

Nebraska Money Follows the Person Advisory Panel Meeting April 27, 2009

Members Present:

Rich Brandow	Sue Spitzer	Mark Schultz
Connie Cooper	Kerry Michael	
Marla Fischer-Lempke	Paul Maginn	
Pat Compton	Jerry Campbell	
Mike Hon	Cindy Fisher	

Members Represented:

Mary Angus (represented by Kathy Hoell – Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council)

Members Not Present:

Mike Schaefer	Brendan Bishop
Mark Intermill	Pat Snyder

State Staff Present:

Cindy Kadavy – DHHS	Debbie Lewis – DHHS	Leslie Novacek – Assistive Technology
Chad Frank – DHHS	Lara Huskey – Department of Economic Development	
Stacey Brunner – DHHS		
Hope Whitaker – DHHS		
Bil Roby – DHHS		

Call to Order

Bil Roby, Grant Manager of NMFP, called the meeting to order at 10:05am, April 27th, 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. Bil reminded panel members and State Staff to sign the Advisory Panel meeting sheet. The meeting notification is distributed to Stakeholders, Advisory Panel members, and State Staff and the date publicized on the Public Calendar of the State of Nebraska official government website.

Bil requested a motion for approval of the minutes of the last meeting; Mike Hon moved and Connie Cooper seconded. The minutes of the February 27th, 2009 meeting were accepted without changes. A motion to adopt the agenda was called for; Mike Hon moved for approval; Rich Brandow seconded.

Agenda Updates:

Introduction of New Panel Member – Kerry Michael, of the Omaha Housing Authority, was introduced and welcomed as a new panel member.

Public Service Announcements (PSA's) / Filler Ads – PSA's and filler ads will be used to further increase public awareness of NMFP and of home-and-community-based services. Bil described the filler ads as short, one-or-two line messages that newspapers use to fill in gaps. A second filler ad will be devoted to Assistive Technology Project's (ATP) website: housing.ne.gov. The ads are close to completion. Thirty-second PSA's for radio stations are currently in development; Bil noted radio PSA's would target a larger audience than television advertisements. A PSA for ATP's housing website is also being developed. Examples of the ads were read aloud to the panel.

MFP National Conference Recap – NMFP staff and Kay Wenzl, representing the HCBS Waiver Services Unit, attended the Baltimore conference in early March. The conference covered many topics as well as approaches to reducing barriers to transitioning. Bil noted many consumers attended the conference; they provided an encouraging personal perspective on the transition process. He also noted that approval of assisted living facilities as qualified residences continues to be actively considered by CMS. Two outstanding items, which are related to differences in leases/service agreements and lockable access and egress to apartments and/or building, particularly as it relates to patients with Alzheimer's, is currently under legal review. Bil further noted that NMFP continues to work with individuals who choose to transition to assisted living residences and will await word on whether CMS considers the residences qualified.

Transition and Outreach Activity –

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Presentations:	212	61
Transitions:	19	9
Transitions in process:	45	50

Figures represent combined NMFP staff outreach efforts and transitions through March 2009. Spreadsheets detailing transition and outreach activity were provided to the panel. It was noted that transitions to assisted living facilities are now no longer included in the total transition count to more clearly reflect transitions to qualified residences. Assisted living transitions are currently reflected in the "Not Transitioned" category; however, if CMS approves assisted living as a qualified residence for the program, the transitions will again be reflected in the total. Kathy Hoell inquired how many assisted living facilities in the state met the qualifications required. Bil replied that Pat Snyder surveyed her association and, from the responses received, noted that many assisted living facilities provide apartments which meet the mandated qualifications. Assisted living transitions to date have numbered 12; however, only 7 individuals have transitioned to residences which meet the qualifications of public law. It was further noted that NMFP Transition Coordinators monitor transitions closely and frequently throughout the enrollment period and will only consider residences as qualified based upon public law.

Agenda Updates (cont.)

Database Update – The database team and NMFP staff will meet after the Advisory Panel meeting to review the next completed stage of the database. It is anticipated that the database will be completed fairly soon and will be able to provide a variety of reports based upon real time data.

