

MEMORANDUM

TO: Advisory Committee HCBW Evaluation Coordinators
FROM: Amy Hewitt & John Sauer,
Institute on Community Integration
DATE: October 6, 1999
RE: Project update

We wanted to take a moment to update you on the progress of the Minnesota Home and Community Based Waiver Evaluation.

First, the Department of Human Services has undergone a few personnel changes that have effected the HCBW evaluation. Bob Meyer and Kristin Johnson were the previous DHS project officers assigned to this evaluation and both have taken new positions within DHS. Our new project officers are Joan Warmington and Kathy Kelly.

Overall we are extremely discouraged by the response rate of all of the surveys we have sent out to various interested stakeholders. We are currently working on implementing strategies to improve response rates (e.g. sending out reminder post cards, follow up phone calls). We have not yet received all 700 pre-survey forms back from county case managers. This poor response rate was not anticipated and has resulted in us not being able to get packets out to the Arc coordinators so that they can conduct interviews within the original timelines. We are currently working with the Department of Human Service to re-align our timelines and to implement strategies to strongly urge counties to return pre-survey forms. Below is a list of the response rates for each survey type as of 9/27/99.

County pre-survey forms/consents: 403/823
Residential site surveys: 15/247
Residential DSP: 10/176
Vocational site surveys: 10/159
Vocational DSP: 61/318
Other provider site surveys: 4/67
Other DSP: 3/134
Family: 80/307
Consumer surveys: 155/397
Individual case manager surveys: 412/690
General case manager: 48/75

To the extent that through your connections and communications you can encourage case managers, agencies, families and direct support staff to make a difference and have their voice heard by completing and returning the evaluation surveys that would be helpful in making this evaluation successful.

We have heard from a few agencies that they did not know that the evaluation was being conducted and that they were not told by some case managers to expect an interviewer to contact the people who receive their services to arrange an interview. We have notified the trade associations (ARRM, MNDACA & HHC) of this situation and have asked them to put out an informational bulletin to their membership regarding the evaluation. Hopefully this will provide information to those providers who have not heard about the evaluation and will also improve response rates for provider and DSP surveys.

We have formally asked DHS for a 3 – 6 month extension and have indicated that we feel a sample of 550 HCBW is sufficient for this evaluation (representative and statistically sound). Once we have received an official decision regarding our request, we will forward the information to you. In the meantime we are not planning an advisory meeting for October as we had originally planned. The purpose of the last two advisory meetings is to discuss evaluation findings and to determine the best strategies for disseminating results. Obviously we are not done collecting data and do not want to hold an advisory committee meeting just to hold a meeting. Provided we get an extension for the project, our next advisory meeting will likely not be held until January 2000. As soon as we have a better idea of when we will have completed data collection, we will schedule a meeting.

We truly appreciate your hard work in helping us figure out what questions we should ask of the various interested stakeholders. Your feedback on all of the surveys was invaluable. Please help us to increase the number of returned surveys by working within the organization/group you represent on the advisory committee to encourage case managers, families, provider agencies and direct support staff to complete and return their surveys.

Thank you for all of your hard work and we look forward to seeing you this winter!
Please call with any questions.