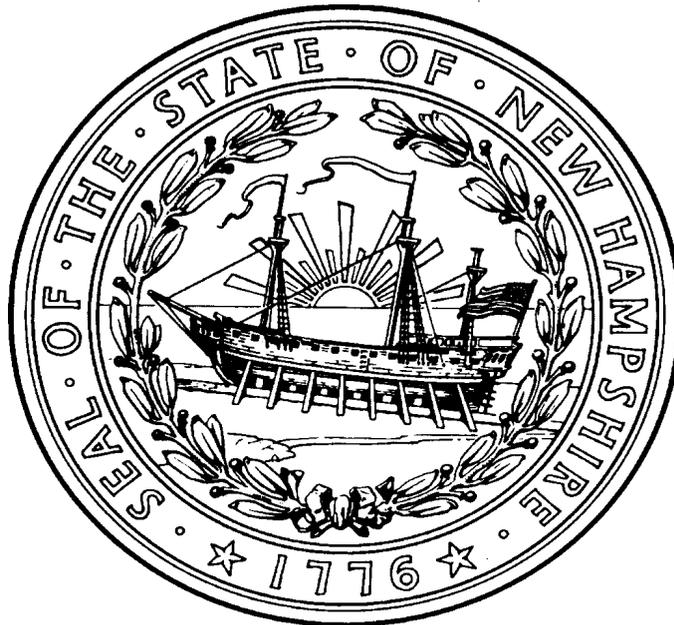


**LAKES REGION
COMMUNITY SERVICES COUNCIL**

REGION III

REDESIGNATION REVIEW



CONDUCTED BY:

THE BUREAU OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
Matthew Ertas, Bureau Administrator

THE DIVISION OF COMMUNITY BASED CARE SERVICES
Nancy L. Rollins, Director

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
John A. Stephen, Commissioner

MAY 2007



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF COMMUNITY BASED CARE SERVICES

BUREAU OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

John A. Stephen
Commissioner

Nancy L. Rollins
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May 4, 2007

Carrie Chase, President of Board of Directors
Christine Santaniello, Executive Director
Lakes Region Community Services Council
64 Communications Drive
Laconia NH 03246

Dear Carrie and Chris:

As you know, the Bureau of Developmental Services has recently concluded its redesignation review in Region III as required by the State Rule, He-M 505, Establishment and Operation of Area Agencies. The review focused on eight indicators of successful area agency operations: mission; rights, health and safety; choice, control and satisfaction; individual and family/guardian involvement; system of quality improvement; governance and administration; budget development and fiscal health; and compliance. I would like to thank all of the people associated with Lakes Region Community Services Council for their cooperation in assisting the Bureau in carrying out this important process. The redesignation team is particularly grateful for the assistance given by Mary St. Jacques who made every effort to see that meetings were scheduled and that materials were available for the team's use.

It is my pleasure to inform you that Lakes Region Community Services Council has been approved for redesignation for the period of October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2011. The Bureau recognizes your agency's efforts on behalf of persons with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders and their families and is pleased that you are a part of New Hampshire's service delivery system.

The results of the redesignation review are contained in the attached narrative report. Please share it with the local stakeholders. Where recommendations have been made, please work with the appropriate parties regionally to consider how to improve the areas highlighted. If appropriate, please add areas of recommendation to your Biennial Plan. Finally, if support from the Bureau could be helpful in addressing any of these areas, please let us know how we could be of assistance. [Note that we are also sending you an extensive attachment, which lists all of the specific findings of the redesignation team. We hope that you will find this as a useful source document.]

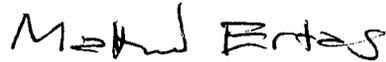
Carrie Chase & Christine Santaniello

May 4, 2007

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Again, thank you for your contribution to New Hampshire's community-based service system and to the lives of persons with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders and their families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Ertas". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Matthew Ertas
Bureau Administrator

Enclosures

cc: John A. Stephen, Commissioner
Nancy L. Rollins, Director

Bureau of Developmental Services

DATE: May 02, 2007

TO: Matthew Ertas, Bureau Administrator
Bureau of Developmental Services

FROM: Lorene Reagan
Redesignation Team Leader for Region III

RE: **Redesignation Review, Region III, 2006**

On July 13, 2006, Lakes Region Community Services Council requested redesignation as the area agency that provides services to individuals with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders in Region III.

During October, November and December of 2006 and January of 2007, a team of Bureau staff reviewed the services provided by the area agency. The team was comprised of Jude Schultz, Joyce Butterworth, Ken Lindberg, Jan Skoby, Fredda Osman and me as team leader. Howard Taylor of the Community Care Waiver Unit provided additional information and Jane Iarussi compiled and tabulated survey data. The narrative report of our findings was written by Susan Covert.

Attached please find:

- ❖ A list of activities associated with the review process
- ❖ A source document containing bullets substantiating material used in reaching our conclusions
- ❖ A narrative report of our findings

The redesignation team wishes to recognize and thank Mary St. Jacques for her coordination of the team's activities. Mary's flexibility, organizational skills and positive and helpful approach truly facilitated the work of the redesignation team. We also wish to thank the agency's Board of Directors, Family Support Advisory Council and Self-Advocacy Group for sharing their valuable perspectives on the work of the agency.

