

REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Implementation of career path for Direct Service Associates
April 2, 2007

PROGRESS REPORT:

Competency Development - A study team continues to develop specific Direct Care Associates' (DSA) competencies for each of the three levels of the DSA career ladder as described in the framework for the program (see Developmental Career Path described below). The study team consists of representatives from each of the facilities and central office that includes program and staff level members. The study team last met March 27, 2007 to review newly developed companion checklists that will be used by first line supervisors to verify Direct Care Associate's competencies. The list of competencies was derived from the Community Support Skill Standards developed nationally by subject matter experts of the Human Services Research Institute. The eight competencies that have been identified are Crisis Intervention & Prevention, Information Gathering, Communications, Facilitation of Services, Documentation, Organizational Participation, Community Living Skills & Support, and Advocacy / Participant Empowerment. The following criteria have guided all developmental work. The competencies must be observable and measurable, distinct at each level, directly tied to excellence on the job and contributes to the attainment of goals of the organization.

Next Steps: At the next working meeting the team will review key administrative issues for defining and administering the developmental career pathway. The career pathway standards using both formal instruction credits and verified on-the-job competencies will be determined for movement through each level in the career pathway. Formal instruction includes that obtained through community college course work and the College of Direct Support. Also, the complement of developed competencies at each of the three described levels and the companion checklists then will be validated through focus groups that will be held in the near future at each of the facilities. Direct Service Associate (DSAs) representatives will provide feedback and input into the final competencies that will be used in the administration of their DSA career pathway.

REPORT ON PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT TRAINING PROGRAM:

Direct Service Associates Assigned as Learners in the College of Direct Support (CDS)
As of April 2, 2007

| Facility Name | Total Direct Service Associates | Assigned as Learners in CDS |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Catawba Hospital | 65 | 56 |
| Central State Hospital | 393 | 252 |
| Central VA Training Center | 721 | 66 |
| Commonwealth Center for Children & Adolescents | 63 | 63 |
| Eastern State Hospital | 322 | 17 |
| Hiram Davis Medical Center | 71 | 35 |
| Northern VA Mental Health Institute | 75 | 75 |
| Northern VA Training Center | 287 | 74 |
| Piedmont Geriatric Hospital | 104 | 103 |
| Southeastern VA Training Center | 258 | 44 |
| Southern VA Mental Health Institute | 48 | 48 |
| Southside VA Training Center | 643 | 232 |
| Southwestern VA Mental Health Institute | 190 | 145 |
| Southwestern VA Training Center | 261 | 261 |
| Virginia Center for Behavioral Rehabilitation | 8 | 1 |
| Western State Hospital | 212 | 212 |
| Total | 3721 | 1684 |

As of March 30, 2007, 1,681 Direct Service Associates are assigned as Learners in the College of Direct Support Internet web-based training program. This constitutes 45% of the Direct Service Associates workforce within the sixteen state facilities across disabilities. Currently, there are 1,056 other DMHMRSAS employees participating in the Program and benefiting from the curriculum at no extra cost. The CDS curriculum (CDS VA Partnership Program) continues to be offered at a reduced price to community service boards and private provider organizations across the Commonwealth because of the public/private partnership and agreement between the University of Minnesota/Office of Community Integration, MC Strategies, CDS, and DMHMRSAS.

PROGRAM INITIATIVE - Developmental Career Path for Direct Service Associates' (DSA)

The framework for the developmental path for DSAs is proposed to consist of three (3) levels and will be further developed with specific competency requirements and reward structure by a team consisting of representatives from each of our facilities.

The first level will require:

- The successful completion of the 12 month probationary period (which requires the receipt of a performance evaluation rating of “Contributor” or better);
- The successful completion of all mandatory orientation training; and
- The consistent demonstration of proficiency in all competencies associated with the orientation training, as assessed by supervisors and managers.

Upon successful completion of these three (3) requirements the DSA will receive a salary increase.

The second level will require:

- The completion of a minimum of 24 months of employment;
- The receipt of a performance evaluation rating of “Contributor” or better;
- The absence of active disciplinary notices;
- The successful completion of training and/or education in such competency areas as crisis intervention (identifying possible crises, evaluating situations and determining appropriate interventions, and defusing situations), organizational participation (understands theories/practices and can teach others such things as Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation [CPR], behavioral intervention and physical restraint techniques [TOVA], serves as preceptor or mentor), facilitation of services (facilitates the development and implementation of an individualized client plan in conjunction with client and treatment, team taking into consideration client preferences, needs and interests)and assessments (assists in the initiation and conduct of client assessments).

- The consistent demonstration of the level 2 competencies obtained from training and education as assessed by supervisors and managers.

Upon successful completion of these requirements the DSA will receive a salary increase.

The third level will be focused on the development of leadership and/or advanced clinical skills and will require:

- The completion of a minimum of 36 months of employment;
- The receipt of a performance evaluation rating of “Contributor” or better;
- The absence of active disciplinary notices;
- The successful completion of training and/or education in such competency areas as group facilitation and leadership, full supervision of staff, understanding and teaching concepts and theories associated with behavior analysis, and the promotion of teamwork and collaboration.
- The consistent demonstration of the level 3 competencies obtained from training and education as assessed by supervisors and managers.

If funding is available, upon successful completion of these requirements the DSA will receive a base salary increase.