

The



Monday Update

December 2006

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Partners' training sessions video a dramatic success

Michigan Partners for Freedom has a new, original DVD program it has been showing at its training sessions around the state and now it's available for wide distribution.

The video is titled "Freedom is Meant for You and Me" and, according to Michigan Partners' project coordinator Tammy Finn, it dramatically highlights the lives of four Michigan people with disabilities. The program shows how these four subjects use self-determination and its principles to enhance their lives. "Nothing is more powerful than someone's personal story," says Finn.

Michigan Partners is supported in part by a grant from the DD Council.

The DVD was created to show at the series of community training sessions that Michigan Partners provides local consumers and advocates around the state. "It provides excellent examples of the power of self-determination."

Showing the 18-minute video supplements the training session's PowerPoint program and an overview of what is self-determination. "The strength of the DVD program is that it underlines everything that comes before it," Finn states. "It says that we're not talking about something that's unreachable....self-determination is real and it works."

The video program has been so successful that a second DVD has been added and is being shown at community training sessions and the more specialized training for local leaders. Finn says it should be available for distribution, along with a third video program, in 2007.

Produced in Grand Rapids

The video was produced by the Grand Rapids Community Media Center. "They have an excellent vision of how important community advocacy is and this is reflected in the programs they have produced for us. They understand what we want to do." The non-profit center is, says its web site (www.grcmc.org/) dedicated "to building community through media."

The DVD program may be ordered from Tammy Finn. Her address for ordering or for more information on Michigan Partners (why not join the group and become a partner?) is:

Tammy Finn, Project Coordinator
Michigan Partners for Freedom
The Arc Michigan
1325 S. Washington Ave.
Lansing, MI 48910
1-800-292-7851, ext. 106
Email is tammy@arcmi.org

Michigan Partners has plans to continue its successful training programs in 2007.

To finish 2006, the training appeared in Flint on Nov. 3, then moved to Berrien County on Nov. 8, where 40 people attended and provided positive comments such as "I do more for myself out there in the community," and "The information was presented at a level that all could understand."

Oakland County was the site for the Nov. 28 training with a session also held in Wayne the next day. The promotional flyer for the Wayne session reads, "Self-Determination is for everyone! If you have a disability and want to get more control of your life, your supports, your services, and the people in your life, join Michigan Partners for Freedom on November 26, 2006."

Finn and Company concluded 2006 with a training day in Cass County on Dec. 4.

The tentative Michigan Partners schedule for 2007 calls for training Jan. 17 in Muskegon County, Jan. 25 in Lansing, February in Berrien/Cass, and March in Washtenaw and Newaygo Counties.

For more on this very successful enterprise, check out the April, 2006 edition of Monday Update ("Michigan Partners on the road for Self-Determination"). It's available at the DD Council's web site – www.michigan.gov/ddcouncil - under "Publications," or call Rick Van Horn at 1-517-334-7288.

The independent supports coordinator: it's in the details

To be effective, any project enterprise needs a coordinator, someone to watch over the details and day-to-day events that make up the enterprise. If you are a person with developmental disabilities, you can have the services of a coordinator.....an "independent supports coordinator."

A good example of what a coordinator does might be an independent building contractor, who takes care of the details of putting up a new house. He or she brings together (and keeps track of) all the elements of a house, the supplies of wood and windows, nails and doors, concrete and glass, and the services of the workers who put them together.

That's similar to the kind of job that an independent supports coordinator has in his or her business relationship with a person with disabilities who is also a consumer of supports and services.

Where does the independent supports coordinator fit within the process of your achieving independence through self-determination? He or she is hired by you and, in addition to your family and friends, can help achieve the dreams and desires you identify in your person-centered plan.

How does it work? You enter into an agreement with your chosen independent support coordinator and then pay them using an individualized budget through a fiscal intermediary (who helps pay the bills and taxes, writes checks; sort of an accountant working for you).

Many government titles

Fiscal intermediary, support coordinator - big titles for those who can help you become more independent in your life? Yes, because it all starts with the government, where long words, big terms and titles are typical. This is just part of the process, as you may know, of receiving Medicaid funds from the government, where layers of checks and balances are normal.

