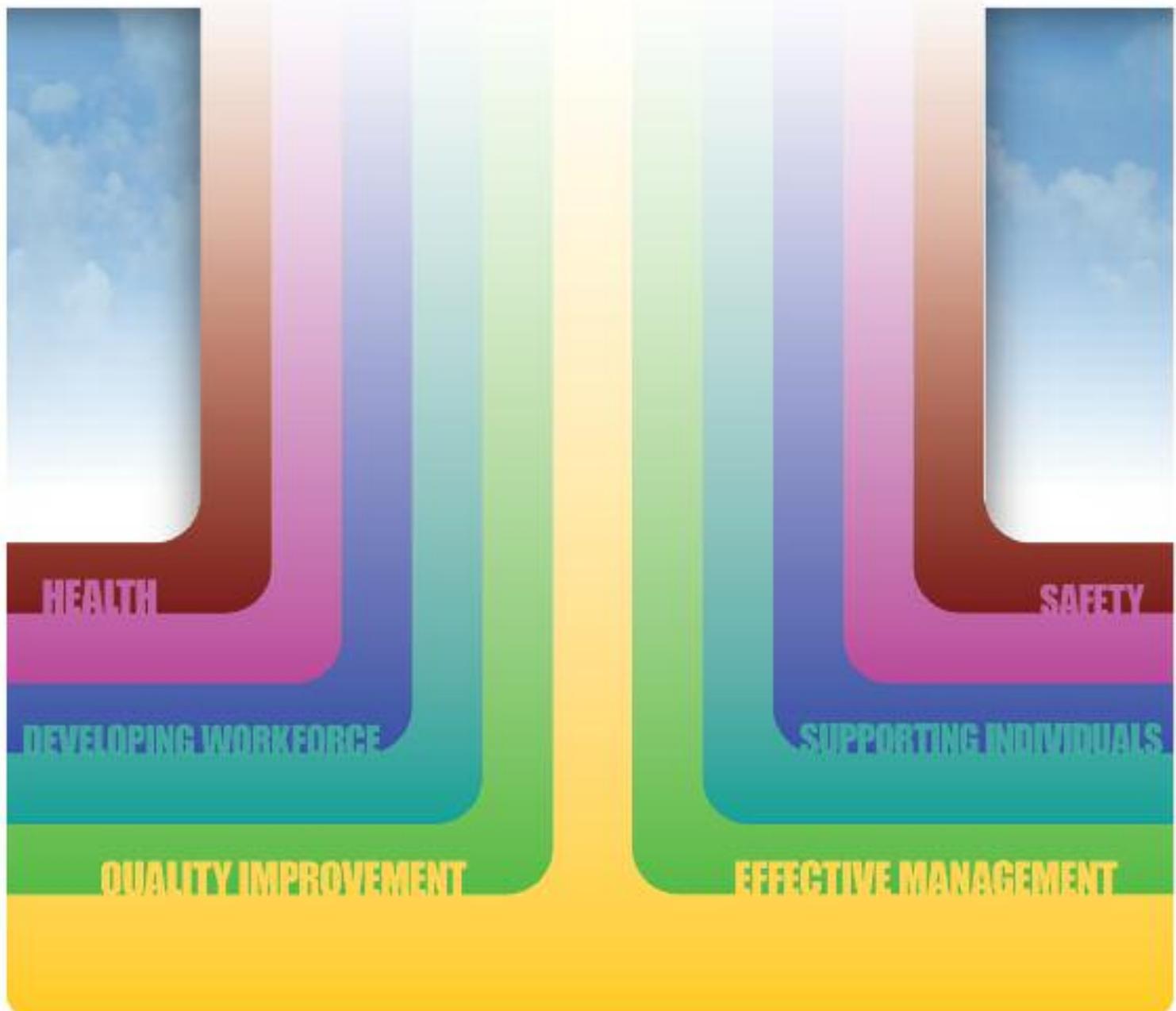




Building a Stronger System for People with Developmental Disabilities

An 18-Month Progress Report from Commissioner Courtney Burke

October 2012





October 2012

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

Over the past 18 months I have very much valued the input and partnership of families, advocates, providers, and others as OPWDD has implemented numerous reforms to further improve the system of services and supports for people with developmental disabilities. My primary focus has been on health and safety reforms, fostering a positive environment, and designing a better service system for the future. Initiatives in these areas have been documented in our six-month and one-year progress reports. We are now beginning to see results: serious incidents are being reported in a timely manner, and allegations of abuse are down 15% compared to one year ago. We can now track 100% of incidents in real-time consistently and system-wide. The length of OPWDD investigations has decreased significantly, as has the average time that OPWDD staff are on paid administrative leave. Thanks to new policies, we also have more highly qualified staff working for OPWDD, and more recognition of the critical and important work that direct support professionals carry out every day.

A critical part of strengthening services and supports has been the workforce. The vast majority of people who work in our field are dedicated professionals, and we must continuously implement new initiatives that better support them so they can better support individuals with developmental disabilities. In an effort to professionalize the work of our direct support professionals, and in recognition of the hard work they do, we have developed and tested job competencies and embraced a National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals Code of Ethics. As part of our efforts to bring consistency and higher quality to the work we do, we have designed new trainings that every OPWDD direct support professional must take. Recruitment of a more diverse workforce has also been a priority. Our efforts to improve the workplace continue to show merit. A recent survey of OPWDD employees indicates that our efforts to provide additional training and outreach in the area of reporting abuse and neglect, as well as strengthening relationships, have had a positive impact on abuse reporting and on creating stronger relationships between staff and the people we support. This is encouraging, but it also shows that certain aspects of supervisory supports must be bolstered.

The agency reorganization that occurred in the past 10 months reflects and supports our goals. We created a new Division of Person-Centered Supports, strengthened OPWDD's quality improvement structure, and created efficiencies by centralizing support services so that greater focus and additional resources can be directed to supports and services. We restructured service delivery by combining regions so they are better aligned with other agencies such as the Department of Health and the Office of Mental Health, and split responsibilities between state operations and oversight of nonprofit providers so there will be better supervision of each.

I believe strongly in being transparent and accountable through reports such as this, and will continue to update you on our progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Courtney Burke', written in a cursive style.Courtney Burke
Commissioner

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I. Introduction to 18-Month Progress Report

Progress continues on OPWDD's efforts to strengthen the system of services and supports that help individuals with developmental disabilities live richer lives. Building on the accomplishments and goals outlined in the six-month and one-year progress reports, our focus is in four major areas: health and safety reforms; improving supports for individuals; supporting the workforce; and effective management and quality improvement.

The outcomes highlighted in this 18-month report are part of a comprehensive effort to not only address immediate health and safety concerns, but to foster a service system that is strong, high performing, and reflects the agency's core values of compassion, dignity, diversity, excellence, and honesty.