If approved, the agency's redesignation would extend from October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2011, or, if conditionally approved, any time therein. The review team has agreed to meet with the Board of Directors, agency staff and other individuals or groups that the agency wishes to invite to discuss our findings and answer questions.

Please contact me or any other team member if you require additional information.

Components of the 2006 Redesignation Review in Region III

The redesignation review process in Region III included:

- Review of Region III's Biennial Plan for fiscal years 2002 & 2003, 2004 & 2005, 2006 & 2007 as well as a July 31, 2006 review and update regarding the current biennial plan.
- Review of the area agency mission statement and organizational chart
- Review of the rosters of the Board of Directors, Board Committees, Family Support Advisory Council and the Lakes Region Self-Advocacy Group.
- Review of the Bureau's summary reports of the Adult Consumer Outcomes Surveys (ACOS) for fiscal years 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 and review of aggregate data for Adult Consumer Outcome Surveys collected from fiscal year 2002-2006.
- Review of Employment data collected as part of the Department's Employment Advisory Group during calendar year 2006
- Review of Bureau of Health Facilities Administration program certification data from 2002-2005.
- Review of Early Supports and Services Family Outcomes data collected in calendar year 2006
- Review of results of a written survey of parents and guardians conducted by the redesignation team in collaboration with the area agency in November 2006 (33 respondents)
- Review of results of written surveys of the following:
 - ❖ Area agency Service Coordinators (13 respondents)
 - ❖ Area agency Family Support Coordinators (12 respondents)
 - ❖ Direct Service Providers (35 respondents)
 - ❖ Home Providers (23 respondents)
 - ❖ Early Supports and Services Providers (6 respondents)
- Review of Community Support Network, Inc. (CSNI), Family Survey data for 2002, 2003 and 2005.
- A review of financial audits of the area agency
- A review of 10 service agreements at the LRCSC office in December 2006.
- An interview conducted by the review team with the Region III Board of Directors on November 8, 2006
- An interview conducted by the review team with the Region III Family Support Advisory Council on October 25, 2006
- An interview conducted by the review team with the Service Coordination and Family Support Staff on October 23, 2006
- An interview conducted by the review team with the Region III Management Team November 20, 2006
- An interview conducted by the redesignation team with the LRCSC Nursing Department on October 16, 2006
- An interview conducted by the redesignation team with the Lakes Region Self Advocacy Group on November 15, 2006

- An interview with the Director of Quality Improvement by selected members of the redesignation team
- An interview with the Complaint Investigator by selected members of the redesignation team
- An interview with the Human Rights Committee Chairperson by selected members of the redesignation team
- An interview with the Training Coordinator by selected members of the redesignation team
- Attendance at three family forums held in Laconia (2 forums) and Plymouth (1 forum) at which we were joined by two families
- Attendance at three consumer forums held in Laconia (4 attendees), Plymouth (10 attendees) and the Route 3 South program (10 attendees)
- Phone interviews with 10 agencies identified to the redesignation team by Region III as cooperating agencies in providing supports and services
- Phone interviews with families of 8 individuals who receive Respite supports from the area agency.
- A review of the agency's Fiscal Policy Manual and interview of the Chief Financial Officer was conducted by a member of the Department's Office of Improvement and Integrity and a BDS Bureau Liaison.
- Review of documentation, including:
 - ❖ Area agency policies and procedures
 - ❖ Job descriptions of key personnel
 - ❖ Board of Directors Orientation manual
 - ❖ Board of Directors meeting minutes
 - ❖ Management Team meeting minutes
 - ❖ Human Rights Committee meeting minutes
 - ❖ Training curricula
 - ❖ Data regarding complaint investigations
 - ❖ Data regarding medication administration occurrences
 - ❖ Human Rights information
 - ❖ Area agency Newsletters
 - ❖ Area agency Website

MISSION

Expectations:

The area agency is unequivocal in its mission: supporting people who have a disability in being valued members of their communities, and educating communities to recognize the value of individuals who have a disability. Individuals who receive services in the region and/or their families and guardians have a clear understanding of the mission and its implications. All staff members of the area agency and of its provider agencies are committed to this common mission and understand the purpose of their work.

Lakes Region Community Services Council is dedicated to serving the Community by promoting independence, dignity, and opportunity. In fulfilling its mission, Lakes Region Community Services Council (LRCSC) has developed a wide array of community connections for both the individuals it serves and for the agency itself. The area agency supports individuals to develop personal relationships that allow them to participate in and contribute to their community. LRCSC's work with the Belknap County Early Learning Council, participation in the Main Street Program, and active membership in local Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs are but a few examples of ways that the agency has worked to increase community opportunities for individuals with disabilities and their families.

LRCSC supports its mission in a variety of ways. Early Supports and Services promote inclusive opportunities for children with disabilities to participate in community playgroups. The agency's Family Support Advisory Council distributes a bi-monthly newsletter that gives parents information about community activities that are available to all children and families in the region. Service Coordinators work to connect individuals with community members who share their interests. The area agency provided financial support for members of the Lakes Region Self Advocacy Group to attend the national 2006 Self Advocacy conference in Georgia where they learned more about how to advocate for themselves in their community.