Potential Consumer Visit – Bil briefly discussed the possibility of having a consumer visit the panel and provide a first-hand perspective on the challenges of transitioning and of maintaining a successful transition. Bil described his meeting with the consumer and related that a presentation by the individual and her family would be informative and instructive and would provide added perspective on the choice and impact of living independently.

Panel Discussion:

Stimulus Bil – Lara Huskey – The DED will receive approximately \$3 million in Community Development Block Grant funds. This is in addition to its annual allocation of \$12 million. Since the department is involved with economic development activity, the DED has attempted to understand the package and its overall effect on the state economy as well as other associated programs. Lara referred to portions of the Federal Omnibus Appropriations Act for 2009 and the Stimulus Bill and what may or may not impact MFP grantees as it regards housing:

- Mainstream Vouchers – not part of the America Recovery and Re-investment Act, but is under consideration for continued inclusion in the overall federal budget; vouchers are set aside for non-elderly people with disabilities. Typically accessed by programs which assist the homeless and those individuals with disabilities. The vouchers are very competitive and are intended to mainstream the two populations specified to allow for greater inclusion in public housing. Lara stated that the vouchers appear to be more accessible to larger, more metropolitan cities. Kerry Michael noted that currently, Omaha does not have Mainstream Vouchers.
- Nebraska does not have a statewide housing authority or statewide rental assistance voucher program. In order to use any kind of voucher from HUD parameters must be in place, particularly the capacity to use vouchers. As a consequence, it limits entities from accessing voucher programs. Nebraska has 29 housing authorities which use Section 8 vouchers. Any increase in units or vouchers authorized by Congress will impact the state regionally, not state-wide.
- Housing.ne.gov – the site lists only available units. Lara stated that NMFP clients may have an interest in using waiting lists for units that are currently unavailable. NIFA website/database includes assisted units and would be a helpful tool in determining how to access those lists. The site is searchable and includes HUD, DED, and USDA. HUD's website also has a searchable database.
- Modernization of Public Housing Units – Funds appropriated are dedicated to improvement of the units themselves; rental assistance tied to the individual is not included. The Recovery Bill is intended to increase employment opportunities and enhance energy efficiency. Rental assistance would not be considered falling within this area.

Panel Discussion Stimulus Bil (cont.)

- Community Development Block Grant Program – Program administered by Nebraska DED outside of the Omaha and Lincoln areas. A portion of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program can be set aside to provide one-time public service aid to a specific community grantee (not statewide) to allow them to assist individuals to transition out of facilities back into the community. The aid is temporary, not ongoing. Nebraska DED does not typically pursue this type of grant; it is capped and difficult to do on a community-by-community basis. Omaha and Lincoln have a different scenario; they have their own CDBG funds and do not have to actively go out and find a grantee; they have the capability to allocate resources for that type of assistance.
- Home Program – Also administered by the Nebraska DED, the program allows for tenant-based rental assistance. It was incorporated in Nebraska’s last five-year plan, but it is not anticipated to be included in the next five-year plan. Programs are not administered directly out of DED; non-profits and local government perform this activity. Nebraska DED focuses instead on developing housing that is affordable and accessible and that is available by voucher. Omaha and Lincoln do use their Home Program to provide rent and security deposits.
- Recovery Act – It appears much of the money is dedicated to educational and energy efficiency activities. Lara suggested, at best, there may be a tie to education stimulus funds to provide outreach about NMFP. The Homeless Assistance Program has received approximately \$8 million for homeless prevention and rapid re-housing. Most of this funding will be for rental assistance and will not cover NMFP populations. Pat Compton recommended remaining alert to the possibility of the funding being used more broadly which would cover additional groups or special housing circumstances.
- General Discussion – State Housing Authorities must submit requests and be certified for Mainstream Vouchers. Waiting lists are utilized differently by each housing authority. K. Hoell stated that Gary Fischer of the Family Housing Advisory Services indicated he has received funding for activities associated with fair housing. Housing.ne.gov lists vacant units and is updated every two weeks.

NMFP Housing Survey – The NMFP web-based housing survey sent to Service Coordinators, Supervisors, and Directors generated 72 responses out of 114 sent. A meeting to discuss the results will be held in the near future. It is hoped that results of the survey will assist Ann Denton, of Advocates for Human Potential, to further define housing issues as they relate to Nebraska.

