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Department of Health and Hospitals
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

September 2008 OCDD QUARTERLY UPDATE

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

HCR 69 Enrolled: Study Group for Autism Spectrum Disorder: OCDD remains in contact with legislative leadership who authored this bill. The OCDD looks forward to participating in this initiative.

HB 670, Enrolled Act No. 154 - Transfer of Autism Center to OCDD: Following the passage of HB 670, the Office is now investigating funding sources for a Autism Center, a resource training facility for educators and others charged with educating autistic citizens with the purposes of giving assistance to private and public agencies and providing services to autistic citizens and their families. As an initial step toward collaboration, the OCDD will meet with local legislators and stakeholders to discuss possibilities for office space in Caddo Parish. The Office is investigating grants opportunities for start-up and project development.

Home and Community Based Services Waivers Termination of Services for Displaced Recipients: DHH promulgated a Rule for Termination of Services for Displaced Recipients in Home and Community Based Services Waivers, which was published in the August 20, 2008 issue of the *Louisiana Register* Vol. 34 No. 08, page 1627. The Rule revises the April 20, 2006, Emergency Rule to further clarify provisions for future declared disasters that may cause recipients to be displaced.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES UPDATES

EarlySteps and Targeted Case Management: During the 2008 Regular Session, the Louisiana Legislature approved an additional \$3 million to increase the provider rates for services in natural environments for infants and toddlers through the EarlySteps Program. As a result of the allocation of additional funds, DHH promulgated a Rule effective September 1, 2008 for an increase for the reimbursement rate schedule for certain services provided to infants and toddlers in the EarlySteps Program. The EarlySteps' one-year action plan for 2009-2009 was updated. Staff participated with the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) in the development of a three-year strategic plan. Effective September 15, Janet Mora, formerly with the Department of Education's autism coordinator, accepted the position as the new Executive Director of the SICC, the advisory body for the EarlySteps Program. The System Point of Entry contracts have been awarded for this year. The Regional Quality Assurance Specialists recently hired will devote one third of their time to QA activities for EarlySteps. Autism screening and training for the Early Autism Screening project was held in May and June with additional training sessions scheduled for September and October for all EarlySteps evaluations and assessors for Initial and Annual evaluations and for providers conducting autism screens for six-month reviews.

Individual Support Planning: OCDD will conduct intensive training January 1, 2009 to March 31, 2009 for two support coordination agencies in one region to pilot the electronic ISP from April 1, 2009 to June 30, 2009. Implementation of the new electronic ISP will begin July 1, 2009 with a plan to phase in all regions over the course of FY 09-10.

Support Intensity Scale (SIS) and LA PLUS Assessments: OCDD is preparing for the statewide implementation of the SIS and LA PLUS assessment with all New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) participants. In response to the recent hurricanes, OCDD has altered timelines for the implementation schedule. OCDD SIS/LA PLUS project team continues to work with regional office staff and support coordinators in on-going training and shadowing of assessors to promote reliable assessment procedures, processes, and the attainment of quality data. With final phase of certification of core regional office staff and core support coordinator assessors, focus is shifting to implementing procedures for on-going data reliability. National consultants and the project team continue to work on the refinement of resource allocation model. A stakeholder update meeting was held on August 29, with another meeting planned for follow-up with additional information about the resource allocation model..

Support Coordination: In July and August 2008, support coordinators continued to adjust to the new 15-minute billing increments. By mutual agreement, OCDD made some adjustments to assist the support coordinators in carrying out their daily functions with new billing logs and an updated version of the Case management Information System Software support program. Support coordinators named three staff per agency in August to attend SIS/LA Plus and "Guidelines for Planning" training and regions 1, 3, and 9, with regions 6, 7, & 8 to follow. Support Coordinators switched into disaster preparation mode with approaching hurricanes Gustav, then Ike with Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 9 providing evacuation assistance, phone support, resource and referral information for individuals with disabilities living in the community. Support coordinators are now in recovery mode assisting people to locate housing, food, water, and replace medical equipment and clothing.