These outcomes also show the collaborative effort of OPWDD staff and our partners in the nonprofit sector, as well as individuals, families, and other stakeholders. With a clear understanding of all of our roles and responsibilities, we are committed to fostering relationships based on trust and confidence in the service system and to creating a learning environment based on self-examination, feedback, and continuous quality improvement.

Reform Highlights – 18 Months (April 2012–October 2012)

Health and Safety

- 15% decline in reports of abuse and serious incidents compared with same six-month period a year ago.
- 51% decrease in average length of time to complete abuse investigations due to more highly qualified investigators.
- 100% of critical incidents now entered into an incident management system by OPWDD and its providers.
- Video recording and GPS devices now being installed in OPWDD vehicles that transport individuals.
- 100 priority homes identified for fire safety enhancements. Site assessments are under way with renovations beginning in fall 2012.



Improved Supports for Individuals

- 9.5% decrease in the number of individuals living in institutions.
- Phase I of new PROMOTE training launched, which will reduce the use of physical restraints.
- Developed and will begin piloting a coordinated assessment system tool for all who receive support services to better match services and supports with individuals' needs.
- Expanded housing options for individuals.
- Working to more effectively transition those eligible for OPWDD services out of residential schools. Since July 2011, 49% of those eligible have transitioned to OPWDD services.

Supporting the Workforce

- Launched a workforce recruitment campaign, resulting in an increased number of diverse applicants statewide.
- Created core competencies to support the work of direct support professionals.
- Adopted National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals Code of Ethics.
- Continued workforce surveys to help determine what changes are needed to improve supervision, abuse reporting, and employee trust.
- Created a single traineeship to teach consistently higher standards among the entire OPWDD workforce.

Effective Management and Quality Improvement

- Enacted major agency reorganization to better focus, standardize, and streamline service delivery; consolidate support functions; better manage resources; and improve outcomes.
- Expanded partnerships with minority and women owned business enterprises.
- Continued expansion of provider report cards and other data on system performance.
- Increased use of CHOICES electronic case management system to streamline and provide real-time access to information.



II. Health and Safety Reforms

Ensuring the health and safety of individuals served in our system remains the highest priority in all initiatives, which in the past six months included progress in areas ranging from fire safety to incident reporting and investigations. It is our goal to provide supports that foster good health and confidence based on a secure, trustworthy, and accountable service system.

Timely Incident Reporting

OPWDD and its nonprofit providers now enter 100% of critical incidents into the incident management system database. Timely reporting enables OPWDD to respond quickly to

15%

decrease in reports of abuse and serious incidents when comparing the six month period ending August 31, 2012 to the same time period a year ago.

any incidents of concern to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities anywhere in our service system are safe.

When comparing six-month periods ending August 31, 2011 and August 31, 2012, there has been a substantial decline in allegations of abuse and serious reportable incidents in programs operated by both state and nonprofit provider agencies. In the six-month period ending August 31, 2012, there were over 27% fewer allegations of abuse and reports of serious incidents in the OPWDD system, and over 11% fewer reports among nonprofit providers. This overall 15% decrease reflects OPWDD's successful efforts to enhance training and increase awareness to better protect the health and safety of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Further Strengthened Investigations

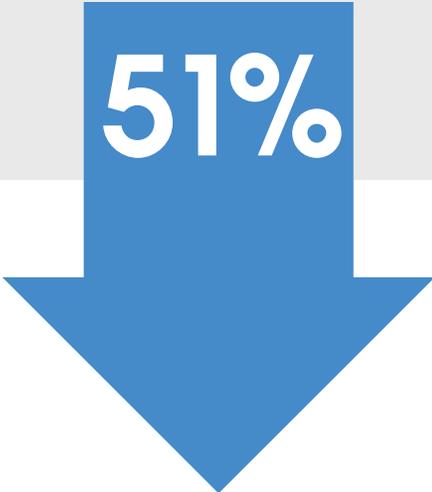
OPWDD is in the process of introducing new regulations that establish a clear timeframe in which internal investigations of abuse by all providers must be completed. Since developing an independent unit of certified investigators, the average amount of time it takes OPWDD to complete an investigation has been consistently decreasing.

OPWDD's Office of Investigations and Internal Affairs (OIIA) utilizes its internal affairs management system database to document and store all investigative materials and activities. Data from the system are used to monitor efficiency and improve effectiveness

of OIIA and the investigative process. In 2012, the average length of time for abuse investigations dropped from 51 days to 25 days, a 51% decrease.

OPWDD also has begun investigating serious allegations of abuse that occur in nonprofit provider agencies; these previously had been conducted by the nonprofit agencies

In 2012, the average length of time for abuse investigations dropped from 51 days to 25 days, a 51% decrease.



51%

themselves. OPWDD will soon assume responsibility for investigating all serious allegations of abuse that involve injury, sexual abuse, and death throughout our system.

OPWDD has also developed and implemented a procedure manual for the performance of investigations and the conduct of investigative staff. This statewide policy manual is intended to improve efficiency and quality, and ensure consistency and clarity in investigations. A system for estimating outcomes of referrals to law enforcement has also been developed.

Incident reporting, investigations, and employee status are all linked with administrative leave and suspension policies within OPWDD so that immediate protections are put in place for individuals and appropriate disciplinary measures for staff are timely. OPWDD continues to suspend employees immediately when allegations are substantiated and seeks termination in serious cases of abuse. The agency has had 100% compliance with this policy.

Enhanced Fire Safety

Consistent with the high priority given to increasing the health and safety of those served by OPWDD, work continues on fire safety reforms. Thousands of state and nonprofit provider operated homes have been surveyed, and priorities for fire safety upgrades identified. This year's state budget provides funding to begin a multi-year initiative that will result in considerable fire safety enhancements to OPWDD homes. OPWDD is working in partnership with the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control and the Dormitory Authority to implement guidance given by a national panel of fire safety experts. A major focus has been conducting site reviews of homes considered to be the highest priority for upgrades to determine what improvements will be made. To date, 100 priority homes have been identified for fire safety enhancements. Site assessments are under way, with renovations beginning in fall 2012.

Increased Safety for State Vehicles that Transport Individuals

In May 2012, a successful pilot that placed video recording and global positioning system (GPS) devices in vehicles used to transport individuals directly supported by OPWDD was completed. This camera and GPS program helps make the system safer when individuals are in transit, resolves complaints, and preserves evidence in cases where there is a substantiated allegation of abuse. Additionally, recordings can easily identify false accusations against employees, reducing the likelihood of an unnecessary drain on law enforcement and OPWDD resources that are better spent investigating true incidents. Statewide installation of video systems/GPS into OPWDD vehicles began in fall 2012.



