



## State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals  
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

### QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT SEPTEMBER 2009

**Rebalancing Initiative Grant/Money Follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration:** The MFP Demonstration (*My Place* or *My Place Louisiana*) staff moved one 18-year-old child out of a nursing facility and into a house during August, who is getting accustomed to no longer living in a nursing facility and having family and friends visiting him more often. (DD Council funds were used to support this child's transition.) The Demonstration staff continue to visit nursing facilities, in which children currently reside, to share the MFP Demonstration program and the opportunities of OCDD home and community-based living services. Staff recently talked with two families interested in the program who are scheduled to participate in a discovery meeting to begin the transition process, and consider signing the Informed Consent. Both Demonstration and regional office staff are doing preliminary work on these transitions, especially in the area of housing. *My Place* staff also began informing hospitals that children who have been institutionalized (inclusive of consecutive hospital and/or nursing home stay) for more than 180 days are eligible to participate in the program. OCDD amended the operational protocol to include hospital stay to be consistent with the CMS guidelines for the Demonstration program. To ensure program readiness for the pending Residential Option Waiver, Demonstration staff are preparing training materials and the Phase II operational protocol.

**Resource Allocation:** The resource allocation model component of the *Louisiana Guidelines for Planning* was implemented with CMS approval July 2009. With the use of the *Guidelines*, greater emphasis is placed on adequate needs-based and personal outcomes assessment, person-centered planning, community inclusion, use of natural and community supports, sharing supports where appropriate, and participation in enriching daytime activities and supports that emphasize the promotion of independence. Statewide training efforts on the *Guidelines* have occurred for the past year along with additional training on utilization of resource allocation elements from the *Guidelines*. Additional support coordinators, supervisors, and regional waiver staff have become proficient in the new planning techniques which is used for all newly designated NOW waiver recipients, and now, for recipients with existing services receiving their annual plan revisions.

**EarlySteps:** EarlySteps received the second half of its ARRA (Stimulus) award of \$6.9 million on Sept 1, which was \$1.09 million more than anticipated. This additional funding will pay for an increased number of children to be served by the program, contracts for diagnostic evaluations, services to children with autism, training and mentoring for providers, and some data system upgrades. The rate increase for support coordination is still pending approval from CMS. The rate increase for infants and toddlers who are not eligible for Medicaid payment for support coordination was implemented September, 2008. Stakeholder surveys were distributed to families and to SICC members for feedback to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) for the verification visit with EarlySteps in October. Interested families may participate in the survey by clicking the link at [www.laptic.org](http://www.laptic.org). The 2009-2010 training schedule is posted to the EarlySteps website at [www.earlysteps.dhh.louisiana.gov](http://www.earlysteps.dhh.louisiana.gov). This schedule includes a *Face-to-Face Teaming Module* to complement an online *Teaming Module*, which will be soon available to providers.

**Support Intensity Scale (SIS) and LAPLUS Assessments:** Since the implementation of SIS and LAPLUS assessments for the new 2,025 New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) participants in October of 2008, 1,115 assessments have been approved for supports and services planning for individuals. As of July 1, 2009, SIS and LAPLUS assessments have been used for support and services planning for all current and new NOW participants. OCDD staff has and continues to put great effort into reviewing all assessments for accuracy so that assessment data can be used for appropriate services allocation through comprehensive support planning. OCDD continues to work with community service office staff, shadowing assessors for assessment certification. To date, there are 176 support coordinators and 21 OCDD staff certified to conduct SIS/LA PLUS assessments. Support coordinators and agencies continue to train and submit their SIS assessments to meet the requirements for Coordinator SIS/LA PLUS Certification. State and regional office staff continue reliability and integrity monitoring of all SIS/LA PLUS assessments.

**Provider Relations:** OCDD met with the Direct Support Provider Advisory Group to get their input and recommendations for the implementation on the *Guidelines for Support Planning and Resource Allocation*, which was approved by CMS and implemented July 2009. The DSP Advisory Group, along with Office for Program Integrity are working to approve a standardized documentation form designed to be meaningful and helpful for all Individual and Family Support providers. OCDD's provider relations staff continues to attend statewide quarterly provider meetings to provide updates and trainings in the areas of employment, residential options, and documentation. Staff communicates on a daily basis with support coordination agencies and service providers to help resolve issues, assist with service providers' billing issues, and update daily the Freedom of Choice list to help recipients choose a service provider.

**Direct Support Initiatives:** OCDD continues to work closely with both these groups to improve direct care services, assist agencies, and support direct care workers. OCDD staff is currently working with two advisory groups, a Direct Support Worker Initiatives Group and a Direct Support Provider Advisory Group. The Direct Support Provider Group is providing feedback and recommendations on issues and concerns relative to direct support care. The Advisory Group is also considering best practices in this field. A survey of DSP staff was recently completed in which results indicated the two top areas of concern among DSP staff are the amount of pay that they receive, and the number of hours they need to work per payroll period in order to make ends meet. The Direct Support Provider Advisory Group will meet this coming quarter to work to establish an annual cost of living wage increase for the DSWs, and work on a plan for recruitment, retention, and training plan for direct support workers.

**Children's Choice Waiver – Family Training Service Definition:** Effective September 20, 2009, a Declaration of Emergency Rule was published in the *Louisiana Register* Vol. 35, No. 09 to amend the service definition of "family training" to assure the definition in the Children's Choice Waiver meets the federal guidelines set forth by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Payment for the cost of travel, meals, and overnight lodging to attend training events or conferences will no longer be available. However, payment will include registration and training fees associated with approved formal instruction in areas relevant to the participant's needs as identified in the plan of care.

**Supports Waiver:** OCDD continues to place emphasis on community-based employment, and will offer numerous trainings, workshops, and technical assistance on these topics throughout the year. The support waiver program manager is working with the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) to offer a series of four webinars to focus on community-based employment for vocational providers and support coordinators. The series of trainings is scheduled to begin in October and will be held every other month.

**Residential Options Waiver:** the new Residential Options Waiver (ROW) application has received final refinements in its newest application, the electronic Version 3.5 format through ongoing assistance and Q&A between CMS Medicaid Waiver Compliance Section and OCDD, along with technical assistance from CMS-authorized consultants. The newest format incorporates performance indicators in key areas of quality assurance including service delivery, health and safety, provider monitoring, corrective action plans, eligibility process, licensing/certification, required training, and outcome-based service planning. Approval from Medicaid is now anticipated for later this year. A ROW program manager has been hired in anticipation of the approval

**OCDD Executive Staff Changes** Mr. Peter Calamari will be retiring as Deputy Assistant Secretary after five years in this position, but will continue in his service to OCDD as Special Projects Director. Mr. Mark A. Thomas, executive manager of community services has been designated Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary by Ms. Kliebert, Assistant Secretary.