

# SW Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

March 20, 2009

**Attendance:** Sharon Schwab, Lori Palesotti, Kris Hemstock, Jerry Pouliot, Jeff Erickson, Tracy Koster, Nancy Karkoska. **Interpreters:** Stephen Mendicott and Paula (intern)

## Welcome and Introductions

### Updates:

#### 1. Review of current budget situation - Jeff Erickson

- Discussion of some reduction in monies given to current grants recipients.
- DHHSD is currently talking with other agencies to assess the options of cross services.
- DHHSD may need community support for contacting legislators regarding funding issues. There was some discussion about making a “form” letter with talking points available so that consumers are more comfortable making contacts.

#### 2. Area Updates – Tracy Koster and Nancy Karkoska

- The Southern area once again hosted a successful community event for area d/hh students.
- Training is occurring at ISJ hospital here in Mankato for a smoother point-of-entry for deaf consumers and interpreter access.
- Client case load has increased with more people accessing services and new people moving to the area.
- Due to increased client case loads and the desire to use our time efficiently and effectively the number of in-house trainings may be reduced and class size increased.
- The TED program is transitioning to a new paperless system which involves the way we receive applications, process them and enter information into a new database.
- TED program will soon be piloting a wireless/cell phone option as part of the services we provide. This is to begin sometime after July 1st.

#### 3. Committee Member Updates: Kris Hemstock and Laurie Palesotti

- “Family Get Away” was held two weeks ago in Mankato with 29 families attending. It was a good time for all and was well received despite some concern over some recent changes at Lifetrack Resources – Greater Minnesota Assessment Service (GMAS).
- Lifetrack Resources – Greater Minnesota Assessment Service (GMAS) recently went with two new assessment persons and are no longer working with Ron Lybarger from Kansas. The end of this working relationship has been very upsetting to the families and several have written letters of concern to Bruce Hodek at DHHSD.

#### *Following are comments made at the meeting regarding this situation:*

- We are greatly affected by this change as we had an excellent working relationship with Ron.
- Ron went beyond assessment by working with area administrators and families to get appropriate services.
- Individuals want to know where to turn and who to talk to about getting Ron back.
- Should they contact Mary Harnett and MCDHH?

- The response “received from DHHS and someone named Deb Olson was inadequate”.
- The presentation given by Dr. Robin Santa-Teresa was very ineffective and was even stopped so that she might redirect her topic toward hearing loss. No changes were made by her after this request.
- No one had any questions for her upon completion of her presentation.
- The comments / evaluations regarding her presentation were very negative.
- She was not available to talk with people after her presentation. A few people wanted to talk with her after and she could not be located nor could anyone from Lifetrack Resources. In past years, Ron was always around for the weekend and interacted with the families.

#### **4. Minnesota Relay – Jerry Pouliet**

- Minnesota Relay provided refreshments and sweets in celebration of their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- There have been changes in relay use over the years related to improved technology. Although, TTY use has declined over the years many individuals are using the HCO and VCO services that relay offers.
- Individuals that experience hang-ups while using relay are contact him so that he can follow up with the business or agency in order to educate them about relay callers.

Meeting adjourned - nk