Strengthened Training for Investigators

The state's Division of Criminal Justice Services has been providing access to law enforcement-level training for OPWDD investigators. To date, OPWDD investigators have attended trainings such as missing person investigations and protocols, interviews and interrogations, and statement analysis training. In June 2012, OPWDD and the New York State Police jointly hosted an Office for Victims of Crime "Assisting Crime Victims with Disabilities" training. Nineteen OPWDD investigators attended the three-day course with members of local and state police, county prosecutors, and victims' advocates.

OPWDD has also developed a 12-hour evidence handling training, instructing investigators on the topics of incident scene management and investigation, physical evidence discovery, documentation, collection and preservation, and chain of custody and testimony. All 64 investigators will receive this training by November 2012.

Implementing an Enhanced Statewide Mortality Review System

OPWDD is working closely with the University of Massachusetts to develop a strong centralized and regional mortality review system. The University of Massachusetts is a recognized national expert in designing and implementing mortality review systems. The purpose of developing an OPWDD mortality review system is to improve the quality of care and treatment provided to individuals with developmental disabilities and to eliminate preventable deaths.

OPWDD began developing regional mortality review committees in fall 2012 with a goal of implementing an enhanced statewide mortality review system in January 2013. When completed, the system will ensure both a regional and a central mortality review within the OPWDD system.

OPWDD has already strengthened the oversight and review process for deaths within the OPWDD system to ensure that accurate and consistent information is reported to both OPWDD and the Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, and that the cause of each death is reported into a statewide application for trending and comparisons. A mortality report based on 2012 data will be completed during spring 2013.

Health and Safety Alerts

In November 2011, OPWDD began a health and safety alert program meant to raise consciousness throughout the system on the need for all employees and stakeholders to remain vigilant and aware of potential safety hazards that exist. The agency issues alerts on timely topics on a regular basis and both state and nonprofit providers reproduce the alerts within their own networks of employees, individuals, and families. Fourteen alerts have been issued to date on subjects such as fire events in the home, prevention of heat related illness, and choking prevention, among others.

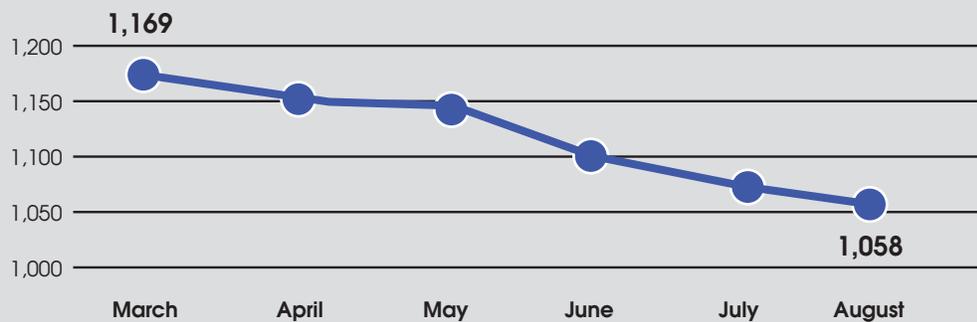




III. Improved Supports for Individuals

OPWDD continues its commitment to put people first by focusing on person-centered supports that facilitate living in community-based settings, and by promoting employment, community involvement, and meaningful relationships. In keeping with the goals of the proposed People First Waiver to offer more individualized services, OPWDD has moved forward on a number of initiatives that directly impact the quality of supports and services offered in our system.

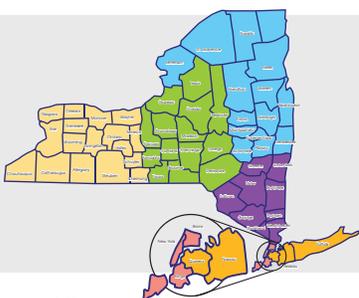
Decline in Institutional Population Statewide, March 2012 to August 2012



Olmstead – Supporting Individuals in the Most Integrated Setting

In his State of the State address, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced New York’s Olmstead Plan, designed to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities are living in the most integrated settings possible based on their abilities. OPWDD’s focus on ensuring that the individuals served by the agency live in the most integrated setting possible continues a long-term shift away from institutional models of care. People with developmental disabilities have moved from large institutional settings to supports designed to meet their individual needs in the community.

The success rate for individuals transitioning to the community so far has been tremendous. OPWDD is committed to further reducing the number of people in institutional settings, using these facilities primarily for short-term transitional support.

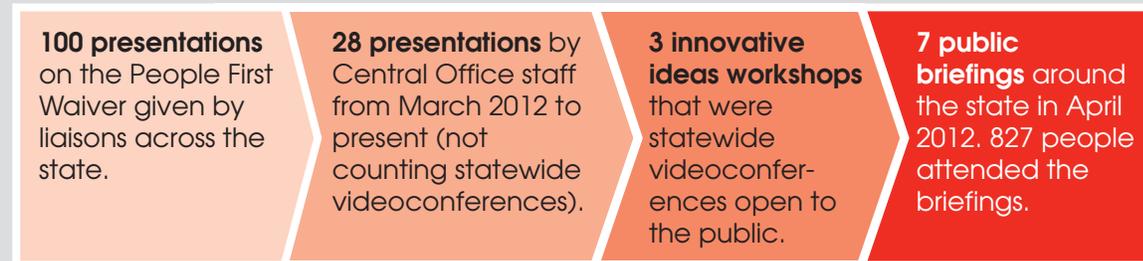


Between March 2012 and August 2012, the number of individuals with developmental disabilities living in institutional units operated by OPWDD decreased from 1,169 to 1,058. This 9.5% reduction means that an additional 111 individuals are now living richer lives in more integrated community settings.



People First

New York State's proposed People First Waiver is a large-scale reform initiative designed to improve OPWDD's services to meet the needs of the more than 126,000 individuals with developmental disabilities in New York State. Through programmatic, fiscal, and administrative improvements, the waiver will establish an integrated system that delivers more flexible supports and services that are based on each individual's needs. Underpinning these reforms is a managed care service delivery structure to provide person-centered planning and improved service coordination, and support better



Since
March
2011

outcomes for people. This managed care model will align incentives so that care coordination organizations assist people to achieve greater success.

OPWDD continues to dialogue with stakeholders regarding the waiver as it begins true implementation planning, which will prepare the agency, as well as nonprofit provider agencies, advocates, and most importantly, the individuals and families who receive supports, to understand and implement the system changes.

This input helps inform a carefully planned and phased transition of the current fee-for-service infrastructure to a managed care infrastructure that will be evaluated and monitored for quality at each phase. Initial implementation planning began with targeted work teams in summer 2012, which will culminate with the submission of the People First Waiver application in fall 2012.

