

Nebraska Money Follows the Person Advisory Panel Meeting February 23, 2009

Members Present:

Mary Angus
Mark Intermill
Rich Brandow
Mark Schultz

Pat Snyder
Marla Fischer-Lempke
Connie Cooper
Pat Compton

Mike Hon

Members Not Present:

Barry Long
Mike Schaefer
Sue Spitzer

Jerry Campbell
Cindy Fisher
Paul Maginn

Brendan Bishop

State Staff Present:

Cindy Kadavy – DHHS
Chad Frank – DHHS
Stacey Brunner – DHHS
Hope Whitaker – DHHS
Kay Wenzl – DHHS

Bil Roby – DHHS
Debbie Lewis – DHHS
Leslie Novacek –
Assistive Technology

Victoria Rasmussen –
Client Assistance Program
(CAP)

Call to Order

Bil Roby, Grant Manager of NMFP, called the meeting to order at 10:05am, February 23, 2009 in the conference room of Staybridge Suites, 2701 Fletcher Avenue, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Introduction / Welcome

Members of the public were asked to sign the Public Comment Sheet if they wished to speak and to hold comments until the public comment period at the end of the meeting. State Staff were also requested to sign the Meeting Sign-in Sheet. Bil noted that publication of the meeting time, date, agenda, and location was duly noted on the Public Calendar of the State of Nebraska official government website and the NMFP website.

It was noted that two items would be added to the agenda updates: 1) public service announcements and, 2) panel member departure / replacement. Bil requested a motion for approval of the agenda; Mike Hon moved and Rich Brandow seconded. A motion to adopt the minutes of the last meeting was called for; Mary Angus moved for approval; Rich Brandow seconded. The minutes of the December 8th, 2008 meeting were accepted without changes.

Agenda Updates:

Housing and Specific Barriers – It was noted that housing barriers can be generally described, but specific reasons as to why individuals cannot obtain housing are not readily available. A suggestion was offered by DHHS staff to create and then conduct a survey which would be directed at Aged and Disabled Service Coordinators and supervisors to help further define housing obstacles. Questions would focus on specific experiences encountered by individuals – such as lack of available housing, furniture, finances, etc. – which hinder or prevent a transition to a residential setting. Bil also noted that Ann Denton, Director of Housing for Advocates for Human Potential, will be offering technical assistance (TA) to address housing issues. Pat Compton remarked that in conjunction with the survey, questions which call attention to the State of Nebraska's housing website (housing.ne.gov) would be useful. Bil concluded that survey questions will be finalized quickly with the survey distributed as noted. Further contact with Ann Denton will be pursued to determine what assistance can be made available to NMFP to help break down housing barriers.

MFP National Conference 03/01-03/04 – NMFP Staff and Kay Wenzl (Home and Community-Based Waiver Services Unit) will be traveling to Baltimore to attend the national MFP conference. An agenda of the conference was provided to the panel. Concurrent sessions cover quality, rebalancing, housing, transition, and community inclusion. Staff will be assigned respective sessions to attend; information gained from the meeting will be shared with the panel.

Web-Based Report – A CMS-required semi-annual report is currently being completed by NMFP staff. Bil noted that the report requests information on transitions, re-institutionalizations, difficulties individuals face in transitioning, changes to the NMFP project, etc. It was noted that the report sought specific information on why individuals could not transition through NMFP. Data revealed many individuals do not choose a MFP qualified residence, preferring to live in an assisted living facility. It was noted that similar circumstances may be occurring in other grantee states and, if so, may result in increased attention from CMS. A brief discussion on the freedom to choose a residence – qualified or not – and the impact upon enrollment in NMFP, CMS' stance (ability to age-in-place) and CMS' decision-making process on the issue followed. Bil noted that he has informed CMS that he would like to be involved as consideration of the topic moves forward.

Bil additionally discussed other reports that are required and noted, with the exception of three files, the project is on a timely track. CMS has been notified and is aware the three files will be submitted when technology issues with the state's reporting system are resolved (anticipated by April 1, 2009).

Transportation Coalition – Mark Intermill briefly discussed the Transportation Coordination Institute conference in Kearney to be held March 16 – 18. Six regional teams are currently working on transportation coordination plans within their respective regions. The purpose of the Institute is to provide focused attention on developing those transportation plans. Technical assistance will be provided at the conference. Hope Whitaker is scheduled to participate in the two-day conference. The Transportation Coalition has also submitted a grant application

Agenda Updates (cont.)

to the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) requesting funding for dedicated staffing for each transportation region to help ensure the program is successful. The Omaha area region has received funding from the FTA to hire a Mobility Manager. Mark further noted transportation plans are being developed regionally with the idea of linking the plans state-wide in the future.

