

Reforming the System, Transforming Lives



A Two-Year Progress Report from Commissioner Courtney Burke



April 2013





April 2013

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The past two years have focused on positive system transformation, with active involvement from individuals with developmental disabilities, families, nonprofit providers, employees, and others. This collaboration has been incredibly valuable and influential in how a reimagined system will work. The transformation has focused on:

- Developing new service options to better meet the needs of individuals and families in a truly person-centered way, including allowing for more self-direction of services;
- Creating a specialized managed care system that recognizes the unique needs of people with disabilities, and is focused on a habilitative model of services and supports;
- Ensuring that people live in the most integrated community settings;
- Focusing on a quality system that values personal outcome goals for people, such as an improved life or access to meaningful activities like employment; and
- Working to make funding in the system sustainable and transparent.

I am pleased to report that even prior to our submission of the People First Waiver on April 1, we have made progress in all of these areas, including the passage of legislation to create specialized managed care, and an agreement with the federal government on specific goals around employment, self-direction, and deinstitutionalization, and the commitment of new federal money in future years to help more people live in the community.

Perhaps what is most notable about our progress, but least quantifiable, is the sense that many more people involved with the system are thinking differently and more creatively about how services might better meet the needs of people with developmental disabilities.

It has been a privilege to work with all of you and be part of the system's transformation as we set the course for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Courtney Burke'.

Courtney Burke
Commissioner





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I. Introduction

Based on a rigorous two-year process of reforms to improve transparency and accountability, OPWDD is continuing its system transformation to further strengthen services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The outcomes summarized in the following report are focused on four major areas: transforming supports for individuals; supporting the workforce; health and safety reforms; and effective management and quality improvement.

These are part of a comprehensive effort that involves the collaboration of individuals, families, nonprofit providers, OPWDD staff, and other stakeholders. It has been OPWDD's priority to address immediate health and safety concerns, and to foster a system-wide culture that is:

- Strong, committed, and caring;
- High-performing and based on the agency's core values of compassion, dignity, diversity, excellence, and honesty;
- Based on relationships of trust and confidence in the service system;
- A learning environment, where assessment and improvement are ongoing;
- Supportive of all participants in the service delivery system and of their roles and responsibilities in building and sustaining this culture.

As OPWDD continues its transformation toward greater person-centered planning and better integrated, holistic support, the agency will continue to work with stakeholders to integrate the policy, workforce, and quality improvement initiatives required to achieve its goals and foster the desired culture.

The outcomes highlighted below exemplify the collaborative effort of OPWDD and its partners:

REFORM HIGHLIGHTS

Transforming Supports for Individuals

- Submitted the People First Waiver to the federal government on April 1, which allows for development of a specialized managed care system to meet the unique needs of individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Came to an agreement with the federal government that New York State will increase opportunities for employment, self-direction, and integrated living opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- Passed legislation to create developmental disabilities individual support and care coordination organizations (DISCOs), which are care management organizations designed to meet the variety of unique needs of people with developmental disabilities.



- Decreased the number of individuals with developmental disabilities living in developmental centers operated by OPWDD by 19% between April 2011 and February 2013.
- Returned 67% of eligible individuals with development disabilities to New York from out-of-state residential schools since July 2011.
- Increased the number of people using self-directed services such as consolidated supports and services and individual and community supports by 59% since 2011.
- Created a new eligibility, assessment, and service plan development process known as the Front Door, which is not only consistent statewide, but ensures the availability of individualized and self-directed service options to as many people as possible.
- Introduced a new needs assessment tool known as the Coordinated Assessment System, a key step in person-centered planning.
- Adopted internationally recognized personal outcome measures to ensure that services and supports are truly person-centered.
- Began implementation of the Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Respite, and Treatment (START) model across the state, which will build capacity for preventing crises and keep individuals out of institutions and in their home or community.
- Trained more than 200 instructors in Positive Relationships Offer More Opportunities to Everyone (PROMOTE), which will help OPWDD achieve its goal to end the use of physical interventions.
- Obtained \$1.8 million in grant funding through New York's Medicaid Redesign Team to support people with developmental disabilities to live in more integrated community settings, resulting in total Medicaid savings of almost \$2.3 million.