Of the ten representatives from cooperating agencies who were interviewed as part of the redesignation process, nine said that they had a clear understanding that the mission of LRCSC is to assist people with disabilities to actively participate in their community. One individual observed, "They really try to be present in the lives of the clients with whom they work and to facilitate their involvement in the community." Others who were interviewed provided examples of how individuals with disabilities are included in and contribute to the community. One representative appreciated the hands on help that individuals who are supported by LRCSC provided at their organization's Halloween party.

In this region, an individual's service agreement must include information about the person's gifts, talents, hopes, and dreams; if this information is omitted, the area agency will not approve the service agreement. LRCSC helps staff and providers develop strategies for expanding opportunities for community involvement. The agency requires Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) training for all staff, including those providing direct care and supports. Home Care Providers surveyed as part of the redesignation process, reported that the area agency supports them in their work to assist individuals in establishing and maintaining relationships in the community. At their regular monthly meetings Home Providers learn about upcoming community activities and share information about community resources.

LRCSC is committed to helping individuals find ways that they can develop their interests and share their gifts. For example, the area agency connected a man who enjoys physical, outdoor activities with the Main Street Community Project. While painting a fence on the Common in Plymouth, this man met a volunteer from Plymouth State University who later helped him get a job with the University's outdoor work crew.

Many LRCSC staff members and Home Providers have strong community ties and tap their personal networks to make community connections for the people they support. For example, one Service Coordinator who is a musician worked with the local business community to organize regular Friday Concerts on the Common that brought together individuals receiving services with other community members.

RIGHTS, HEALTH AND SAFETY

Expectations:

The area agency has systems in place to promote the health and well being of the individuals who receive services. It is proactive in its efforts to protect individuals from abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and, when there are rights violations or questionable injuries, these are thoroughly investigated and the information is used to prevent future occurrences. Individuals, families, guardians and service providers receive on-going training regarding rights, rights' protection, health promotion, and safety.

It is the expectation of the area agency that all staff and providers are knowledgeable about the agency's policies on health, rights, and safety. Orientation for new employees includes information on client rights, social role valorization, Gentle Teaching, and the complaint and incident reporting process. The agency has adopted a High Profile and Sentinel Event Reporting process that is in compliance with the Department's policy; this has been incorporated into the agency's existing incident reporting policy. Every two weeks LRCSC holds disaster-planning meetings to ensure that the agency is prepared to respond to natural disasters or health epidemics such as Avian Flu.

Individuals and their families and/or guardians are informed about their rights at their annual service planning meetings and are also given contact information for the region's Complaint Investigator and a "Know Your Rights!" handbook. All eighteen individuals who attended the Redesignation Self-Advocacy Forum reported that they understood their rights, knew that they could file a complaint if they were unhappy with their services, and knew whom they could go to if they had a problem or did not feel safe. Of the 115 individuals interviewed for the Adult Consumer Outcomes Survey (ACOS) during 2002 through 2006, 79% indicated they understood their rights and 89% knew who to go to if they had a problem or did not feel safe.

In response to the agency's last Redesignation Report, LRCSC designed and implemented a revised training on Individual Rights and Responsibilities; by May 2005 over 150 individuals with disabilities had participated in this training. The agency conducts rights training on a regular basis, at least annually. The agency is to be commended for its work in this critical area.

In an interview with the ten representatives from cooperating agencies, half said they were unaware of individual's rights within the agency and unfamiliar with the agency's complaint process. A quarter (25%) of the families and guardians surveyed as part of the redesignation process did not know whom to contact if an individual's rights have been violated. **Consideration:** The area agency may wish to draw upon its success in implementing Individual Rights Training to develop a plan for helping families, guardians, and cooperating agencies better understand its process for protecting client rights.

LRCSC is responsible for providing training to staff, subcontractors, and individuals and families on rights protection, health care, and safety. Those surveyed during the redesignation process indicate that they have received this training and as a result, feel they are prepared to respond to emergencies, and understand the importance of protecting clients' rights. All Family Support and Service Coordinators who were surveyed said that they knew how to assist families if rights violation occurred; nearly all Direct Support staff and Home Providers reported that the agency's training had given them sufficient information to respond to medical emergencies. One Direct

Support Provider commented, “With the classes we receive we are able to do our jobs and keep our individuals safe.”

Within two days of a complaint being filed, the area agency initiates a complaint investigation. The area agency’s Board of Directors receives a summary of the complaints filed and the actions taken, as does the Human Rights Committee. The LRCSC Director of Quality Improvement and Training develops and implements staff training to address underlying causes for individual complaints that are found to be valid. LRCSC has a “zero tolerance” policy, and any employee found guilty of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation is terminated.

The area agency has a detailed review process for formal complaints and is to be commended for its conscientious follow-up on *individual* complaints. However, it is not evident that the agency’s review process identifies trends or general causes of complaints that could be addressed through agency-wide education or other systemic interventions. **Consideration:** In order to prevent situations that could result in complaints, the agency may wish to develop a process to evaluate complaint data to identify trends and potential risk areas. A more proactive approach would enable the area agency to provide focused interventions before problems arise.

Redesignation interviews, Adult Consumer Outcome Survey (ACOS) and CSNI (Community Support Network, Inc.) survey results indicate that individuals and their families feel safe and have a sense of well-being. All those interviewed for the ACOS during the redesignation period felt safe at work or day services and 98% felt safe at home; all have a doctor and 80% saw a dentist annually. The Management Team reported that the area agency assesses individuals’ safety and health needs, and ensures that those needs are being met. The following are examples of LRCSC’s work in this area.