The use of independent support coordinators and fiscal intermediaries is a fairly new way of helping persons with disabilities become more in control of the supports they may need to get a job, live in a home of their choosing, make more friends, and become a contributor to the community.

The old way of helping a person with disabilities with his or her life was to have a team of professionals who were employed by the same government agency that processed and regulated the supports and services money. This team might be made up of clinical types: nurses, psychologists, a case manager, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and physical therapists, to name just a few.

It was the team's job to inform the person with disabilities and family what services and supports were best. Services and supports were from a list of team-approved providers ("Need a service? This is who you're going to hire.").

Many of these teams worked under the assumption that the client needed fixing – certainly a negative start to helping a person change his or her life for the better.

But that was then. Today, many agencies have moved past the clinical approach and now provide help based on a positive attitude that focuses on a person's strengths, abilities and desire for a better future, as well as community support. Independence, personal choices and self-determination rule. Part of this new way of doing things are the options of independent support coordinators (somebody to make sure the person-centered plan focuses on what the person wants for their future, and actually gets implemented), and fiscal intermediaries (keeping track of where the money goes, how much has been spent, and how much is left).

Plan + budget, then coordinator

Put aside fiscal intermediary for now and focus on the independent support coordinator. You can hire a coordinator once you have a person-centered plan and an individual budget you can use. The money is yours...it's your choice who you're going to hire to be your independent supports coordinator. How much you pay him or her is up to you, not some team.

Under the new way of doing things, the coordinator you hire must only meet the basic Medicaid requirements.

What exactly does the supports coordinator do? Here is a list of responsibilities from the Michigan Department of Community Health's Medicaid Provider Manual:

- Planning and/or facilitating planning using person-centered principles.
- Developing an IPOS (Individual Plan of Supports) using the person-centered planning process.
- Linking to, coordinating with, follow-up of, advocacy with, and/or monitoring of Habilitation Supports Waivers, other mental health services and community services/supports.
- Brokering of providers of services/supports.
- Assistance with access to entitlements and/or legal representation.
- Coordination with the Medicaid Health Plan, Medicaid fee-for-service, or other healthcare providers.

Words, that when put into action, provide the support you need to become independent and stay independent.

The manual also says the coordinator must make sure:

- Your desires and needs are determined.
- The supports and services you need and want are identified and implemented.
- That people you choose are involved in planning your life.
- Your housing and employment issues and concerns are addressed.
- Social networks are developed.

It's in the manual

Sound good? The best part of the independent supports coordinator service might be that it is identified in the Medicaid Provider Manual rules and regulations that this support be provided to you if you choose, just as an independent facilitator of your choice must be provided if that is what you also wish.

As you may know, during the person-centered planning process, one question that is always asked is, "Who would you like to provide each of your services?" If your plan authorizes a supports coordinator, that's when discussion about hiring one begins.

Which agency you must go to through depends on the county you live in. If you are a person with developmental disabilities or a family member, you likely already know about the community supports agency that administers Medicaid services in your county.

That agency – probably a community mental health service board or private organization hired to do the work either practices the new methods of freedom of choice and follows the Manual, or it does not.

Become a partner

It is up to you to request a coordinator. But rather than demand change, you may wish to offer to partner with the agency and your case manager to make these changes happen in your community. The agency helped you create your person-centered plan and will obtain credentials for, and regular work updates from, the supports coordinator you hire, so establishing a good working relationship with agency staff is important.

Who are supports coordinators? They are people who understand person-centered planning and self-determination and are familiar with the model of supports. Unless they have a Bachelor's degree, they are usually provided oversight by someone who does.

Experience instead of education

If they do not have a formal education or a license or certificate, they must have applicable life experience that gives them the skills to be a good coordinator. This very much includes people with disabilities, family members and friends.

Supports coordinators may also be professional advocates who have experience in schools, advocacy organizations, job search agencies, hospitals, etc.

Whoever it might be, they should know community resources and their knowledge and expertise should benefit the people they support. They also must have their credentials verified by your services agency. This can be quite easy and it does include a background check, for your protection, as required by Medicaid.

As far as choosing a coordinator, it's best to interview at least three candidates. Some people might interview five candidates. Others may have one person, and one person only, in mind as their supports coordinator and that works, too.

