



Employment First Commission Updates - Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council

November 2, 2016

Governor Cuomo Signs Executive Order 136 Establishing Commission to Create Employment First Policy for New York

- September 17, 2014
- Goals
 - Increase the employment rate of New Yorkers who are receiving services from the State by 5%
 - Decrease the poverty rate of New Yorkers who are receiving services from the State by 5%
 - Register 100 businesses as having formal policies to hire people with disabilities as part of their workforce strategy



Medicaid Reforms

- Addressing Employment Services Needs of Medicaid Recipients with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Addressing employment needs of Medicaid Recipients with behavioral health needs
- Addressing employment disparities as a social determinant of health
- Medicaid Buy-In for working people with disabilities (MBI-WPD)



Employment Services Needs of Recipients with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

- Individuals receiving 1915c People First waiver services for intellectual and developmental disabilities will benefit from Employment First concept-driven reform addressing employment outcomes as part of its HCBS habilitation model
- It includes a comprehensive plan to increase competitive integrated employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



Addressing Employment Needs of Medicaid Recipients with Behavioral Health Needs

- DOH's transformation plan draft includes reform to its behavioral health services, including health and recovery plans (HARPs)
- Enhanced benefits, including behavioral supports in-home and in community settings, are designed to enable recipients to live in the most integrated setting possible
- Menu of individual employment support services, including pre-vocational training, transitional employment support, intensive supported employment services, and ongoing supported employment services



Addressing Employment Disparities as a Social Determinant of Health

- MRT further committed to addressing employment outcomes for people with disabilities by convening a workgroup to consider social determinants of health, with a focus on employment
- The MRT issued a report in October 2014 that offered a series of 12 initiatives meant to expand overall employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities



Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities (MBI-WPD)

- Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities (MBI-WPD) allows individuals with disabilities who are working to maintain their Medicaid eligibility beyond the maximum income and asset limit for Medicaid eligibility
- A recent study performed by Cornell University's Employment and Disability Institute demonstrates that enrollment in the MBI-WPD program (and thereby, employment) resulted in a reduction in Medicaid expenditures of approximately 43% compared with "regular" Medicaid enrollment



What are New York's Goals?

- Based on New York's existing employment services framework and infrastructure New York State is establishing three aggressive goals to measure the success of its Employment First policy:
 1. **Increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities by 5%.**
 2. **Decrease the poverty rate of individuals with disabilities by 5%.**
 3. **Register 100 businesses as having formal policies to hire people with disabilities as part of their workforce strategy.**



Recommendations

1. Cultural Modeling
2. Energize the “Demand-Side” of the Equation
3. New York Employment Services System (NYESS)
4. Benefit Advisement
5. Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities
6. Transportation
7. Education
8. Creating an Employment First Service Culture
9. Self-employment and Entrepreneurship
10. Expand Access to Assistive Technologies
11. Outcomes Measurement



1. Cultural Modeling

- State agencies and their respectively funded community-based organizations need to effectively model the employment of individuals with disabilities
- Section 55-b of the New York State Civil Service Law
 - Including individuals in 55-b positions on canvassing lists will expand their opportunities
 - Reinstatement of the statewide 55-b coordinator



2. Energize the “Demand-Side” of the Equation

- Redesign and reinvigorate the New York Business Leadership Network (BLN)
 - Engaging 100 business partners in having formal policies to hire people with disabilities as part of their workforce strategy
 - Champion the “business first” platform, promote hiring individuals with disabilities, and advise other businesses on how to take advantage of underutilized incentives like WOTC, the Workers with Disabilities Employment Tax Credit, and the Developmental Disabilities Tax Credit
- Targeted Marketing Campaign to New York State Vendors underway



2. Energize the “Demand-Side” of the Equation - continued

- Expanding the Developmental Disabilities Tax Credit to include all disabilities
- Promote state and federal policy supporting hiring individuals with disabilities. Businesses should be encouraged and supported in pursuing federal contracting opportunities that require a 7% hiring rate for individuals with disabilities
- Build on Minority Women Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) policies to include individuals with disabilities as a minority group