- Frail individuals are identified through physical assessment; a new nurse has been hired to address their medical needs.
- All homes of individuals identified as frail or at high risk are being evaluated by Assistive Technology, Education and Community Health (ATECH) for safety risks.
- Management meets bimonthly with agency nurses to ensure that they are aware of all health issues for individuals served by the agency.
- Direct Service Providers in the region have received training on the Basic Health Observation Guidelines developed by the Bureau of Developmental Services.
- All individuals who were eligible for Medicare were identified and enrolled into appropriate drug plans prior to the implementation of Medicare Part D.

Area agency nurses report that the organization does a good job maintaining individuals' health and safety. However, they indicated they would like to have more opportunity to work directly with individuals and provide support to agency staff. Asked about the agency’s ability to meet the health needs of frail elders, one nurse commented, “This is our biggest problem. We have three full-time RNs and one who works thirty hours per week, but we spend all our time doing the 1201’s (compliance reporting on administration of medications).”

In its 2001 Redesignation Review, LRCSC was asked to more closely monitor and follow-up on health issues for individuals. Since this review, the agency has made progress in evaluating and identifying individuals who are frail or at risk. However, it is unclear that the area agency has a comprehensive plan to ensure that the agency is able to effectively meet the health care needs for individuals identified as frail, with chronic medical conditions or whose health is at risk.

Recommendation:

- The area agency needs to develop a system that incorporates appropriate identification, follow-up, direct care, and nursing/medical support for individuals whose health status has been identified as frail or at risk. *The agency's recent creation of a Nurse Case Manager position is an example of their commitment to address this issue.* LRCSC is in a position to build upon this first important step and address the health care needs of the individuals it serves.

CHOICE, CONTROL AND SATISFACTION

Expectations:

The unique needs, strengths and preferences of individuals and families are acknowledged, respected and supported. Individuals and families/guardians have the knowledge, authority and support they need to direct and manage their supports and services and to decide who will provide them. Supports and services are designed to address the needs of individuals and their families, and to improve the quality of their lives.

The majority of families and guardians responding to the Redesignation Survey reported that the area agency provided them with the information they needed about supports and services.

Service Coordinators provide information to individuals and their families/guardians about the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) option. For those who are interested in CDS, Coordinators help individuals and families maximize the available financial resources to develop creative and cost-effective supports.

Results of the Family Support and Service Coordinator Survey found that the majority of respondents believe that the area agency is responsive to families and assists them to exercise choice and control about services. In a joint interview, Family Support and Service Coordinators discussed their role in helping families plan for Consumer Directed Services. Service Coordinators see this model as the way of the future and reported that families who are just coming into the system are especially interested in having a greater say in planning and directing services.

Service Coordinators, Home Providers, and Direct Support Providers responding to the Redesignation Survey all indicated that services were based on the individual's needs and interests. In the interviews for the ACOS when they were asked if they chose their daily schedules, their activities in the community, and how they spent their money, nearly all individuals (95% or greater) answered "yes" or "sometimes". A slightly lesser percentage (70%) answered "yes" or "sometimes" when asked if they chose the goals in their service agreements.

Consistent with the previous Redesignation Report, most individuals interviewed for the Adult Consumer Outcomes Survey (ACOS) during the years covered in the current Redesignation Review indicated they did not choose the staff that support them in the community, on their job, or in their homes. However, the results of the most recent Adult Consumer Outcome Survey indicate that individuals are beginning to have a greater involvement in this area

CSNI Survey results (2002, 2003, and 2005 combined) found that the vast majority of families were satisfied with their level of involvement in service planning. Asked in the Redesignation Family/Guardian Survey, "Do you feel that LRCSC considers the unique concerns, priorities, and resources of your family in providing services?" 67% answered "yes" and 18% "sometimes." The majority of these families and guardians also reported that the area agency staff and providers respected their choices in regard to what services they receive, who provides the service, where services are provided, and what goals are pursued in the service agreement.

Since 2003 all individuals participating in the Adult Consumer Outcome Survey answered "yes" or "sometimes" when asked if they felt they were being helped to reach their goals. In a meeting with

Service Coordinators, they talked about how the agency has facilitated community connections to help individuals realize personal goals. Recently, LRCSC has participated in "Winterfest," an event sponsored by the Main Street Community Project.

As part of the redesignation process, two team members met with ten individuals who receive services at the forensic treatment residence in Plymouth. All ten said that they were being helped to meet their goals. They were, however, concerned that residential staff shortages have meant a cut back in recreational activities. Program managers have been filling in and the residents said that they appreciated their help.

The majority of families and guardians indicated they are satisfied with services. For example:

- Of the 115 respondents to the 2002 – 2006 ACOS interviews, when asked if they liked where they were living, ninety-eight percent responded positively.
 - Of the 219 individuals receiving day supports from the area agency fifty-four percent were employed in integrated setting, which ranks third highest in the State of NH.
 - Ninety-eight percent of the interviewees stated they liked the way they spent their days when they were not working or volunteering.
- When asked the question, "Are staff at the area agency responsive," eighty-five percent of the respondents to the Redesignation Family/Guardian survey (28 of 33) said "yes".