Community Services: The 2008 Louisiana Regular Legislative session allocated 2,025 waiver opportunities for services to persons with developmental disabilities. August 18-22, 2008, the first 200 preliminary offer letters for NOW services were mailed to individuals on the Request for Services Registry asking individuals and families to schedule their SIS/LA Plus assessments for the week of September 15-19, 2008, with final waiver offers to occur in October. Due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, the process was delayed and assessments rescheduled October 20-24, 2008 with the conclusion of the process and potential waiver offer in the month of November 2008. Planning for offering the remaining waiver opportunities is underway.

Children's Choice Waiver – Allocation of Waiver Opportunities for children participating in the Money Follows the Person Rebalancing Demonstration: OCDD submitted a rulemaking request to Medicaid to enable allocation of up to 20 Children's Choice waiver opportunities for children who participate in the Money Follows the Person (MFP) Rebalancing Demonstration (June 2008 through September 30, 2011).

New Opportunities Waiver – Skilled Nursing Reimbursement Methodology: Act 19 of the 2008 Louisiana Regular Legislative Session approved increased expenditures for the equalization of the reimbursement rates for the provision of Skilled Nursing services in the New Opportunities Waiver program with the rates for skilled nursing services under Medicaid state plan extended home health services. OCDD will submit a rulemaking request to Medicaid for promulgation of the proposed changes.

National Core Indicators: Surveys have been completed and the contractor is in process of analyzing results of surveys by region and by program area. Responses have been submitted to Human Services Research Institute, who will compare Louisiana results with twenty seven other participating states. Both intrastate and national analysis should be completed by end of this calendar year.

Critical Incident/OTIS Reporting System: The new OCDD critical incident policy and procedures, revised critical incident report form and the Online Tracking Incident System (OTIS) was implemented

July 1, 2008. Prior to implementation, approximately 600 Direct Service Providers along with support coordination agency staff received training.

Complaint Reporting System: The complaint workgroup continues to meet working on the development of OCDD's new complaint database application. This new database will provide quick and easy access to complaint information for remediation and quality improvement strategies. The application is nearing completion with testing of the new system to take place by October. The new application will be piloted on a limited basis for one month to assure there are no problems. Training on the new system should be conducted by the end of December 2008, with full implementation in January 2009.

Rebalancing Initiative Grant/Money Follows the Person: On July 28, 2008 Louisiana Medicaid was notified by CMS that the Louisiana *Money Follows the Person (MFP) Rebalancing Demonstration's Operational Protocol* had been approved. During the development of the program, a committee of stakeholders chose "*My Place Louisiana* or *My Place*" as the marketing name for the Demonstration. Phase I of the *My Place* program will move children from nursing facilities to the Children's Choice Waiver. Phase II of the *My Place* program will utilize the new Residential Options Waiver (ROW), contingent upon CMS approval, for children moving from nursing facilities and for people residing in ICFs/DD. Thirty-five staff (CSRAs, Assistant CSRAs, and PASARR and Waiver Supports and Services Supervisors) were trained on the program's policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities. *My Place* participant information booklets, for people with developmental disabilities in nursing facilities and for people in ICFs/DD, have been finalized along with other information to be distributed to families during person-centered planning meetings. A public website is under construction for the *My Place program* (www.myplacelouisiana.org). A Program Manager has been hired and two positions advertised for the Transition/Quality Management Coordinators, for which more than 145 applications were received.

OCDD'S EMERGENCY OPERATIONS FOR HURRICANES IKE AND GUSTAV

Immediately upon realization that the hurricanes could impact Louisiana, the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities begin focusing on emergency disaster preparedness, deploying teams and individuals to provide support and assistance to staff, providers', and participants' in preparation for emergency evacuations. OCDD employees staffed evacuation shelters, Special Needs Shelters, Louisiana DHH Emergency Operations Center, and OCDD's emergency operations center. Post-hurricane, staff assisted participants in their return to their homes and conducted post-emergency follow-up activities.