Supporting the Workforce

- Trained more than 400 OPWDD staff members on how to provide positive, proactive supports; 36 change teams around the state have developed action plans to implement at least one positive outcomes project in their work locations.
- Trained more than 1,500 direct support professionals from the state and nonprofit sectors in the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals' Code of Ethics.
- Delivered more than 4,500 employee recognition certificates to employees who demonstrated exemplary service and commitment during and after Superstorm Sandy.
- Embarked on a culture change initiative designed to impact OPWDD culture at every level, with a focus on person-centered planning.

Health and Safety Reforms

- Reduced the use of physical interventions in state-operated programs by 19% in the six-month period from August 2012 to January 2013 as compared to the previous six months.
- Saw an overall 21% decline in allegations of abuse and serious incidents at state and nonprofit provider agencies when comparing the most recent six-month period ending March 1, 2013 to the six-month time frame ending September 1, 2011.
- Increased by 670% the number of abuse cases brought to arbitration in 2011-2012 as compared to 2009-2010.



- Conducted over 3,200 unannounced site visits since March 2011 to assess services, the physical condition of homes, and staff accountability and familiarity with abuse reporting guidelines; 100% of homes across the state have been visited at least once by OPWDD leadership.
- Began implementation of new regulations in April 2013 that establish clear requirements for the use of positive interventions before more restrictive techniques may be used.
- Partnered with nonprofit providers and the state Office of Fire Prevention and Control to create a new training curriculum on fire safety.
- Implemented a new statewide mortality review system designed to ensure accurate and comprehensive data are available and are used to implement actions that help reduce the incidence of preventable deaths.

Effective Management and Quality Improvement

- Reorganized the agency with a focus on creating and fostering more person-centered services while creating efficiencies, improving quality oversight, and streamlining service delivery.
- Created transformation work teams with all relevant stakeholders to help manage implementation of waiver commitments, budget reductions, and system changes.
- Exceeded the New York State goal of achieving 20% minority and women-owned business (MWBE) participation.
- Enhanced transparency by developing provider performance report cards that can be viewed on the OPWDD website.
- Increased by 117% the number of agencies that have achieved Compass status or are working toward the designation since 2011.
- Increased participation in CHOICES electronic case management system, which allows real-time sharing of case-specific information, enabling enhanced care coordination, and person-centered planning.