Targeted Work Teams

The work of OPWDD's three targeted teams—organized around 1) access, enrollment, and advocacy; 2) care coordination; and 3) modernizing the fiscal platform—is exploring and defining specific details of system reform under the People First Waiver. The work teams, which include individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, nonprofit providers, and local governmental units, met several times beginning in early August 2012 and are continuing their sessions throughout fall 2012.

Person-Centered Supports and Needs Assessment

In February 2012, OPWDD selected the interRAI Integrated Assessment Suite to serve as the core needs assessment tool within the new system. This needs assessment will be used to ensure supports and services are planned that meet each individual's unique needs regardless of the level of support required, or where an individual may reside in New York State. To this end, OPWDD has been working with assessment consultants from the University of Michigan and the interRAI Assessment Consortium to establish what will be known as a coordinated assessment system (CAS) tool for all people who receive OPWDD supports and services. The CAS has been shared with parents and providers and will be piloted later this year. During the People First Waiver case studies, feedback related to the assessment process and the information obtained from the tool—for the purpose of informing a person-centered planning process—will be sought and



evaluated. Individuals, families, advocates, and nonprofit providers will also provide feedback on the assessment process. OPWDD is presently interviewing state employees with experience as Medicaid service coordinators to serve as the first assessment specialists.

Preparing for the Transition to Managed Care

OPWDD has continued to work with selected high performing nonprofit provider agencies to prepare to test the CAS tool and new measures of system performance, and began holding innovative ideas workshops that showcase how providers throughout the state are working together for improved efficiencies and outcomes for the people they support as the system moves to managed care. Guidance and oversight of the People First Waiver, as well as its development and implementation, was transitioned from a steering committee to the commissioner’s standing Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council.



Waiver Timeline

| Milestone | Anticipated Date |
|--|-------------------------|
| Draft request for applications (RFA) posted on webpage | September 2012 |
| Waiver application submitted to federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services | October 2012 |
| Ongoing implementation planning | October 2012-March 2013 |
| RFA for pilot managed care plans will be issued | March 2013 |
| Selection of pilot managed care plans | June 2013 |
| Initial voluntary enrollment of individuals in pilot managed care plans | November 2013 |

Shifting Service Provision to Positive and Proactive Approaches

The first phase of OPWDD’s new training called Positive Relationships Offer More Opportunity to Everyone (PROMOTE) was launched in April 2012.

This major culture shift in OPWDD training focuses on positive and proactive approaches to support individuals with developmental disabilities and reducing the use of restraints. Direct support professionals statewide will be trained in new strategies for positive interaction, as well as strategies for ensuring safety without using physical restraints. PROMOTE will teach staff members skills that increase an individual’s self-confidence, connections to others, and opportunities for relaxation and recreation. PROMOTE is based on the premise that if people are supported and engaged in leading richer lives, they will be less likely to engage in challenging behaviors.

As of July 2012, OPWDD successfully implemented a new system to electronically collect data on the use of restrictive physical interventions throughout the developmental disabilities system. The electronic data collection will ensure compliance with a new behavioral regulation, and requires all restrictive physical interventions to be reported within five days of occurrence. This will provide a means to measure the effectiveness of the PROMOTE curriculum as it is implemented.

Person-First Services Based on Individual Needs

OPWDD is focused on using outcome measures to gauge how well individuals with developmental disabilities are achieving the goals they and their families and/or advocates feel are important. Success breeds success, and individuals who are supported



are likely to have more confidence and believe they can utilize their gifts and abilities to enrich their lives.

OPWDD is now exploring individual outcomes as part of a People First Waiver case study. Working in conjunction with the nationally recognized Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL), OPWDD is researching and integrating CQL’s personal outcome measures into new care coordination and evaluation methods.

Individual Community Supports (ICS) is an OPWDD initiative designed to transform the system into one driven by individual needs and preferences. Eligibility procedures will be streamlined to remove complexity and allow easier access to supports in the system. A consistent menu of service options will be developed so that individuals statewide are offered a robust package of options regardless of where they live or from which agency they receive services. Additionally, new person-centered planning competencies are being developed and will support the development of life plans that individuals with developmental disabilities can be engaged in and call their own. The model for ICS is

Individualized Support Quarterly Snapshot

In just one quarter, from April 1, 2012 to June 30, 2012, the number of individuals accessing:

Individualized Budgets

Consolidated Supports and Services
(self-determination)

Individual Support Services
(rent subsidies)


Increased by 5%


Increased by 9.3%


Increased by 4.5%

based on OPWDD’s Consolidated Supports and Services (CSS) program, and seeks to offer individuals the freedom and control of self-determination without the technical complexity that made some people wary of committing to CSS.

Creating New Opportunities for More Independent and Shared Living

The state’s Medicaid Redesign Team Supportive Housing Development Program awarded OPWDD \$1.8 million for 2012-2013 to create new housing opportunities for 180 individuals statewide. OPWDD will utilize the available funds while also matching those funds to assist people to live in apartments with the support necessary to help them access community life. OPWDD will also utilize a portion of the funds to assist some individuals to move from a supervised group home to a supportive model with less than 24-hour supervision.

In addition, OPWDD is creating a continuum of housing options for people with developmental disabilities through statewide housing forums. To date, more than 1,500 individuals have attended these housing forums to learn more about available options.

In September 2012, OPWDD and New York State Homes & Community Renewal (HCR) entered into an agreement to provide new opportunities for supportive housing for people with developmental disabilities. HCR has provided an incentive to developers to work with OPWDD through its tax credit program. Currently, up to 97 units are proposed by developers and providers to support and serve people with developmental disabilities, including seniors.



Integration through Community Habilitation

Community habilitation offers another option to individuals who wish to have their habilitation services focus on a variety of everyday community activities and settings. The service is designed to promote independence and community integration, and helps individuals get out into their communities and engage in their interests.

A recent review of the community habilitation service found that:

- 85 % of individuals felt that staff worked directly on goals/outcomes meaningful to them as individuals
- 83 % of individuals were satisfied with service quality

Transitioning Individuals to OPWDD Services

Historically, children who cannot be adequately educated within their local school system and/or accommodated by their families may be enrolled at in-state or out-of-state private residential schools. Once the student is no longer eligible for educational funding, OPWDD may continue to provide funding for such individuals to remain in their educational placements until appropriate services are available.

49%

of individuals from both in- and out-of-state residential schools have transitioned to receiving adult services through OPWDD since July 2011.

OPWDD has begun a focused statewide initiative to transition adults to appropriate services within New York State who are eligible for OPWDD services and currently living in in-state or out-of-state residential schools. To ensure services exist, and to anticipate needs well in advance, OPWDD has taken steps to improve coordination and information management.

Since beginning the initiative in July 2011, 49% of individuals from both in- and out-of-state residential schools have transitioned to adult services accessed through OPWDD. OPWDD continues to develop opportunities through a rolling Request for Services (RFS) to ensure adequate supports and services are available when young adults age out of residential schools. Over 20 provider agencies responded to the most recent RFS, released in April 2012, to express interest in working with individuals as they age out over the next three years.