Hire the best

If you don't have anyone in mind, it's likely your agency has a list of qualified people who serve as coordinators. The criteria for hiring a person as a coordinator are also yours. Some people may hire a coordinator based on education, or experience as an advocate, or personality, etc....it's your choice, but you should hire the person you feel is going to help you the best with your life.

Remember when you hire a supports coordinator it is a business transaction; you are not hiring him or her for life. Once this business

relationship begins, if you feel it is not working, you have the right to end the relationship and find somebody else.

It's important to remember that the coordinator does this kind of work because he or she cares about people, but it is also a job. But you should expect quality service for your money and your coordinator should have whatever time and effort is required to help you implement your person-centered plan.

Once you have selected your supports coordinator, you (or your designated representative) and he or she sign a formal agreement. The agreement outlines roles and responsibilities and how much you will pay the coordinator for services.

From there, you and your supports coordinator implement your person-centered plan and make great things happen! Your service agency is a free, valuable, resource partner in the process and will monitor plan progress notes from your coordinator and help with any customer service needs you might have.

Grant applied for....could provide Michigan housing solutions

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) has applied for a federal grant that, if awarded to the state, will assist people with disabilities and seniors to live in housing of their choosing.

If awarded to Michigan, the project will begin in 2008 and last for at least two years. The grant is titled "Deficit Reduction Act: Money Follows the Person Demonstration."

Basically, the law provides grant money to pay for home and community-based services, including transition services, for up to 12 months for qualified individuals who move from an inpatient facility (nursing home, hospital, or ICF-MR) to a qualified residence.

If a person resides in a nursing home and chooses to live elsewhere, there may not be enough support resources, including funds, to provide suitable

living in an independent setting. It may be that a person living in the nursing facility had applied for assistance to move out and into a place of his or her choice. However, the funds and resources are not there to assist with the transition.

Community services provided by the grant money will come from either the optional MI Choice waiver for elderly and people with physical disabilities or the Home Help state plan personal care program, with transition services provided by the Single Point of Entry Program, or Centers for Independent Living.

Grant may mean services for more people

For people who wish to move into an assisted living program, presently there is little money that will permit the program to provide services a person might require. For those who qualify, the grant may provide the money for waiver services possibly not available from an adult foster care location. In some cases, this lack of the ability to bring along services may be the only barrier preventing such qualified people from making the transition.

The program will be administered by DCH's Medical Services Administration, along with the Office of Long-Term Care Supports and Services. Collaborators include Michigan Disability Rights Coalition, the Disability Network/Michigan and advocates and community service providers.

Planning for using the grant calls for participants to come from a wide area of the state, rather than just a few sites. Since this project is a demonstration, planners hope to establish practices that will extend beyond the life of the grant and become a routine part of the service system.

Living choices, right up front

Then, people who might have gone to a nursing facility because they did not know about the most appropriate community services will instead exercise choices, up front, about where they want to live. They will never see the inside of the nursing home system.

This means, through the Single Point of Entry Program (SPE), the need for transition will actually decrease. SPE is another grant that is currently being operated as a pilot project in four locations around the state.

Practices encouraged by the Money Follows The Person grant are also expected to build capacity among providers and create well-informed community stakeholders.

This is much easier than choosing, then transitioning to, a place to live from within a nursing home.

Institutions still in favor?

Besides the obvious benefits of living in a place of choice, doing so can be less expensive for the system than residing in a nursing home. Even though more and more people with disabilities are taking advantage of home and community services long-term care systems, the delivery of care and services still tends to favor living in an institution.

This is where most of the Medicaid money is spent. In fact, federal statistics show that just one third of Medicaid long-term care spending goes toward personal care and home health services. The purpose of the grant is to help shift money more into the personal and home-based style of services and supports.

When and if the grant is received, people who may qualify for its benefits will be notified as a Single Point of Entry participant, or through the local waiver agency, or even by word of mouth through organizations such as the Regional Interagency Consumer Committees.

State website may be a resource

Have you visited the state's Michigan Disability Resources website? You may find it an interesting stop the next time you're surfing.

The address is: www.michigan.gov/disabilityresources

On its welcome page, it says, "Michigan's first website devoted specifically to the interests, concerns, and needs of Michiganders with disabilities."