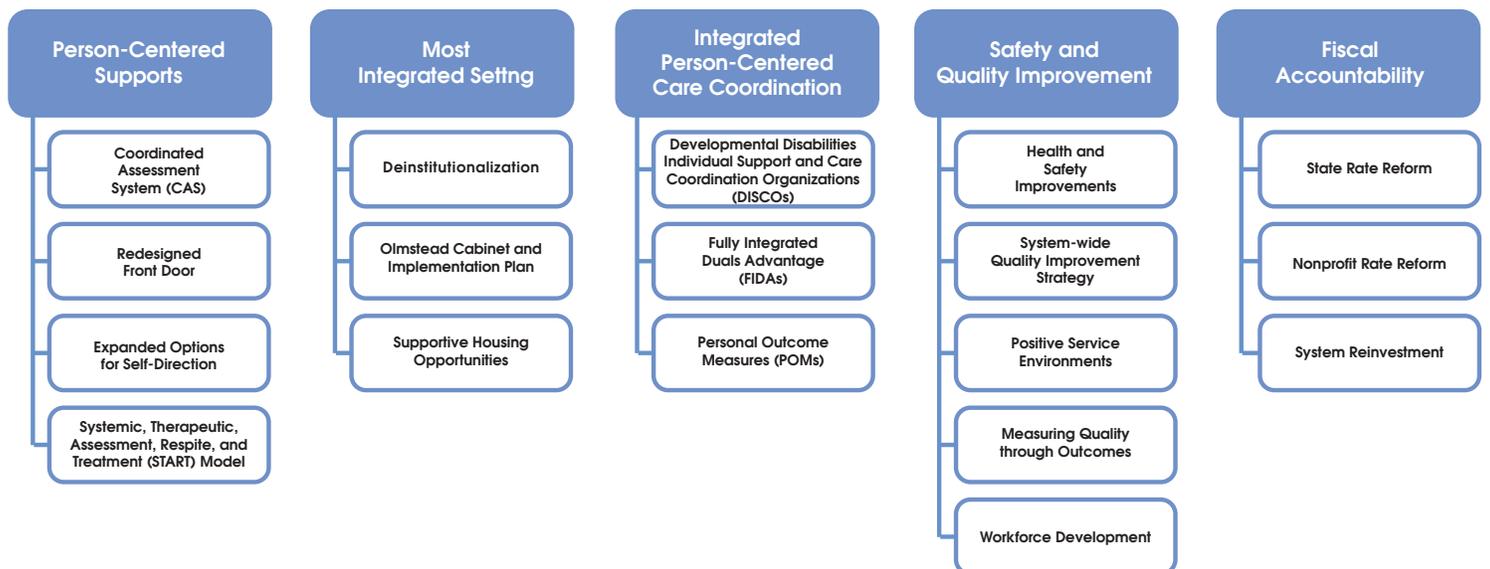
II. Transforming Supports for Individuals

OPWDD’s reform agenda began two years ago and sought to help individuals achieve greater independence and allow them more choices in their services and supports. This involved creating a more person-centered approach to meeting individual needs and required finding new ways to measure outcomes for individuals. The federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) supported New York’s reform agenda and has encouraged the state to engage in a process of identifying and developing specific system improvements focused on:

- Making the system more person-centered.
- Restructuring the system to provide better integrated supports and care management.
- Establishing transparent and sustainable funding.
- Measuring the quality of the system based on outcomes for individuals.
- Serving people in the most integrated community settings.

In collaboration with individuals, families, and other stakeholders, OPWDD has already implemented many new changes to move the system forward. The graphic below shows some of the foundational pieces that are helping transform the system.

SYSTEM REDESIGN





People First Waiver

On April 1, 2013, OPWDD formalized its commitment to specific parts of its transformation agenda by submitting the People First Waiver to CMS. The waiver carries out OPWDD's commitment to put people first by focusing on person-centered supports that facilitate living in community-based settings, and by promoting employment, community involvement, good health, and meaningful relationships. The waiver is an agreement with the federal government about the way services are provided to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families and encompasses all of the five primary objectives outlined in the system redesign graphic on page 8.



The Front Door

OPWDD's new Front Door is a redesigned way for people with developmental disabilities to access, continue, or modify the supports and services they need. The redesign will improve the way people learn about OPWDD and available service options while better connecting individuals to services and giving them more opportunities for self-direction. The new system will also provide more financial stability because resources will be allocated to individuals based on their needs, not to programs or agencies.



OPWDD made these changes because individuals and their families want a system that is easy to navigate and responsive to their needs and choices.

The Front Door will be used to ensure that people with developmental disabilities have the opportunity to:

- Enjoy meaningful relationships with friends, family, and others in their lives.
- Experience health and personal growth.
- Live in the home of their choice.
- Fully participate in their community.

Coordinated Assessment System (CAS)

One of the tools OPWDD is developing to help individuals create a person-centered plan is the coordinated assessment system (CAS); a standardized, consistent assessment process for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Unlike the assessment tools of the past, instead of just focusing on individuals' needs, the CAS focuses on their strengths and interests and where they would like to see change, with the ultimate goal of maximizing an individual's strengths and helping him or her lead a richer life.