NMFP Advisory Panel Meeting – Dec. 28, 2009 – It was agreed to move the last meeting of the year to Dec. 14, 2009 to avoid year-end, holiday scheduling conflicts. Meetings will be continued to be held at Staybridge Suites from 10:00am-1:30pm.

Transition and Outreach Activity –

| | <u>2008</u> | <u>2009</u> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total presentations: | 212 | 24 |
| Total transitions: | 19 (7*) | 2 (3*) |
| Total transitions in process: | 44 | 14 |

*Assisted Living transitions

Figures represent combined NMFP staff outreach efforts and transitions through January 2009. Spreadsheets detailing transition and outreach activity were provided to the panel. A brief description of the documents followed with an explanation regarding modifications to the spreadsheets to note the beginning of a new year (2008 figures carried forward) and the inclusion of web-based report reasons to conform more precisely to CMS' methodology in tracking transitions and benchmarks. It was noted that transitions to assisted living facilities are included in the total transition count, but noted elsewhere on the document that, to date, 10 of 31 individuals transitioned moved to assisted living facilities. Bil further noted that a database was still in the process of being constructed and, once completed, would facilitate reporting to both the Advisory Panel and CMS. Bil will be attending the 2009 Nebraska Public Health Conference (April 8-9).

Marla Fischer-Lempke asked about the transfer of individuals from BSDC and whether they are impacting NMFP. Chad Frank noted that NMFP is included in the distribution of a list of individuals / guardians who have expressed interest in transitioning to a residential setting and that the program continues to offer support and assistance with transitioning. He added it is not within the scope of the project to contact family members or guardians who will not consider transitioning their individual. In response to Mary Angus' description of other states' efforts to support or promote transitioning, Chad stated that BSDC has relied upon the family members or guardians of successfully transitioned individuals to share information about their experiences with those who have expressed interest in transitioning to a residential setting.

Public Service Announcements (PSA) – Bil described NMFP efforts to deliver PSA's statewide. He noted that after discussion with communications staff, 30-second radio advertisements – which would receive more air time and reach a larger population – were more beneficial than television which typically airs PSA's at times unsuited for the populations the project seeks to inform. Two PSA's are currently in development: 1) a 30-second announcement specifically about NMFP and HCBS and, 2) a 30-second announcement which explains the

Agenda Updates (cont.)

features and benefits of Nebraska's housing.ne.gov website. The communications staff also advised the use of short, one-to-two sentence "filler ads" to be placed in newspapers across the state to extend the messages further.

In response to Mary Angus' question about the involvement of housing authorities, Bil replied NMFP currently works with the Omaha and Lincoln Housing Authorities. He also noted upcoming housing technical assistance provided by Ann Denton may assist in measures to increase the association between NMFP and the state's housing authorities.

Connie Cooper recommended participating in AM radio talk shows to further expand messages regarding NMFP, HCBS, and the housing website.

Panel Member Departure – Bil noted with regret the departure of Barry Long, Omaha Housing Authority (OHA) from our panel membership. Due to recent economic events, Barry's responsibilities with OHA have increased. Barry has passed along a request to the OHA Administrative and Operating Staff to consider participating in NMFP and Housing Sub-Committee meetings. Bil further noted that Barry's experience and contributions will be missed.

Financial Reporting – Waiver expenditures along with an unduplicated client count from state fiscal years 2006 through 2008 were provided to the panel. Home Health services were not provided in the totals as it is not a waiver service. In response to Mark Intermill's question, Kay Wenzl stated that reports could be produced which would indicate average monthly waiver expenditures. Mary Angus requested a breakdown of NMFP waiver expenditures and the state/federal match. Bil explained that Mike Kaczmarczyk, who was to go to present waiver figures for the panel today was unable to attend, but will be available to provide support and assistance in regards to waiver expenditure figures.