Several families, however, shared some concerns. One parent noted, "Day program instability (in staffing) has been a problem." An older couple whose son lives at home wanted emergency respite care. Another person wanted to go to work, but needed care for their family member. The three parents who attended the Family Forum expressed concern about what would happen to their children when they died and wanted the area agency to make planning for long-term supports a priority.

The majority of individuals interviewed for the ACOS during the redesignation period were satisfied with services; however, a little over half said there were activities that they would like to do that they were not currently doing. In addition, four individuals who responded to the Adult Consumer Outcome Survey for the timeframe of FY 04 - FY 06 reported that they needed an ATECH evaluation and had not received one. **Consideration:** Given the close collaborative relationship between LRCSC and ATECH, the agency may wish to explore why individuals served are reporting unmet needs or difficulty accessing this service.

As part of the redesignation process, the team reviewed service agreements for ten individuals served by LRCSC. Less than half of the ten records that were reviewed had clear documentation of quarterly satisfaction assessments conducted by the Service Coordinator.

Recommendation:

- Regular inquiry and documentation regarding satisfaction with services provides the agency with critical information and helps determine whether or not supports and services are meeting the needs of the individual. The area agency should conduct an audit of individuals' records to determine if the findings in this small record sample are an aberration or indicative of larger problem that will need to be addressed to ensure that the agency regularly documents satisfaction with services.

Overall, it appears that great majority of the individuals and families served by LRCSC are satisfied with the supports provided by the area agency and most of them receive opportunities to exercise choice and control over specific elements of their services.

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

Expectations:

The area agency believes that people who need and/or receive services have the greatest investment in and understanding of how those services should be designed and provided. Individuals and families/guardians are invited, welcomed, and supported as full participants in system planning and decision-making. The opinions of individuals and families/guardians are continuously sought to inform policy making and system improvement. Financial and other assistance is available to enable individuals and families/guardians to play leadership roles and participate in all activities that affect them.

Family members and individuals with disabilities are represented on the LRCSC Board of Directors. Of the 13 members who serve on the Board, four have a family member with disability and one receives services from the area agency. To support individual and family involvement, LRCSC offers transportation to Board and committee meetings.

The area agency's Board of Directors oversees the development of the Region's Biennial Plan. In developing the 2006 & 2007 Biennial Plan, LRCSC solicited input from individuals with disabilities and their families in the following ways:

- Meeting with the Lakes Region Self-Advocates.
- Conducting telephone surveys and personal interviews with randomly selected family members and/or guardians.
- Working with the Family Support Advisory Council (FACS) on a section of the plan.
- Inviting families and guardians to the September 2005 Family Support Advisory Council meeting to learn more about the results of the telephone surveys and to ask for their additional input to the plan.

The area agency's Family Support Advisory Council currently has seven members, all of whom have family members with disabilities. The Council is representative of families in the region; its membership includes parents of preschool, school aged and adult children with disabilities. One member of the Council also serves on the Board of Directors. The Council participated in interviewing and hiring the new Director of Family Support. The Director of Family Support is a member of the area agency Management Team and shares information from the Council with the agency's administration. Council members also reported that they have access to the Executive Director and the Board.

The Lakes Region Self-Advocates group is distinguished as New Hampshire's first self-advocacy organization. During the Redesignation Self-Advocates Forum, this group reported that in August 2006, two of their members applied for membership on the area agency's Board of Directors. Neither was invited to join the Board. The Board, however, did recruit an additional parent to serve on the Board.

The area agency's primary communication with families is through *Family Update*, the FSAC's newsletter. The Family Support Program also funds a part time Legislative Liaison; this individual is responsible for keeping families informed about proposed legislation and policies that could impact their family member. In the results from CSNI's Family Survey (2002, 2003, and 2005

combined), over three quarters of families reported that the area agency “always” or “usually” keeps them informed about upcoming legislation and legislative activities.

Recently, the area agency made a change in how it delivers services. Except for a handful of service arrangements, the agency no longer subcontracts with providers to support individuals; this work is now done exclusively by LRCSC programs. When asked about their input into this change in service delivery, the Family Support Advisory Council and the Lakes Region Self Advocacy group indicated they were informed of the change after it occurred but had not been asked for input prior to the change. Two individuals attending the Redesignation Self-Advocate Forum were upset with the agency’s decision and believe that it limited their choices of supports and services.

Members of the Family Support Advisory Council report that they are supported by the Director of Family Support and by the agency. However, Council members spoke about their sense of “separateness” from the overall activities of the area agency. The Council said that their primary responsibility has been to make decisions on the allocation of discretionary Family Support funds for families who are requesting assistance. While this is an important function, the Council has the capacity to work in a much more productive partnership with LRCSC. Council members stated that they would like to be better informed and to have a larger advisory role on those issues that impact the area agency and the individuals and families it serves.

Recommendation:

- Individuals with disabilities and their families and guardians have the greatest stake in decisions concerning the planning, provision, and monitoring of supports and services. These local stakeholders can offer LRCSC a unique, first hand perspective on how the agency’s decisions will impact those receiving services. It is important that the area agency explore ways in which it can enhance its current practices in regards to inviting and supporting the Family Support Advisory Council, Lakes Region Self-Advocates, and other individuals and families to play an advisory role regarding availability, accessibility and quality of services, as well as utilization of resources and management of the agency’s waiting list.