Workforce Development – Bil stated that discussions with Workforce Development centered on expanding service provider capacity, specifically independent providers. A request to Workforce Development to provide a proposal of what technical assistance can be offered to expand service capacity was submitted.

Panel Discussion (cont.)

Sunshine Video (comments) – K. Hoell discussed the “dignity of risk” and emphasized all individuals should be allowed the freedom to take reasonable risks. She stated that often Service Coordinators aren’t willing to allow an individual the opportunity to make decisions which may involve risk. Kathy suggested sending individuals who have already transitioned to visit those who reside in nursing facilities/ ICF/MR’s. She also referred to a report that CMS produces which presents data on the numbers of individuals currently in facilities who would like to return to community-based living arrangements. Kathy indicated the number for Nebraska, over 2500, was at a very high level. She noted that not all individuals would be eligible or appropriate for HCBS, but that efforts must be increased to transition individuals out of facilities. Bil responded that Mathematica Research Policy (MPR), Inc. provided similar information based upon 2004-2005 report but the figures did not distinguish populations or the physical/mental health status of individuals.

Strategies for Increasing NMFP Referrals – Bil outlined current practices in regards to obtaining or increasing referrals: presentations to facility staff and residents; presentations to senior centers and community groups; identification of NF residents who wish to return to the community on monthly Minimum Data Set reports; and upcoming PSA’s and filler ads. Bil requested ideas from the panel for additional approaches. An open discussion in which all panel members participated followed:

- Create a Nebraska video – distribute it NPR, local TV stations
- Contact Social Workers (SW) in hospitals; present at annual meetings.
- Contact discharge planners in hospitals, concentrating on rehab / skilled units
- School of SW’s (Senior Class) / Masters Degree Program / UNO Continuing Education
- Letter directed to nursing facility social workers
- Conduct presentations at hospitals and Rural Health Association
- Use CMS online discharge planning booklet
- NHDA – SW’s round table
- Return to NF’s; contact physicians and their staff to inform them of alternatives to facility care
- Utilize the Resident Assessment form; make it more effective, more directed
- Contact individuals; get to people before they enter a facility; contact the Nursing Association, local chapter of AMA, etc.
- Short commercial about MFP
- Print bingo cards with NMFP message
- Visit Medicaid supply places; local health fairs
- Rely upon professional advertising firm – use one-line, simple message, add 1-800 number
- Postcards to all nursing facility residents
- Radio / TV station advertising: target specific stations to reach MFP audience
- Filler advertisements
- Create a video to help guardians/family members overcome fear of independent living
- Add NMFP to the Sunshine video
- Advocates and peer support; involvement of CIL’s
- M. Fischer-Lempke – have ICF/MR individuals be visited or have them visit
- Newspaper series about HCBS, then interview individual who transitioned
- Providers need to advertise their services

Strategies for Increasing NMFP Referrals (cont.)

Referral Concerns Discussed – Conflicts of interest exist; turn-over of facility staff frequent; nursing facility / guardian / family perception that comparable community care not available or inadequate; industry and NF staff resistance to MFP message; providers must promote the advantages of their services and prove their services are comparable or superior to facility-based care; the concerns and fears of families are consequential; and MFP public law regulations (six-month residency stay and qualified residences) are restrictive and make transitions more difficult.

Subcommittee Discussions:

Housing – A teleconference is scheduled with Ann Denton (housing technical assistance) for May 14th. Information from the meeting will be made available to the Housing Subcommittee to review.

Transportation – Hope briefly discussed highlights of the Transportation Coalition Institute in Kearney March 16-18. A regional approach to address transportation issues and coordinating the means of transportation statewide is the Coalition's goal. Grants have been applied for or, are in the process of being applied for, by the state's six transportation regions as well as the statewide Transportation Coalition to obtain additional funding to meet or sustain goals. Approval of the grants is pending.

Services Availability – Bil briefly discussed provider issues and noted that Mary Angus was not present. Bil stated the next meeting would provide an opportunity for breakout sessions in which he would like to exchange ideas on goals and proposals with each of the committees. Specifically for the services committee, Bil would like to concentrate on provider issues.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Bil thanked everyone for attending and noted the next meeting would be on June 29. The meeting was adjourned at 1:09pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Debbie Lewis
NMFP Staff Assistant