The CAS was developed based on an internationally recognized assessment tool and has been tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals supported by OPWDD and its nonprofit providers. It was created with input from stakeholders including individuals, family members, and advocates as well as other professionals in the field of developmental disabilities.

To help individuals and their families better understand the CAS, OPWDD developed an informational video that is available on the agency's website.



The Coordinated Assessment System:

- Feels more like a conversation than an assessment
- Is focused on identifying individual strengths, needs, and interests
- Establishes a foundation for a person-centered plan



Personal Outcome Measures (POMs)

To ensure that services are truly person-centered, OPWDD has embraced the Council on Quality and Leadership’s (CQL) personal outcome measures (POMs).

CQL has identified 21 POMs in areas of great importance to the person receiving supports. In the months ahead, OPWDD will design ways to incorporate POMs into the new developmental disabilities managed care infrastructure. Using POMs, OPWDD will assess how well supports and services help people achieve personal outcomes.

Thirty nonprofit provider organizations are now working with CQL on initiatives ranging from integrating personal outcome measures in their programs to seeking full accreditation from CQL.

Selected CQL POMs

- People are connected to natural support networks
- People have the best possible health
- People are treated fairly
- People are free from abuse and neglect
- People realize personal goals
- People participate in the life of the community
- People have friends
- People are respected

Olmstead – Supporting Individuals in the Most Integrated Setting

The US Supreme Court’s Olmstead decision requires states to provide services “in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities.”

OPWDD’s focus on ensuring that individuals live in the most integrated setting possible continues the long-term shift away from institutional models of care. A person with a developmental disability living in the community, with the right support, has more opportunities to learn, grow, and be part of society.

19%

Decrease in the number of individuals with developmental disabilities living in OPWDD developmental centers from April 2011 to February 2013.

OPWDD continues to decrease the number of individuals with developmental disabilities living in campus settings across New York State. Between April 2011 and February 2013, the number of individuals with developmental disabilities living in developmental centers operated by OPWDD decreased by 19%. This reduction means that an additional 244 individuals are now living richer lives in more integrated community settings.



Creating a Wider Array of Living Options for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

Through the New York State Department of Health's Medicaid Redesign Team, OPWDD has obtained \$1.8 million in grant funding to support people with developmental disabilities to live in more integrated community settings, resulting in total Medicaid savings of almost \$2.3 million.

To foster the development of a continuum of housing options, OPWDD has:

- Facilitated housing forums for more than 2,000 people since February 2012 on topics such as supportive housing, shared living arrangements, assisted living, rural housing development, family care, and housing options for seniors.
- Hosted a comprehensive forum on "Better Health, Better Care and Lower Cost: Realigning Resources to Support Successful Aging in the Community," presented by the Center for Excellence in Aging and Community Wellness, School of Welfare, University at Albany.
- Entered into an agreement in March 2013 with the US Department of Agriculture, which will help more people with developmental disabilities gain access to safe, affordable, and self-determined housing in rural New York State.
- Organized housing roundtable discussions in January and March 2013 to foster collaboration with nonprofit agencies, and to continue to expand OPWDD's continuum of housing options.

Serving Individuals Closer to Home

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

OPWDD has placed an emphasis on returning students currently being served out-of-state who have aged out of educational placements. Since July 2011, 67% of eligible individuals have returned from out-of-state residential schools and have accessed OPWDD services. Transitioning individuals to in-state services allows them to be closer to their families and home communities.

Percent of eligible individuals from out-of-state residential schools who have transitioned to receiving adult services through OPWDD since July 2011.

67%



Increasing Employment and Volunteerism Opportunities

OPWDD continues its efforts to double the number of people with developmental disabilities who are employed over the next 10 years. Individuals with developmental disabilities should have opportunities to work in the community alongside individuals who do not have disabilities, and earn wages that are at or above the minimum wage.

