are 1) Philosophy/Principles, 2) Building local capacity and access for consumer person centered planning facilitation and building self sufficiencies at the local project sites, 3) Mentoring and technical assistance for facilitators, 4) Education and support for consumer networks, 5) Self advocacy, and 6) Community connections. These areas provide a structure for each site to individualize and implement an education plan that meets the needs of each unique region. This overall education framework was developed because each project site has different needs in the education area. This framework allows for individualization, collaborating across sites for identified commonalities, and provides an opportunity for local sites to build on past educational activities. Each site is responsible to assure that identified outcomes are achieved. Generally, the local sites will contract for the development of person-centered planning materials, training and consultation, technical assistance to expand consumer support networks and self advocacy training. A main contractor will be the University of Minnesota, which has developed many materials as a result of other initiatives focusing on consumers, outcome based strategies and self determination.

System Redesign

Minnesota has historically been highly regulated which has limited flexibility in how services are purchased and provided. Because of that approach, one of the key tasks this past six months has been to sort out the "perceived" and the "real" limitations due to legislation, rule, and policy. This includes the areas of housing, semi-independent living skills, case management, day training and habilitation/employment, family support services, home care, ICF/MR, home and community based waived services, guardianship, licensing/certification and quality assurance. Legislation changes were identified and will be recommended for introduction during the next session in order to support self determination principles.

Strategies have been discussed to increase the ability to "pool" resources. A framework for a computer based tracking tool to track and disperse funds after "pooling" has been initiated. The system is projected to have a component that can meet the unique reporting requirements needed now by separate funding streams and still be flexible for future changes. Minnesota will be applying for a 1115 waiver from HCFA in the next 6 months to increase flexibility of funding streams.

System Redesign (continued)

Federal amendments to Minnesota's home and community-based waiver for persons with developmental disabilities were drafted in July and will be submitted in August. The amendments add services, change provider qualifications, reduce licensing requirements, and "unbundle" support choices. Two new services in particular, consumer directed support service and consumer education and training, will provide opportunities for individualized supports controlled by the consumer.

Local project sites have received training and technical assistance in the development of consumer-owned housing and separating housing from service supports.

Individual Controlled Resources/Budgets

The focus for the past six months has been to address liability insurance issues for small providers, establish options for employer/employee relationships, develop a framework for tracking and dispersing funds and develop resource allocation strategies.

Work has been initiated to develop a liability insurance pool that is cost effective, and can meet the unique employee insurance coverage needs for providing supports to persons with developmental disabilities. This policy development is being modeled after Minnesota's liability insurance policy for foster care providers.

The Project has developed five feasible models centered around the functions and responsibilities of employer/employee relationships. Procedures developed with the Internal Revenue Service will allow counties or other entities to be granted IRS fiscal intermediary status. Contracting specifics for independent contractor relationships are being drafted.

A framework for tracking and dispersing funds across the project sites has been established. Each local project site may develop a tracking and dispersing funds model that works for the individual, however, project wide, a general framework provides the structure. Each methodology must assure that funds are spent according to the consumer's plan, audits must be available and bills are checked against the plan, funds must be able to flow quickly, and funds availability must be flexible and easy for the consumer to use. Methodologies for consumers to control their resources, such as vouchers, electronic account cards, or checkbook models, have not been finalized during this reporting period.

Resource allocation to the consumer has not been finalized. The Project will be assessing an historical approach for persons already receiving supports. For new consumers, an assessment methodology to determine funds to assure health and safety with an additional base amount for life enhancement/life style is being considered. Concentrated efforts will be directed to this area in the next two months.

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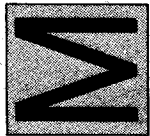
PROJECT FOCUS - NEXT 6 MONTHS

The following will be the key focus for the next six months of Minnesota's DD Self Determination Project:

- ▶Local site consumer education and support network development
- ▶Project-wide frameworks individualized at the local sites
- ▶Completion of initial system redesign efforts to allow functional consumer participation
- ▶Contracting - evaluation, consumer education and support, and systems development
- ▶Legislation development
- ▶Individually controlled resources and resource allocation
- ▶Quality Assurance activities

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information about this semi-annual progress report or questions about Minnesota's Self Determination Project may be directed to Barb Roberts, Self Determination Project Coordinator, at 612/296-1146.



Minnesota was one of 18

states that received a Self-Determination grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in which Blue Earth and two other Minnesota counties were selected as three-year demonstration sites. The grant will assist persons with developmental disabilities, their families and service providers to begin to think and plan differently regarding the supports people need and receive. While current service systems require people to "fit" into programs, the Self-Determination project will encourage individualized choice and control, with the belief that better services will be provided in a more cost-effective manner.



ARE YOU INTERESTED IN
LEARNING MORE?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO PARTICIPATE?



FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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Whose
choice
is it
anyway?

SELF-
DETERMINATION
A BLUE EARTH COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES PROJECT



THE ROBERT WOOD JOHNSON FOUNDATION believes it is important to allow persons with disabilities and their family and friends, in conjunction with professionals, to be the decision makers in determining what supports are needed and how they are provided. The foundation is dedicated in assisting states to transition to systems of support that recognize the abilities of persons rather than their disabilities.

SELF-DETERMINATION brings persons with disabilities into the community and allows them to build informal networks of friends and family who can provide some of the day-to-day supports, such as transportation, bathing and eating. As a result, the quality of life of persons with disabilities is enhanced and expenditures are reduced.

BLUE EARTH COUNTY will be implementing a service-delivery system in support of this philosophy. Through Project ASSURE, a Southern Minnesota Health Initiative managed care pilot project, participants will be actively involved and supported as they work to achieve their goals.



PRINCIPLES

FREEDOM

The ability for individuals, with freely chosen people, to plan and live a life with necessary support.

AUTHORITY

Individuals will control resources, both formal and informal, that will assist them to live a life they choose.

SUPPORT

The arranging of resources, both formal and informal, that will assist an individual to live a life he or she chooses.

RESPONSIBILITY

Acceptance of the benefits and risks by an individual for choices made, and accountability for spending public money in ways that assure health and safety and that are life enhancing.

SYSTEM REDESIGN

Evaluating current regulations and policies, identifying barriers and challenges, and considering any other necessary changes. An emphasis will be placed on the following:

- simplification
- assuring health and safety
- supporting consumers

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Individuals will have control over resources in order to:

- purchase individualized supports
- accommodate individual needs

PROJECT

EDUCATION

Making sure consumers, providers and the community receive and understand:

- information on Self-Determination
- how to make informed choices
- person-centered planning approaches
- quality assurance issues

COMPONENTS