The welcome continues by noting “you will find the services and programs for people with disabilities offered by the State of Michigan as well as other sites of interest. Whether you're looking for assistance in finding a job, want to learn about the latest assistive technology, or have a question about your rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you will find it here.”

Categories for selection on the left side of the first page include:

- Employment
- Education
- Housing
- Transportation
- Health
- Benefits
- Technology
- Disability Rights
- Accessibility
- Programs and services

Each category has a list of links to various agencies that provide services and information on that topic. For example, under Employment can be found information and links to:

- Michigan Rehabilitation Services
- Michigan Career and Technical Institute
- Michigan Commission for the Blind
- Michigan Commission for the Blind Training Center
- Business Enterprise Program
- Workers' Compensation Agency
- Career, Education & Workplace Programs
- Michigan Works!
- Joint Veterans Council of Michigan
- State of Michigan Job Postings
- DBTAC: Great Lakes ADA Center
- Michigan Transition Resources
- ESight Careers Network
- Employer Assistance & Recruiting Network

Quite a list.

The DD Council link may be found under Programs and Services, along with Michigan Department of Education, Special Education & Early Intervention Services, Michigan Department of Human Services, and CAUSE-Citizens Alliance to Uphold Special Education.

How can you access this site if you don't have a computer? Your local library most likely has one you can use and if you are not the computer type, the librarian may be willing to help you access the Michigan Disability Resources web page.

Another source that may provide web access for you is your Regional Interagency Consumer Committee (RICC). At the next meeting, tell people about the web site and ask if there is anyone there who might be willing to help you access it for yourself. Yet another source is your local Center for Independent Living (CIL). It's pretty certain they have a computer and it's hooked into the network.

Council committee and work group meeting minutes

Housing Work Group

Nov. 9, 2006

Attendance: Paul Ecklund, Nelson Grit, Sue Hart, Penny McMillian, Carl Fenner, Darrel Hicks, Salli Christenson, Molly Chambers, Paul Palmer, Frank Lynn.

OSU/ADA Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion & Disability – Sue Hart said that she had submitted the proposal to OSU and had sought funding through the Cookie Gant Foundation. She is currently waiting to get acceptance of the proposal before seeking further funding.

Zero Step Across Michigan – Frank Lynn presented a report on the first meeting of the Zero Step Team. Paul Ecklund (DRC), Sue Hart (DNF),

Linda Potter (UCP), Frank Lynn & Rob Lewakowski (DAKC) will be working on the project.

MDRC Finding Our Way Home Steering Committee meeting – Nelson Grit reported that the next meeting date is 11/29/06

MSHDA 5 Year Implementation Committee -Nelson Grit reported that MSHDA was still ignoring the request that PWD be included in all teams for implementation of the 5 Year Plan. MSHDA only wants to include PWD on the Supportive Housing group. A meeting is scheduled for before Thanksgiving to discuss these issues.

Michigan Conference on Affordable Housing – Possible recipients of the Corrie Bair Building Inclusive Communities Award were discussed. MSHDA and Habitat were suggested. Possible presentations at the conference were also discussed.

Genesee County Land Bank Sue Hart said the Land Bank Chairperson will be speaking at the Leaders For Action Long Term Care Group meeting in Flint on 11/22. Sue will e-mail out informational flyer regarding this meeting which will be held at The Disability Network in Flint

Carl Fenner presented information on Simplified Disabled Housing which can be found at www.simplifieddisabledhousing.com

Education Work Group

Sept. 27, 2006

Attendance: Patt Clement, Glenn Ashley, Jane Spitzley, Barbara LeRoy,
Jane Reagan

Phone: Stacey Diekevers, Neva Nahan

Guests: Michele McManus, Karen Anthony, and Lori Goike

- 1.) Jane R. moved to accept the August 23, 2006 minutes. Barbara seconded, and the motion carried.
- 2.) Presentation and Discussion on Early Childhood Education with Michele McManus and Lori Goike
The presentation is attached and has been sent to all WG members.

3.) Universal Education Summit

Planning – update and next steps.

Possible dates in April were suggested, but it was agreed that March would avoid conflicts with other events and school breaks. Patt will check on March dates.

Participant list – a previous draft was distributed. A number of names were suggested. Changes in the names of 2 of the Results Teams were suggested to clarify the focus of the groups. Patt will pull together the lists for the next meeting.