SYSTEM OF QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Expectations:

There is a resolute and continuous commitment to excellence and quality improvement. The area agency is committed to assessing the quality of services on an ongoing basis and is accountable to individuals and families who receive services. Individuals, families, as well as others are active partners in evaluating system quality and provider performance. There is continuous evaluation and improvement of services and supports to achieve better outcomes for individuals and families.

The area agency is to be commended for its work in adopting quality improvement policies that addressed recommendations made in the agency's last Redesignation Review.

The LRCSC Management Team reported that the agency uses results from program satisfaction surveys and interviews from Adult Consumer Outcome Surveys to assess and improve service quality. The Bureau of Developmental Services Liaison to the region said that LRCSC is exemplary in its support of the Adult Consumer Outcome Survey process and uses findings from this assessment to improve the quality of individual supports and services. The Management Team also noted that the agency is strongly committed to Asset Based Community Development and Gentle Teaching; ongoing quality assessment and improvement is incorporated into both of these approaches.

The majority of all groups surveyed, including Direct Service Providers, Home Care Providers, Service Coordinators, and Early Supports and Services staff said that the area agency has included them in discussions about improving quality of services for the individuals they support. Most importantly, these groups also reported that these discussions about quality did, indeed, improve services for the individual.

LRCSC takes quality assessment seriously and makes needed changes and adjustments to programs and supports based upon assessment findings. The Management Team offered an example of this. As a follow up to a Bureau of Developmental Services review, the area agency initiated an evaluation of its Whole Life and Day Services. Individual service agreements were examined to see if they reflected the person's gifts, talents, hopes, and dreams; progress notes were reviewed and observations were conducted. Based on findings from this evaluation, action plans were developed to help ensure that all individuals supported by the area agency are working towards goals that are personally meaningful.

Service Coordinators reported that they hold "Quality Meetings" every two weeks to share information and brainstorm ideas about how better to support individuals who are currently experiencing challenges.

At the redesignation meeting with the Family Support Advisory Council, members were asked if the area agency shared information concerning quality assessments and satisfaction surveys. One member recalled a presentation by the Director of Quality Improvement and Training made two years earlier. The Council members expressed their wish to have an opportunity to be part of this process.

In their meeting with representatives from the redesignation team, the Board of Directors reported that the area agency's Management Team does an excellent job keeping them apprised about

matters pertaining to quality of services. They also appreciated the work of the Human Rights Committee and said that they have exercised the Board's authority to address recommendations from this Committee.

In 2005, the state Bureau of Developmental Services conducted a review of Day Services and Personal Care Supports and found that documentation of services in individuals' service agreements was insufficient. As a result of this review, the agency initiated a region-wide internal review of both of these programs and developed procedures to ensure appropriate implementation of service agreements and documentation of supports and services. The agency is to be commended for its thorough and thoughtful response to this issue. It appears that when quality related matters are identified LRCSC displays a responsible posture in further examining and addressing the issues.

GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Expectations:

The area agency Board of Directors and Management Team play crucial leadership roles in administering an effective regional service system. A well informed and active Board and Management Team fulfill their responsibilities by engaging in and promoting effective communication with and among all stakeholders in the agency and region, achieving quality services, individual/family/guardian satisfaction, and employing a well trained, supported and supervised work force. The Board and Management Team engage in activities to enhance the area agency's association with the community at-large on behalf of individuals with disabilities.

The area agency's organizational charts, job descriptions, bylaws, and policy and procedure manuals have all been updated to reflect current practices and board, management, and staff responsibilities.

The area agency management organizational chart, updated in May of 2006, clearly delineates the relationship between the Board of Directors, Executive Director, and the Management Team. The agency also maintains an up to date functional organization chart that includes affiliate agencies, the Family Support Advisory Council, and Lakes Region Self-Advocates.

As recommended in the area agency's 2001 Redesignation Report, the agency's bylaws have been updated, most recently in 2006. Revisions to the bylaws reflect current practices, highlight the purpose and mission of the agency, and outline the responsibilities of the Board and its standing committees.

The area agency's Board of Directors has an extensive orientation for new members. During the orientation period, veteran Board members are paired with new members. Each new member receives a comprehensive Board Orientation Manual that includes bylaws (with specific references to the duties and responsibilities of Board members), mission statement, organizational chart, Board member profiles, information about the role of the Management Team, conflict of interest policies, a brief history of the agency, FSAC Agreement and Council membership list, and the Biennial Plan. In addition, the Board receives information about Gentle Teaching and Asset Based Community Development.

Orientation and training for new Management members includes several weeks of job shadowing with other managers and meetings with key program staff in specific content areas including personnel, IT, behavioral treatment, and day services. In 2004 a Leadership Training Series was offered to middle managers. Management level staff also developed monthly trainings for managers to further their professional development.