2. Energize the “Demand-Side” of the Equation - continued

- Utilize the power of its current regional economic development efforts to infuse opportunities for individuals with disabilities to obtain work
- Employment First policy can be infused into the regional economic development councils by requiring businesses to employ people representative of the community in which they operate, including those with disabilities



3. New York Employment Services System (NYESS)

- Adoption of NYESS by all agencies that provide employment supports to people with disabilities will allow data collection and exchange among all state agencies supporting individuals with disabilities in employment
- Generate more that **\$7 million** annually through SSA's TTW program to fund many of the Employment First initiatives



4. Benefits Advisement

- NYESS, has begun developing an interactive web-based platform that will provide accurate, up-to-date information and benefits calculators
- Enhance benefits advisement capacity and provide life coaching to all individuals with disabilities seeking economic self-sufficiency – **Promoting Opportunities Demonstration**
- Life coaches and/or community organizations could earn outcome based payments, similar to the TTW program, but funded via Medicaid instead of through SSA. The expense to the Medicaid program is anticipated to be offset by savings related to the decrease in Medicaid usage



5. Medicaid Buy-In for Working People with Disabilities

- Individuals report difficulties in completing the enrollment process in MBI-WPD through local departments of social services and New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA)
- The state is in the process of taking over administration of the Medicaid program from local districts, which will centralize and create consistency in determinations
- MBI-WPD program will be integrated into the online New York State of Health application portal, automating eligibility determinations and referring applicants who require additional assistance to the state enrollment assistance center



6. Transportation

- A cross-agency taskforce is needed to explore options to address the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities
- Pursue a rural transportation tax credit for employers providing resources or direct transportation to employees
- Mobility transportation project survey



7. Education

- Supports to schools to assist students in understanding their disability, accepting responsibility for their own success, accessing appropriate preparatory curriculum, and learning time management skills and computer skills; and offer students opportunities to get involved in the community life
PROMISE research initiative is testing the impact of early employment supports and coupled with services with significant family involvement
- Implementing a “school of choice” option for students with disabilities whereby students and their families can choose the schools that will best support them in achieving a degree recognized and valued by post-secondary educational institutions and employers



7. Education - continued

- The array of available credentials/diplomas in New York State needs to be re-visited to include a recognized “portfolio-based” option for degree completion
- Schools also need to have adequate levels of school guidance counselors and/or transition coordinators who are trained to provide career planning supports to students with disabilities seeking higher education, employment, or job skills training. All students need guidance and models of success. As a result, it is recommended that a peer-modeling approach also be used in conjunction with this planning to provide real-life context to the planning process



8. Creating an Employment First Service Culture

- Over the past several years agencies like OPWDD, SED's ACCES-VR, and OMH have been providing targeted training to employment services staff on the delivery of high quality evidence-based employment services to individuals with disabilities.
- The commission recommends building upon this robust foundation by extending the offering of these trainings focused on the delivery of high quality employment services to the full spectrum of direct support professionals
- Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Project – Office of Disability Employment Policy



9. Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship

- ACCES-VR has policies that support two levels of self-employment initiatives
 - one requiring less than \$5,000 of resources that does not require a business plan
 - above \$5,000, which requires more rigorous business planning and review by a team of professionals, including, but not limited to New York State entrepreneurial assistance programs and/or small business development centers.
- Recommends that this model be expanded upon, and to consider including supporting a localized incubator model that will provide a safety net of success



10. Expand Access to Assistive Technologies

- In New York State, TRRID, a federally funded program, is administered by the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs
 - Responsible for providing information and referral, device reutilization, demonstrations, maintenance, loans, and training
- Recommends increasing access to assistive technologies through a strategic partnership with ACCES-VR, OTDA, and TRRID that will expand inventory of employment-related devices and increase training on the use of such devices



11. Outcome Measurement

- Finalizing Medicaid data to New York wage data to create a proxy to measure increases and respective decreases in the employment and poverty rates in New York
- Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council's (MISCC) employment sub-committee be tasked with overall performance tracking and coordinating implementation



Questions?