Jane Reagan moved that the Council pay for 3 people to attend the Michigan Summit on Model High Schools, to be held in April 2007. Barbara seconded. After discussion, the consensus was that this would be a preferred use of Work Group funds, and the motion carried.

4.) Next meeting is Wednesday, October 25.

Multicultural Committee

Oct. 9, 2006

Present:

Terrie Hylton (chair, phone); Mae Golden (phone); Caryn Pack Ivy (phone); Robin Sefton (phone); Clara Potapa (phone); Betty Walton (phone); Jacqueline Day; Jim McGaugh; Mitzi Allen; Rick Van Horn .

Call to Order: by Chairperson Hylton at 1:11 p.m.

September's minutes approved on a motion by McGaugh and second by Day.

For today's agenda, Hylton added "Information for Resource File" to New Business. Allen added "Outreach Information" to New Business. Golden added "Housing Commission Board Diversity" to New Business. The agenda was then approved after a motion by Golden and second by Day.

Old Business

- RICC Retreat Workshop. Hylton thanked Sophie Baker, Van Horn, and Patrick McSherry for their help with the workshop.

Hylton said only about 12 signed up for the workshop, but more than 35 attended. She invited comments from attendees. Golden said it was an excellent workshop and was well-received by participants. Van Horn asked who among the crowd in attendance was a RICC diversity coordinator, stating that it was for diversity coordinators that the workshop was presented. If they attended they should receive credit. The sign-in sheets will be examined to determine which of those in attendance were diversity coordinators.

Allen read evaluation comments from the workshop. Ten people filled them out for the first session. They included “informative and well-presented,” “information was helpful and will be used,” “good information was given,” “basic information for approaching groups,” “lots of good information,” and “helpful.”

Hylton explained the concept of the diversity coordinator and the idea behind training workshops for them (“to build community collaboration....”).

Sefton, departing from Multicultural Committee business, noted that some speakers for the RICC workshop were not paid and others were. Allen said it is the policy of the Council not to pay grantees to speak at Council functions. Keynote speakers are often paid. Hylton noted that most conferences in which she was involved with planning do not pay speakers. Day said in her workshop and meeting experiences, contributors are rarely paid.

Day said the workshop was a positive experience. Allen said in order to learn whether or not Council functions are improving their outreach that the category of race should be on the evaluation sheet. Hylton agreed and wondered if that could be extended to RICC functions via their diversity coordinators.

- The Committee work plan. It was approved following a motion to accept by Golden and seconded by Day. Van Horn noted the hard work put in by Committee members writing the 2007 work plan at the September meeting.

Diversity coordinators. Any changes in information on this group? With the RICC certification packets coming in, there may be new coordinators. The packets should be reviewed and the coordinators' list updated.

New Business

- Information for the resource file? Golden discussed a new resource at the African American Family Resource Center and Network, an information network created to lower the rate of black infant deaths in Genesee County.

Hylton encouraged members to look within their own communities for multicultural and outreach resources. The Committee needs these contacts because the Council relies on the Committee for such information. Members should bring at least one resource to each meeting.

Day reported that the fastest growing AIDS population in the U.S. is heterosexual African American women. Day has an acquaintance at the local AIDS network who can be considered a resource.

Walton commented on the negatives being mentioned during the meeting and suggested looking at positives in the African American and other minority communities as well. "Share some of the good things." They belong in the resource file, too.

- Hylton listed as a resource the Greater Detroit Agency for the Blind and Visually Impaired. They are willing to print materials in Braille. The web address is www.gdabvi.org.

- Outreach information. Allen said she had been receiving outreach information from other DD councils. The Committee may want to look at some of these programs. A review of them will be put on the November agenda.

- Allen reported on her visit to the Newaygo RICC meeting featuring cultural awareness activities. It is important that other Committee members conduct

similar visits. Then members will see what the RICCs are doing with outreach and be able to apply that experience to future planning.

Continuing, a day of outreach and multicultural events should be more than just entertainment. Minority members attending an outreach meeting should be encouraged to stay, rather than just entertaining then leaving. Day understands how difficult it can be to organize an effective day of RICC outreach. First of all, the community at large must know about the RICC and what it is and stands for before the RICC can practice outreach.