IV. Supporting the Workforce

A strong and effective workforce is a cornerstone of providing quality supports to individuals with developmental disabilities. For that reason, OPWDD is making a significant commitment to supporting the workforce. All employees in the developmental disabilities system, from the more than 90,000 direct support professionals to clinical and administrative staff, play a role in achieving the mission to help people with developmental disabilities live richer lives.

Building an Environment of Trust Survey

Engagement and feedback from the workforce is being fostered through the third installation of the OPWDD employee trust survey, which was distributed in summer 2012. This anonymous staff survey was expanded for the first time to include questions on supervision, employee interaction with individuals served, and employee stress.

Fully independent and confidential direct care focus groups will be convened in several regions in early 2013. All information gathered will be used to further develop improved supervisor supports and inform the agency on employee morale and stress levels, which can impact services. Preliminary trust survey results show some success from extensive outreach and training efforts on both abuse prevention and fostering positive relationships between workers and the individuals supported.

94%

of responding staff believe that they have the knowledge and workplace support to create a positive environment that helps prevent abuse and mistreatment.

93%

of responding staff state that they have a strong personal relationship with the individuals they support.



The graphic below depicts employee sentiment that reveals where supervisory supports are stronger, plus those areas with room for continued improvement:

| Statements staff were asked to respond to: | Ratio of those who agreed they are very satisfied or satisfied to all others (who responded neutral, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied) |
|---|---|
| My supervisor’s fairness in appraising my job performance | (3:1)  |
| The way my supervisor listens when I have something to say | (3:1)  |
| The way my supervisor sets clear work goals | (2:1)  |
| The way my supervisor understands the problems I might run into doing the job | (2:1)  |
| The way my supervisor treats me when I make a mistake | (3:1)  |

Establishing Consistent Core Competencies

The core competencies for direct support professionals (DSP) encompass all aspects of direct support and OPWDD’s mission to help individuals with developmental disabilities live richer lives. They are framed by seven goal areas.

In 2011, OPWDD formed a DSP core competencies workgroup as part of the New York State Talent Development Consortium.

The consortium has finalized the DSP core competencies, recommending that they serve as the skill standards for evaluation of direct support professionals throughout the entire developmental disabilities system.

Implementation is now under way in the eight nonprofit provider agencies that participate on the workgroup and in several state offices, and will be expanding to six additional nonprofit provider agencies represented on the consortium’s steering committee. All providers will begin using the competencies in April 2013, with the goal of full implementation by May 2014. Providers will be required to ensure that their DSP standards are consistent with the New York State core competencies. A webpage containing various resources will be made available for all providers starting in January 2013.

The next initiative for the Talent Development Consortium will be developing core competencies and providing recommended training tools for direct support professional supervisors. This effort will commence by the end of 2012.



NYS DSP Core Competency Goals

1. Putting People First
2. Building and Maintaining Positive Relationships
3. Demonstrating Professionalism
4. Supporting Good Health
5. Supporting Safety
6. Having a Home
7. Being Active and Productive in Society



Recruitment Campaign – A Wider Pool of Candidates for OPWDD Jobs

OPWDD has launched a comprehensive and values-based workforce recruitment campaign targeting potential applicants who reflect the diversity of New York State and who share the agency’s values.

4,600

Since June 2011, 4,600 applicants took the direct support assistant examination; 1,600 were screened for potential employment.

Since February 2012, OPWDD has held 34 outreach and recruitment events, including college and career fairs, as well as meeting with the Native American Family Service Commission and participating in a job fair held at the American Indian Community House in Tonawanda, New York. OPWDD began a pilot recruitment program with Centro Civico, a grass roots organization serving Latinos living in various communities in New York State, and the first Civil Service examination administered at a nonprofit provider agency was completed in August 2012. Plans are under way to expand these efforts to other Latino communities around the state.

OPWDD also entered into a formal agreement with the State University of New York (SUNY) that is designed to recruit the next generation of workers for OPWDD and its

For the first time in OPWDD’s history, the agency held examinations for direct support professional positions at community organizations throughout the state.

Some of the outcomes from these efforts include:

NYC Metro: 24 direct support professionals were hired as part of recruitment efforts with the Bronx, Manhattan, and Westchester Educational Opportunity Centers.

Brooklyn: 15 candidates that took the direct support professional examination at the Brooklyn Educational Opportunity Center are being hired.

Capital District: 12 hires are pending from a recruitment effort at Centro Civico in Amsterdam, NY.

OPWDD Recruitment in the Community

nonprofit partners. Pilot initiatives are under way in New York City and Central New York to recruit, test, and train DSPs in collaboration with SUNY.

In addition, OPWDD is partnering with the Department of Labor to get recruitment information into locations where unemployment benefits are acquired. In order to provide a more realistic job preview for potential DSPs, OPWDD added a video to its employment webpage, as well as to the New York State Department of Civil Service website.

Adopted a National Code of Ethics

In July 2012, OPWDD announced the agency adoption of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) Code of Ethics, based upon the recommendation of the New York State Developmental Disabilities Talent Development Consortium.

Development of an implementation plan for the code began in July with an OPWDD initiative in partnership with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals and



the College of Direct Support. Six regional DSP dialogues, or workshops, were scheduled to engage DSPs from both state and nonprofit service providers.

In each of the day-long dialogues, groups of approximately 30 DSPs take part in an interactive presentation of the national code of ethics and also serve as focus groups to provide information on key issues facing the profession. That information is serving as the guiding framework for a system-wide implementation strategy now in development for the code of ethics to the more than 90,000 DSPs statewide.

Culture Change – Shaping a System through Awareness, Respect, and Teamwork

The initiative to reshape the culture of OPWDD and the state’s developmental disabilities system began in fall 2011 with creation of a focus group comprised of self advocates, families, direct support professionals, and leaders from the state and nonprofit provider systems.

As of April 2012, the group defined goals and areas of focus that have been the foundation of multiple cross-system initiatives.

The culture—or shared set of attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterize the system—would be developed and sustained by focusing on awareness, respect, and teamwork in all endeavors that impact culture.

The culture of the developmental disabilities system will:

- Be strong, committed, and caring;
- Be high-performing and based on the agency’s core values of compassion, dignity, diversity, excellence, and honesty;
- Foster relationships based on trust and confidence in the service system;
- Create a learning environment where self-examination and improvement is ongoing; and
- Provide clear understanding to all members of the service delivery system of their roles and responsibility in building and sustaining this culture.

Creating the lasting changes in culture requires an alignment of agency values and policies, as well as alignment of personal values held by employees throughout the system. To support the creation of the desired culture, OPWDD has undertaken initiatives spanning the major areas that impact culture: leadership; decision-making, policy and structure; workforce and talent development; and work processes, systems, and quality improvement.