Transportation / Social Services Block Grant – Cindy Kadavy reviewed regulations that state transportation services can be provided under the Social Services Block Grant to those individuals residing in a facility who are in the process of undergoing discharge planning. The individual must be eligible for the service (no access to a car). The service would specifically cover discharge transportation only, and would allow the authorization of a friend, neighbor, or non-legally responsible relative to be hired to provide transportation to look at apartments or homes. The same legal requirements that apply to providers who provide transportation services for hire apply to discharge transportation. Once a provider is approved, the provider is reimbursed for mileage at a rate no greater than state employees receive. The Social Services Block Grant regulations are found in Title 473 Chapter 5. Mike Hon inquired whether individuals could be reimbursed under this regulation for the rental or temporary use of specially equipped vans. Cindy Kadavy replied it appears the regulations apply only to mileage reimbursement, but the issue could be looked into to see if rental reimbursement would qualify.

Subcommittee Breakouts:

Transportation – Bil asked Mark Intermill to keep the panel updated on developments made by the Transportation Coalition and requested Hope Whitaker to provide a brief summary of the Transportation Coordination Institute conference.

Subcommittee Breakouts (cont.)

Housing – Bil noted that housing continues to be a major issue. In regards to the housing survey, he stated other individuals have expressed interest in lending their housing experience to help prepare or formulate effective, worthwhile survey questions. Bil discussed the status of Home Again funding. Kay Wenzl noted that it is currently undergoing review in the Governor's Policy Research Office and, once approved, will be scheduled for public hearing. Kay said that as the process unfolds, she would keep Bil apprised.

Services Availability – Stacey Brunner provided a summary of the services subcommittee discussion. Lack of service providers in rural areas continues to be an issue; background checks which are required can lengthen the process of approval; and possible approaches to determining whether an individual would consider providing to those other than family. It was noted background checks can be turned around fairly quickly by Service Coordinators and, Resource Developers in rural areas pay attention to situations in which family providers may wish to explore opportunities to provide to non-family clients. Further discussion centered on how to encourage providers to sign up on the Nebraska Resource and Referral Service (NRRS), a website in which a provider can list services provided in a specific geographical area. Cindy Kadavy suggested the possibility of additionally using PSA's to promote NRRS statewide. Bil added NMFP has technical assistance available from CMS which provides direction or advice on the recruitment and retention of direct service workers. However, he stated the last teleconference focused on nursing and home-health aides. Bil indicated that NMFP priorities were more focused on independent providers in the community. Bil will pursue this difference in thinking with our Project Officer.

Public Comment:

Kathy Hoell, Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council, pointed out that the number of transitioned individuals, as indicated on transition activity sheets, was misleading. The total transitioned includes those individuals who transitioned to assisted living facilities. Kathy stated CMS has not approved assisted living facilities as a qualified residence so the totals should not include these types of transitions with MFP data. Kathy further stated individuals with certain levels of care needs are not allowed the option of choosing assisted living and that the facilities do not allow aging-in-place. She further expressed the opinion that assisted living should not be considered as a qualified residence under MFP. Pat Snyder countered that as CMS has not yet reached a decision, the transitions to assisted living facilities should be tracked. She stated there is a value in tracking such transitions because it is the choice of the individual and the level of care received increases the success of a transition. She also said that if CMS approves assisted living facilities, the data would be relevant. Bil stated he understood both viewpoints; the transition activity sheet would be revised to better reflect transitions to qualified residences.

Frank Velinsky, Caretech, Inc. addressed the issue of lack of independent providers and requested that agency providers in the homecare area not be overlooked. He stated that certified agency providers of waiver services must meet a number of criteria. As an agency provider he would welcome the challenge to look at those areas that are difficult to fill.

Public Comment: *(cont.)*

Gary Fischer, Family Housing Advisory Services, followed up on housing issues. He stated his agency provides fair housing assistance and advocacy services statewide through the Fair Housing Center of Iowa and Nebraska. Specifically in regards to assisted living facilities, Gary stated individuals have a right to make placement useable, enjoyable, and sustainable. He further stated that the providers of those residences – independent or assisted – must be reminded of the rules and obligations that apply in regards to sustainable placement and accommodating disabilities. He noted that problems of misunderstanding or differences of opinion can be resolved through education and training. His agency can provide training throughout the state, including Western Nebraska. Gary referred the panel to Jill Fenner, Director of Fair Housing Services, who has qualified staff who can deliver training. He also suggested including known advocates of housing services to be included in the housing survey to provide additional perspective upon the issue. Contact information was exchanged with panel members.

There was no further comment. Bil thanked everyone for attending and reminded the panel that the next meeting would be on April 27. Bil made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 12:51pm. Mike Hon moved and Rich Brandow seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Lewis
NMFP Staff Assistant