Hylton pointed out the importance of not only asking minorities to RICC meetings, but also inviting ourselves to the minorities' meetings and gatherings as well. "Can I come to some of your functions?"

McGaugh noted at all the usual disability functions, "you see the same people there," so such meetings are largely "preaching to the choir." Hylton said one must suggest when announcing a meeting or other gathering that those coming bring a friend.

McGaugh asked if outreach is being done at schools.

- Potapa said she's in the process of starting a RICC in Barry County.

- Golden on public housing authority in Flint. She is concerned about the lack of diversity on its board. It's a reverse issue because the board is all African Americans. Golden would like some direction on how to approach this board about diversifying the board for its own benefit since it is quite ineffective. The members are appointed by the mayor, which may explain the three board members are city employees.

Hylton replied that Golden, who attends the board meetings, will have to get political, review guidelines and ask about the process of getting members appointed and have somebody ready to recommend to the board. Also get the media involved. McGaugh agreed....get the public involved.

Updates and announcements

- Allen said this is Hispanic Heritage Month in Michigan. McGaugh said October is also Traumatic Brain Injury Month and National Disability Employment Awareness Month, plus Invest In Ability Month.

- Allen announced that the Upper Peninsula RICCs do a conference call once a month and Committee members should join in, learn more about their outreach activities.

Hylton will discuss further with Terry Hunt the concept of conducting further RICC diversity coordinator training in the UP.

Adjourn

Golden moved to adjourn. McGaugh seconded. Meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

Transportation Work Group

Oct. 12, 2006

PRESENT:

Diane Kempen, Kathy Janego, Aaron Borton, Sharen Blowers, Paul Miller, Tandy Bidinger, Dee Florence, JoAnn Lucas

VIA PHONE:

Genesee: Charlene Lizotte, Gordon Siwula, Carl Fenner, Mae Golden, Tiffany McIntire

Kalamazoo: Don Milbeck, Stacy Riddle

Kent: Rob Lewakowski

Legislative Update

MDOT is seeking input on state plan (long range)

Review of 8/03/06 meeting

The UP TWG meeting was a great success. There were representatives from the Governor's office, Stabenow's office, Levin's office and the local radio station. Rep. Casperson came and stayed for the entire meeting.

The Delta RICC has been working hard on getting information out to everyone in the community about the transportation millage.

The TWG traveling meeting needs a new site for next year. We are looking for a location in northern Michigan. (not the U.P.)

TWG T-Shirt (design, etc.)

The TWG is having T-Shirts made. At the October meeting a final logo design will be determined.

Local Advisory Committees

The Luce Co. RICC is trying to get their LAC to commit to when their next meeting is going to take place.

The Genesee Co. RICC reported that their transportation millage passed and the LAC has accepted a rate increase, doing away with the monthly pass.

Transportation Voucher Project Update

The Jackson Voucher program currently has 50 riders. Unfortunately, they are having difficulty attracting multi-cultural individuals.

Transportation to Local Polling Place

Now is the time to check with your local transit provider about getting a ride to your polling place to vote. There are some transit providers who will provide a free ride to polling places.

Work Plan

The work group went over the details of the TWG work plan for FY07. There were many suggested changes and updates made. The final draft work plan will be presented at the October TWG meeting for approval.

Success Stories

Kent: A sidewalk study has been completed and presented to the Downtown Development Authority for implementation.

Genesee: *The Genesee RICC participated in a walking group, which walked the street to determine if those with a disability could successfully travel around the area.*

Other

The TWG presented a transportation workshop at the RICC Leadership Development Conference.

In November, the TWG will present a workshop at the Michigan Rehabilitation Conference on the Voucher program.

We are looking for a co-chair for the Transportation Work Group.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:44 am.

Public Policy Committee

Oct. 10, 2006

Present

Robin Sefton, Theresa Squires, Andre Robinson, Rick Van Horn, Elmer Cerano, Terry Hunt, Paul Palmer, Melinda Haus-Johnson, Tandy Bidinger, Dee Florence, Jacqui Day

Welcome/Introductions

Theresa Squires filled in as Chair until Chair Andre Robinson's arrival, and called the meeting to order at 8:41 am.