LRCSC Board of Directors is kept well informed and is prepared to address the issues that come before them. The Executive Director's monthly report to the Board includes information about state and local legislative initiatives, state level budget updates, and waiting list information. The four standing committees of the Board - Finance, Personnel, Human Rights and the Executive Committee - make monthly reports to the full body. The Board also regularly receives reports from the Human Rights Committee on complaint investigations, discusses Adult Consumer Outcome Survey results, and is updated about progress on the agency's Biennial Plan. It is less clear, based

on review of Board minutes, that there is a process for information sharing between the Board of Directors and the Lakes Region Self-Advocacy Group.

Both the Family Support Advisory Council and the Management Team described a positive relationship between Family Support staff and the Council. The Council was part of the hiring process for the new Director of Family Support who, at the request of the Council, attends all FSAC meetings. As a member of the Management Team, the Director of Family Support shares the Council's views and concerns with the agency's Executive Director.

In Redesignation Surveys of area agency staff, the majority of Service Coordinators, Home Providers, Family Support Coordinators and Direct Support Providers reported that the agency created a work environment in which they were encouraged to offer ideas, suggestions, and opinions. This group also noted satisfaction with the quality of supervision, agency communication, and the overall support that they received from the agency.

LRCSC maintains a website which highlights its mission, purpose, and services. The agency's newsletter, *Family Update*, is widely distributed to over 800 families, health care providers, and community organizations in the region.

The area agency is strongly committed to being part of the community and supporting individuals to make meaningful community connections. LRCSC is involved in community organizations including the local Rotary Club, Main Street Community Project, Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Advisory Council. Individuals receive services within the context of their communities; their inclusion in community life sends a powerful message about the agency's commitment to its mission.

In response to a recommendation in the 2001 Redesignation Report, the area agency's Training Committee designed a process to improve orientation and training. New employees are required to do job shadowing prior to beginning work and the agency's Human Resource office has Professional Development plans for employees that provide raises based on the completion of the plan. All employees have opportunities to take advantage of a wide range of training opportunities offered by the agency and available externally.

The agency's David King Scholarship provides tuition assistance for employees interested in continuing their education. Additionally, the agency will pay for textbooks for employees enrolled in the New Hampshire Community Technical College Human Service Program.

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT AND FISCAL HEALTH

Expectations:

The Management Team and Board of Directors provide leadership in achieving financial health in the pursuit of the area agency mission. The agency's resource allocation, budget oversight, and billing procedures reflect sound fiscal management. The development and management of the agency and individual budgets are achieved through the involvement of appropriate stakeholders. The agency reviews its fiscal status on an ongoing basis, maintains good financial health and considers cost effectiveness in resource allocation. In responding to requests from individuals and families/guardians for assistance, the area agency draws on generic community supports and services as key resources to enhance its own funding, including its efforts to address the needs of those who are on waiting lists.

Management Team and Board minutes reflect regular reports from the Director of Finance and discussions concerning the agency's financial health. A monthly packet containing in-depth financial information is given to the Finance Committee and Board of Directors. The Finance Committee also reviews monthly the short and long-range financial position of the agency. The Board's Finance Committee reviews and approves, in conjunction with the Executive Committee, the Agency's annual budget prior to submission to the full Board.

In June 1999, the Board of Directors approved a financial manual that set policies for effective accounting practices. There are plans to update this manual before June 30, 2007.

Consideration: When the area agency updates its financial manual it might want to consider incorporating these additional policies:

- A policy requiring approval on non-recurring and unusual journal entries.
- A policy for receiving proposals on services, property, or major purchases. (This is a current agency practice, but not a written policy.)
- A policy on the use and accountability of credit cards (the agency has procedures in effect, but these are not included in the financial manual).
- A policy pertaining to travel and expenses. (This is in the agency's personnel manual and should be included in the financial manual.)
- An enhanced policy on collections of accounts receivable that includes specific step-by-step procedures. All documentation pertaining to the attempts of collections should be maintained and analyzed. This evidence will support prompt decision of further action (i.e. potential write offs).
- A policy on petty cash that calls for periodic and unscheduled accounting of petty cash by someone other than the custodian of the fund.

The Management Team indicated in the redesignation interview that area agency teams work together to address financial matters. The area agency has an ongoing goal to train staff on individualized budgets and Consumer Directed Services. New Service Coordinators meet with the Finance Director to understand the Medicaid Community Care Waiver and Prior Authorization process. The area agency has developed a Consumer Directed Services Guidebook as a resource for all staff.

The area agency Waitlist Committee meets every other week to review individual cases and develop strategies to address support needs. When possible, Family Support funds are used to assist families who have a family member on the waitlist.

The area agency cited its commitment to supports and services under He-M 521 (personal care supports for individuals living with their families) and He-M 524 (in-home supports for children) and its provision of clinical and other supports for children with significant behavioral challenges as ways in which it strives to reduce the need for or intensity of long-term services.

The area agency is commended for its efforts in accessing outside funds. LRCSC has applied for and been awarded public and private grants from the Harry Allen Gregg Foundation, First Star Foundation, United Way, and Childcare Initiative. In addition, individuals and families are assisted in accessing public fuel assistance, Section 8 Housing vouchers, and Healthy Kids Insurance. Some revenue is also generated from small businesses operated by individuals who are supported and reimbursed by the agency; these include the Clothesline, the Readery, Wood Depot, and Using Our Tools. The Family Support Advisory Council and Family Support staff are diligent about helping families access other available resources such as Vocational Rehabilitation services, transportation and fuel assistance, and other public assistance before drawing down Family Support funds.