Implementing a Single Direct Support Professional Traineeship

As part of its continued efforts to provide consistent and efficient training and professional development for new DSPs within state delivered services, OPWDD began implementation of a revised and improved traineeship program that will be used statewide and incorporates the national code of ethics and direct support core competencies. A diverse, agency-wide team is reviewing the criteria as well as updating training curricula and on-the-job learning tools. The result will be a dynamic, high quality talent development program delivered at all state-operated offices. Field testing/validation of select modules is now under way at seven state operations offices. Feedback is being received from new employees, supervisors, and instructors, and will direct modifications to be made in coming months as the training is implemented statewide.



Key Elements of the NADSP Code of Ethics

- Advocacy
- Confidentiality
- Integrity and Responsibility
- Justice, Fairness, Equity
- Person-Centered Supports
- Promoting Physical and Emotional Well-Being
- Relationships
- Respect
- Self-Determination



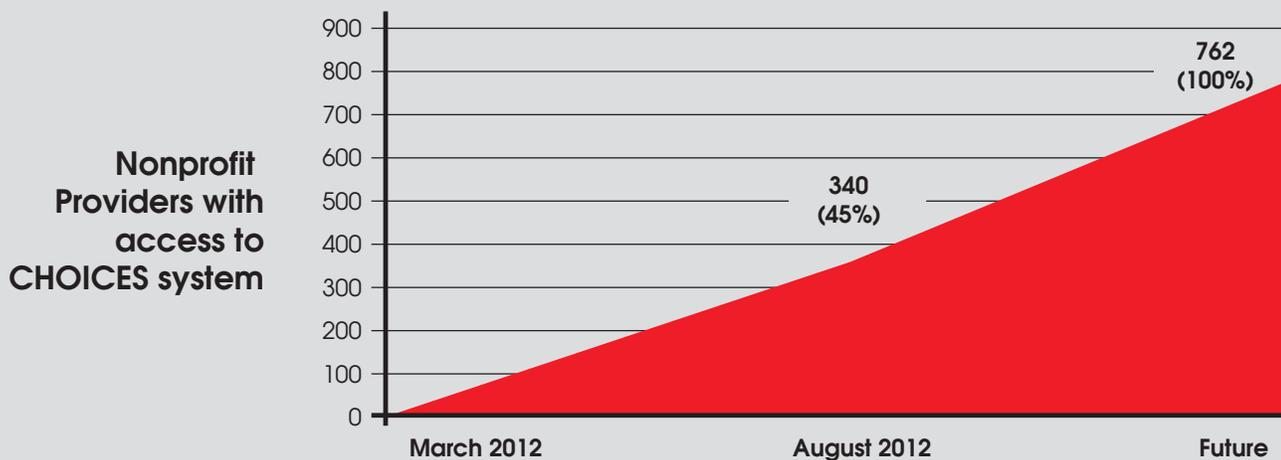
V. Effective Management and Quality Improvement

OPWDD has realigned its agency operations to consolidate administrative functions, create efficiencies, and streamline service delivery. The agency is building on its use of data to measure outcomes, utilizing technology to connect staff, and improving services to provide reliable indicators of system progress.

Expanding Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises Partnerships

OPWDD has continued to expand its partnerships with minority / women owned business enterprises (M/WBE) firms doing business in New York State. Providing training and technical assistance and assisting M/WBE vendors where possible with business development efforts have allowed OPWDD to make strides in engaging M/WBE firms.

Between April 1, 2012 and June 30, 2012, OPWDD allocated nearly \$3.3 million to M/WBEs, or 24% of the partnership goal established for 2012-13. This pattern is anticipated to continue.



Using Technology to Connect Staff and Improve Services

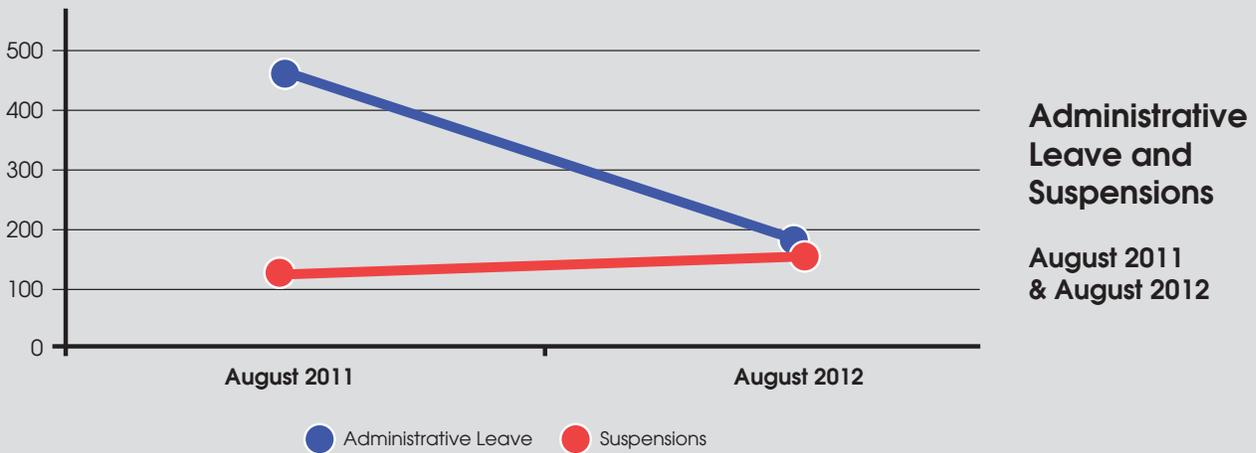
Of the over 700 nonprofit agencies providing services for OPWDD in New York, almost half are now actively using the CHOICES electronic case management system for data entry. The goal is to engage all of OPWDD's nonprofit service providers.



CHOICES currently supports 6,000 nonprofit agency users to make approximately 12,000 entries per month, enhancing care coordination and person-centered planning through the rapid communication of information.

OPWDD has also begun implementing system-wide videoconference technology statewide, which will allow employees, supervisors, managers, and others to engage in remote meetings without the need for travel. In fall 2012, OPWDD will also install an electronic voice and video communication tool in group homes throughout the system to connect house staff and off-site management.

In addition, OPWDD is now utilizing Lync software, which enhances an employee's ability to communicate through the computer to increase efficiencies. Lync allows a user at one computer to share documents and programs, or to share the computer itself, with a user at another computer.



Managing Staffing

OPWDD continues to monitor the necessity of keeping OPWDD employees on paid administrative leave and is aggressively reviewing all cases where employees are on paid leave. The focus is to improve and expedite decision-making in order to take appropriate administrative action to discipline, suspend, or return employees to duty as quickly as possible. Efforts will continue to try to keep the number of employees in paid administrative leave status to a minimum, reduce overtime, and enhance safety throughout the OPWDD system.