Approval of Minutes from September meetings

Melinda Haus-Johnson moved that the minutes from the September meeting be accepted as written. Theresa Squires seconded. CARRIED

Candidates Forum

The October DDC meeting will have a health issues theme and a Candidates Forum will be part of the meeting. Terry Hunt presented the questions that will be asked of the candidates. The committee refined one of the questions that will be asked to the Secretary of State. They felt it was important to ask what, if anything, will be done to make the hours of operation more convenient for the citizens of Michigan. We provide input on the test of the questions previously.

Work Plan Revision

The Committee examined the draft of the work plan and made a few grammatical corrections. We will also be attempting to simplify and shorten it.

Federal Updates

a. Medicare Part D

Many individuals receiving Medicare are reaching a “donut hole”, where they have reached a \$\$\$ limit and now, for a certain period of time, will have to pay the entire amount for their prescription medications, until they have paid a certain \$\$ amount and then the Medicare will kick in again.

Medicare reimbursement rates are being cut.

b. Deficit Reduction Act

As part of this legislation, individuals will have to show ID and prove their citizenship. Due to the expense and difficulty of obtaining such information, this requirement will cause hardship for many. The federal government should offer money and assistance to help offset these costs.

State Updates

a) Ballot Proposals

There will be five ballot proposals for individuals to vote on this year. Each ballot proposal was explained.

They are as follows:

Proposal 1

A proposed constitutional amendment to require that money held in conservation and recreation funds can only be used for their intended purposes.

Proposal 2

A proposal to amend the state constitution to ban affirmative action programs that give preferential treatment to groups or individuals based on their race, gender, color, ethnicity or national origin for public employment, education or contracting purposes.

Proposal 3

A referendum on Public Act 160 of 2004 – An act to allow the establishment of a hunting season for mourning doves.

Proposal 4

A proposed constitutional amendment to prohibit government from taking private property by eminent domain for certain private purposes.

Proposal 5

A legislative initiative to establish mandatory school funding levels.

b. Long Term Care

MDCH is still holding “Single Point of Entry” informational forums. People are encouraged to attend and give public opinion. The remaining dates are as follows:

October 23, 2006
10:00 am - Noon
Michigan Home Health Association
2140 University Drive, Suite 220
Okemos, MI

November 27, 2006
10:00 am – Noon
Michigan Library & Historical Center
702 West Kalamazoo
Lansing, MI

b) SB 836

This bill has passed the house. Please contact your senator and encourage them to support this legislation.

c) HB 1289

This legislation will change the make up of the Detroit Mental Health Board. It will mandate that the county appoint all 12 members. Currently, 6 members are appointed by the City of Detroit and six members by the county, resulting in a 6/6 split.

PPC Subgroup on Awards

The sub-committee is in the process of finalizing the details, nomination forms, timeline, etc. The plan is for a wide distribution of the nomination so that a diverse pool of nominees is found.

Legislative Event Planning Committee

The next meeting is scheduled for October 16th from 1 pm to 3 pm at the DD Council Office. Currently, the Committee is looking for suggestions for speakers; preferably someone who is knowledgeable about disability issues and doesn't charge a fee. Following the event, there will be a sit down lunch the same as last year.

Health Issues Work Group

Sept. 19, 2006

Members present: Linda Potter, Paul Shaheen, Jacqui Day (phone), Yvonne Fleener

Guests: Linda Potter (UCP), Tom Leitz and Erin Litner (Message Makers), Dave Branding (phone-Resource One)

Staff: Terry Hunt, Dee Florence, Tandy Bidinger

Jacqui agreed to chair the meeting in the absence of chair Theresa Arini.

Members discussed the status of the upcoming candidate's forum. The council currently does not have a means of paying Kathrine Draper for her

time to coordinate the forum, so no progress is taking place at this time. Vendella is attempting to resolve this issue with the department.

Members viewed the first cut of the video currently identified as Faces of Medicaid and discussed options, preferences, etc. Linda, Tom and Erin noted comments and will incorporate into next draft.

Dave Branding reviewed progress on the Care Coordination project. 26 participants were involved initially and the total is now up to 30. This expansion provides perspective regarding more diverse needs and issues. This population, however, does not have broad multi-cultural representation and this remains a priority for this project. Of the initial 26, Dave reported the following demographics: 21 white, two Native American and three African Americans.