The area agency's current ratio of assets to liabilities is one of the strongest in the developmental service system. The agency is to be commended for sustaining this strong ratio over the past five years.

COMPLIANCE

Expectations:

The area agency and its subcontract agencies are knowledgeable of and in compliance with the basic state and federal standards regarding services. The area agency and its subcontract agencies fulfill requirements regarding certification of day and residential services, medication administration, determination of eligibility for area agency services, establishment of service agreements for each person being served, authorization for Medicaid's Community Care Waiver funding stream, provision of Family Support and Early Supports and Services, and management of waiting lists. The area agency and its subcontract agencies also submit to the Division requested information and data regarding services provided under the contracts with the State.

According to the Medication Committee Reports for 2002-2006, Lakes Region Community Services Council complies with He-M 1201 and provides follow up to the Medication Committee, when requested, in a timely manner. Timelines regarding eligibility determinations pursuant to He-M 503 are met and the area agency's Family Support Advisory Council is in compliance with He-M 519.

According to the Bureau of Developmental Services and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Lakes Region Community Services Council's:

- Budget and contract submissions are accurate, timely, and in the correct format.
- Quarterly financial reports are accurate, timely, and in the correct format.
- An annual independent audit is submitted as requested.
- Waiting List information is submitted on time according to parameters required for inclusion on the State Waiting List. Descriptions of those individuals' circumstances currently being submitted are more complete than earlier submissions.
- PASARR submissions are in compliance with He-M 1302.
- Submission of data regarding employment is complete and timely.
- Mortality Reporting is timely and in accordance with Bureau and Department policies.

A May 2005 review of services provided pursuant to He-M 521 found that the area agency was out of compliance with the following documentation requirements:

- Progress notes did not always relate to service agreement goals or were missing completely.
- Seven out of ten files reviewed lacked Service Coordinator notes addressing the residential/personal care goals of the Service Agreement.

In addition, an August 2005 review of Day Services provided pursuant to He-M 507 found insufficient documentation to substantiate Service Coordinator monitoring of Day Services.

As a result of these reviews, the agency initiated a region-wide internal review of Whole Life/Day Services and developed procedures to ensure appropriate monitoring and documentation of supports and services. The agency is commended for recognizing the need for a systematic response to the challenges identified in these reviews and for following through with the development of a system to address them.

On-going non-compliance with state and federal regulations regarding provision of Family Centered Early Supports and Services (ESS) has been a concern. Areas cited as problematic in the area agency's ESS program between 2002-2006 include:

- Challenges regarding provision of speech therapy services.
- Program documents that do not include the necessary components regarding the rights of families.
- Unexplained gaps in service provision.
- Non-compliance with the 45-day Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) completion requirement.
- Non-compliance with 90-day transition meeting requirements.
- The 2006 ESS on-site compliance review identified a practice where information was being added to the IFSP without the written consent of the family, as required by state and federal regulations.

Recommendation:

- In 2006 the area agency submitted an extensive corrective action plan that included strategies for addressing long-standing challenges in its ESS program. On-going self-assessment of progress on the corrective action plan should be conducted and documented by the ESS program and reported to the agency's ESS Bureau Liaison on a quarterly basis, starting in May 2007 and continuing until such time that the agency has demonstrated sustained improvement in the areas noted.

The area agency is responsible for maintaining compliance with applicable state and federal standards. The agency's ability to maintain compliance with these standards is one indicator of its overall ability to provide supports and services that meet minimum standards for service delivery. The agency is commended for its development of strategies to address areas of non-compliance identified throughout the redesignation period and is encouraged to continue its efforts toward systematic review and resolution of compliance-related challenges.

SUMMARY

Lakes Region Community Services Council is committed to supporting individuals with disabilities to be involved and contributing members of their communities. To ensure the greatest possible access to community opportunities, the area agency is actively involved in a wide variety of community organizations. LRCSC requires that *all* individual service agreements include information about the person's talents, gifts, hopes, and dreams. Those who support individuals are trained in Gentle Teaching and Asset Based Community Development. The agency's strong emphasis on community has helped individuals to develop and sustain meaningful personal relationships.

The area agency is working to further promote Consumer Directed Service options for individuals and their families. Service Coordinators receive training and support to ensure that they are able to help individuals and their families use CDS to develop creative and cost effective supports. The agency also has developed a Consumer Directed Services Guidebook for those interested in this approach to services. Since individuals and families who receive services have the greatest investment in and understanding of how services should be designed and provided, the agency is encouraged to support increased involvement of and advisory role for individuals and families in regional planning, system design and development.

LRCSC is committed to the provision of quality services and supports. The agency has done an exemplary job in using the Adult Consumer Outcome Survey process to improve individual service quality in the region. It also has developed an effective training program for staff and self-advocates on the protection of individuals' rights. LRCSC is extremely conscientious in its investigation and follow-up for individual complaints and is to be commended for its work in this area. We encourage the area agency to build on its success and move forward in developing a process to identify systemic causes of complaints. Adopting a more proactive approach will enable the area agency to intervene before problems arise.

The agency has a committed Board of Directors that is kept well informed by the Management Team and has a good working relationship with the Family Support Advisory Council. LRCSC is commended for its work on the behalf of individuals with disabilities and their families.