After a substantial decrease in the average number of employees on paid administrative leave, OPWDD has maintained these reduced levels. This suggests that the actions OPWDD has taken to manage and reduce unnecessary paid leave, while continuing to ensure the health and safety of the people served, are effective.

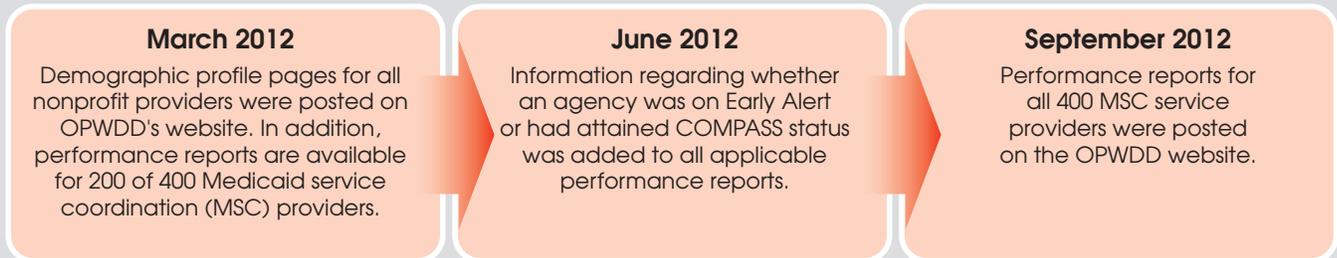
Agency Reorganization

A major reorganization at OPWDD has taken place to enable a heightened focus on both state and nonprofit provider service delivery, which will result in increased efficiencies and higher quality outcomes for individuals and families across the state. The



reorganization heightens the agency's focus on service delivery and quality improvement; provides for increased oversight of the existing network of nonprofit

Performance data available on the OPWDD website:



providers; and helps ensure accountability across the system. Another key component of this restructuring is the realignment of OPWDD's operations to enhance consistency statewide. Some highlights of the reorganization:

- Created a Division of Person-Centered Supports dedicated to designing a system of supports based on an individual's needs and goals, enhancing person-centered planning, and increasing the options offered to individuals and families.
- Developed a quality improvement strategy to ensure that continuous quality improvement through the use of data and objective measures drives the development and implementation of supports.
- Centralized support functions to increase consistency, streamline work, and save resources.
- Established new regions to improve the consistency and coordination of both state- and nonprofit-operated services by dividing responsibilities for staff more sensibly. Supervision and oversight have also been enhanced to ensure accountability and quality of supports.

Making Performance Information Publicly Available

OPWDD continues to expand the amount of information available to individuals, families, and other members of the public regarding the quality and availability of OPWDD supports.

Enhanced Early Alert Process

In July 2011, OPWDD substantially restructured its early alert committee, which monitors the operational status and performance of nonprofit service providers that are having programmatic, fiscal, or governance concerns. Most agencies provide quality supports and services; the enhanced early alert process identifies poor performing agencies earlier in order to help them improve before issues worsen.

In April 2012, OPWDD's Division of Quality Improvement further refined the early alert process. Additional requirements such as requiring corrective management plans, progress metrics, and defined timeframes have been put into place to better ensure agency response and accountability. Since reinvigorating the process, 21 agencies have been placed on early alert status.



Quality Improvement Strategy

To ensure OPWDD's services are of the highest quality possible, the agency has adopted a comprehensive quality improvement strategy that uses data to prioritize and inform service development and enhancement. As the state moves into managed care, the careful monitoring of service quality is crucial, as the new flexibility afforded through managed care will increase the use of community supports not certified by OPWDD. Therefore, measuring performance takes on a new importance and renews emphasis on achieving individual outcomes and system goals.

The quality improvement strategy (QIS) involves the development of quality goals, indicators, and performance metrics. First, a review of information about the performance of the system is conducted to identify issues, and then specific plans for improvement or remediation are made. Progress toward reaching improvement targets is reviewed and evaluated regularly.

The OPWDD QIS structure draws from quality improvement activities associated with reform initiatives and evidence-based management practices. The QIS structure is built on existing quality improvement and performance measurement activities including OPWDD's routine quality audits and surveys, and participation in the National Core Indicators project. In addition, OPWDD is working with a national quality improvement expert to develop and test consistent service outcome measures for person-centered planning and individualized supports.

- 21:** Agencies have been placed on early alert since July 2011
- 4:** Agencies demonstrated improvement and were taken off early alert status
- 10:** Nonprofit providers received fines, ranging from \$1,000 to \$7,000, for failing to comply with regulations
- 15:** Residential programs have been or are in the process of being transferred to another nonprofit provider agency
- 3:** Nonprofit providers no longer provide services through OPWDD
- 14:** Agencies remain on early alert status as of September 2012

Early Alert by the Numbers



VI. Next Steps

Continuing the Modernization and Improvement of Service Delivery

A major undertaking for OPWDD this past year has been redesigning how services are delivered, and the vehicle for many of these changes is the proposed People First Waiver. A major goal of the redesign is to ensure that services better meet the needs of individuals and families. Additional goals include preparing the system to move to managed care in a way that preserves specialized services for persons with developmental disabilities; ensuring that more people can access community-based services; changing how quality is measured so it focuses on individual outcomes; and making service funding easier to understand.

Many of these changes are already under way, while others are being done by waiving certain federal Medicaid program rules. To waive these rules, OPWDD will be submitting relevant Medicaid waiver requests and waiver amendments to the federal government in fall 2012. The People First Waiver will continue with implementation planning through targeted work teams and the public release of the coordinated assessment system tool this fall for people who receive supports and services.

OPWDD is also expanding its Family Care program to meet the changing needs of people with developmental disabilities who are aging and the family care providers who support them in their homes. Regional family care forums are being scheduled, and family care providers have been offered the opportunity to participate in the Home of Your Own and Individual Development Account (IDA) programs.

To achieve the goal of significantly increasing the number of people with developmental disabilities who are employed, OPWDD is focusing on necessary systemic changes, including restructuring current OPWDD employment programs to eliminate silos, and incorporating assessment, discovery, and person-centered planning into the delivery of supported employment services. OPWDD is also increasing opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to develop job readiness skills through volunteer and internship work experiences, and engaging individuals in community service projects that create opportunities to develop employment skills.

Additional Health and Safety Reforms

Over the next six months, OPWDD will implement a number of significant next steps to further enhance the quality of person-centered supports for individuals with developmental disabilities, supports for the workforce, and effective management tools.

Among the health and safety priorities advancing this fall are the start of fire safety renovations to identified state and nonprofit provider homes and expanding the installation of full GPS and video systems in OPWDD vehicles. These efforts will complement the ongoing development of the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs, designed to give New York State the strongest standards and practices in the nation for protecting people with special needs and disabilities.



Starting in November 2012, PROMOTE implementation will proceed with training for additional instructors, following certification of the trainers and instructors who have been training for the past six months. From April 2013 to September 2014, PROMOTE training will be implemented with all staff in both state and nonprofit programs.

In 2013, OPWDD will issue behavior management regulations with comprehensive requirements for behavioral supports and interventions in response to challenging behavior and symptoms of diagnosed psychiatric disorders. These new requirements will help agencies provide higher quality services and will protect the rights and welfare of individuals receiving services.

In keeping with the PROMOTE principles, the behavior management regulations will emphasize positive approaches, strategies, and supports as the preferred method of intervention for challenging behaviors. In addition, the regulations will establish specific procedures that must be followed in order to actively monitor and control the use of specific behavioral interventions that limit rights or have a potentially adverse impact.

OPWDD's new electronic data collection on use of restrictive physical interventions will ensure compliance with the new regulations, which require that all use of restrictive physical interventions be reported within five days of occurrence. This will provide a means to measure the effectiveness of the PROMOTE curriculum as it is implemented.

Additional Supports for the Workforce

In support of the workforce, more than a dozen nonprofit provider agencies will integrate use of the core competencies for direct support professionals in the coming months to inform system-wide utilization of the standards to begin in April 2013. An implementation strategy for the national code of ethics will also be developed based on the feedback from the DSP dialogues that began in June 2012. Competencies for DSPs will be implemented to make job expectations clearer and ensure higher quality services.

Continued efficiencies will be sought through the reorganization of OPWDD's support operations. Electronic and video communication tools will also be installed in residential homes in the state system to connect house staff and managers.

Reports on these and other areas of progress will be made as OPWDD continues to work to make person-centered practices the foundation of the agency's supports and services to individuals with developmental disabilities.



VII. Conclusion

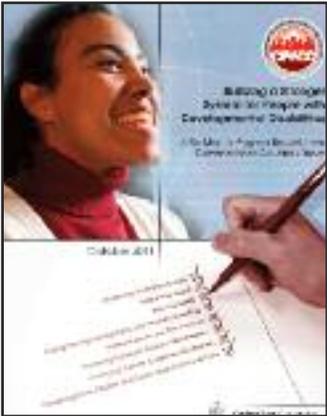
OPWDD is making measurable progress on ensuring the health and safety of our employees and the people we serve, while also continuing efforts to redesign how services are delivered through the proposed People First Waiver. We will continue to seek the input of families, advocates, providers, employees, and others. In the past 18 months, this input has allowed OPWDD to select and phase in a needs assessment tool, which will enable providers to better match services with needs and create more equity across the state. It has also allowed OPWDD to streamline supports that are more person-centered and family controlled. Suggestions from individuals, families, advocates, and providers are also helping form the basis for additional refinements to the People First Waiver. All of OPWDD's initiatives are helping to make the system stronger, and providing the people we serve the opportunity to lead richer, fuller lives in the setting of their choice.





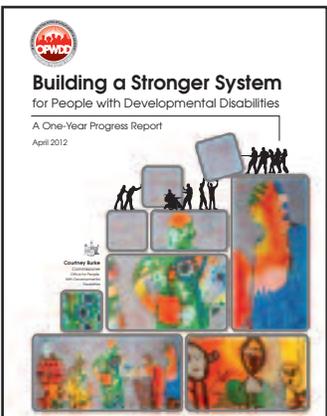
VIII. Appendix: Six-Month and One-Year Report Highlights

THE FIRST SIX MONTHS (April–October 2011)



- Raised the hiring and training standards for direct support professionals and redesigned the direct support job description and title.
- Began unequivocally seeking termination in cases of physical and sexual abuse.
- Established a centralized incident management unit to follow-up on incidents of abuse and neglect and conduct analyses of the data.
- Overhauled investigations, including certifying investigators, hiring a lead investigator, and centralizing the function to ensure an independent, unbiased process.
- Created effective relationships with law enforcement to ensure crimes against people with developmental disabilities are properly reported.
- Began holding providers more accountable for their performance.
- Promoted positive relationships and open communication between individuals with developmental disabilities and OPWDD staff.
- Began the process of a delivery system redesign to provide more flexibility for individuals and families, and encourage more integrated and person-centered services.

ONE YEAR (October 2011–April 2012)



Strengthening the Workforce

- 98% reporting to law enforcement for allegations of physical abuse, up from 26% a year ago.
- 100% reporting to law enforcement for allegations of sexual abuse, up from 80% a year ago.
- Now have 64 highly trained and certified investigators, which has resulted in more timely completions of investigations.
- Reduced overtime of direct support professionals working more than 16 consecutive hours in a shift by 43%.
- Reduced unnecessary paid leave by 55% in less than six months.
- In second environment of trust survey, number of direct support staff judging that their coworkers “would always” report abuse rose by more than 6% in just six months.



Ensuring Safety and Oversight

- Fully automated all incident reporting by state and nonprofit service providers.
- Presented information to over 30 law enforcement officials on responding to community homes for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- The next graduating class of state police cadets will undergo new training to support the OPWDD system.
- Obtained resources through the state budget that will enable OPWDD to improve the fire safety of the homes it operates and certifies.
- Launched an online provider performance report card so families and individuals with developmental disabilities can know about the quality of services they or their loved ones are receiving.

Transparency and Communication

- Presented system redesign ideas at more than 100 public presentations across the state.
- Opened the lines of communication for all OPWDD employees by creating 7,000 additional email accounts for those previously not connected.

Strengthening Supports and Services

- Restructured agency operations to be more focused on service delivery and oversight of nonprofit providers, while being more responsive to individuals and families.
- Assisted 71 additional individuals to move from institutions and into more integrated community-based settings in the last six months; 180 individuals have moved in the last year.
- Received a federal grant to create programs that support competitive employment of individuals with developmental disabilities.



IX. Appendix: Overview of OPWDD System

OPWDD is responsible for coordinating services for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, autism spectrum disorders, and other disabilities. It provides services directly and through a network of approximately 700 nonprofit service provider agencies, with about 80% of services provided by the private nonprofits and 20% provided by state-operated services.

Presently, there are more than 126,000 people with developmental disabilities who receive supports and services, which include Medicaid funded long-term care services such as habilitation and clinical services, as well as residential supports and services, primarily provided in communities across the state. Largely because of intensive treatment needs, about 1,200 people continue to reside in institutional settings such as developmental centers, secure facilities, and children’s residential programs. In addition to these Medicaid services, OPWDD also provides family support services, which are designed to assist families in providing care for their loved ones who live full-time in their family home, and employment supports, which include ongoing job coaching, job matching, and vocational training.









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