OPWDD fosters employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities through:

- Developing job readiness skills for individuals who want to work.
- Expanding opportunities for individuals to engage in community service, volunteerism, and other meaningful community activities.
- Expanding provider capacity for quality job development and job coaching.
- Strengthening partnerships with other state agencies and building relationships with the business community.

9,357

Individuals receiving supported employment services as of January 2013.

Self-Directed Services

Self-direction of services means that individuals exercise more decision-making authority over some or all of their supports and services, and that they accept responsibility for taking a direct role in co-managing these supports and services. Self-direction is an alternative to provider management of services that promotes personal choice and control, including by whom and how services are provided. Supports are identified in a unique individual budget and plan.

OPWDD has developed an individual and community supports (ICS) platform designed to provide more flexibility and authority for individuals and families in choosing the supports and services that best meet their needs. ICS allows individuals to more easily access existing self-directed services such as consolidated supports and services (CSS) and individual supports and services (ISS).

The goal of ICS is to increase the number of people who are self-directing; in the last two years, the number of people using individualized budgets, including CSS, increased by 59%, and the number of people accessing individual supports and services increased 12%.



Systemic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Respite, and Treatment (START)

START is a nationally recognized model for preventing and responding to behavioral health crises. The model focuses on effective treatment strategies for individuals with developmental disabilities who also have mental health needs, and provides opportunities for active participation in community-based supports.

The START model will be phased in incrementally across the state, with implementation already under way in the Western NY, Capital, Taconic, and Hudson Valley regions. Planning includes cross-system stakeholder involvement and is designed to augment the system of supports that is in place within each region. OPWDD is partnering with the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, which has provided assistance for effective implementation.

Positive Relationships Offer More Opportunities to Everyone (PROMOTE)

PROMOTE is New York State's new training program for direct support professionals and other staff providing assistance to individuals with developmental disabilities. It is based on the understanding that individuals live fuller lives when relationship-based supports are provided, thus reducing the likelihood of challenging behaviors.

PROMOTE Zones

Green: The person is having a good day and is safe, confident, and connected to those around them.

Yellow: The person is experiencing increased stress and is having trouble coping.

Red: The person has lost emotional control and may be engaging in behavior that compromises the safety of themselves or others.



GREEN



YELLOW



RED

PROMOTE teaches staff the importance of forming connections with others, creating opportunities for relaxation and recreation, and building self-confidence. The training stresses the relevance of these values to staff and the impact on the people being supported to encourage a positive culture throughout the system.

PROMOTE implementation continued through the first quarter of 2013, with more than 200 people participating in the instructor trainer certification process. Once certified, instructors will conduct trainings throughout the direct support workforce. PROMOTE builds upon the positive approaches of the current Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention (SCIP-R) training and will replace it statewide as it is implemented throughout 2014 and beyond.

Resources to support the introduction of PROMOTE to the state and nonprofit provider workforce were launched in January on the agency's website.





III. Supporting the Workforce

Direct support professionals (DSPs) are the foundation of New York State’s system of care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

DSP Dialogues Generate New Initiatives

Beginning in 2012, six direct support professional dialogues were held statewide to present the newly adopted code of ethics created by the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). Presented in partnership with NADSP, the DSP dialogue participants completed surveys and provided insights on the challenges facing the profession, including how best to promote support for the national code of ethics among colleagues. To date, code of ethics trainings have been presented to more than 1,500 direct support professionals from the state and nonprofit sectors. More information on the DSP dialogues is summarized in an online report available on the OPWDD website.

Competency Goals

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

Promotion of the Code of Ethics and Core Competencies

To promote the code of ethics in both the state and nonprofit sectors, OPWDD adopted a set of DSP core competencies, which were developed by the New York State Developmental Disabilities Talent Development Consortium, a diverse group representing OPWDD and its stakeholders. The competencies, evaluation tools, and other resources are available on the OPWDD website. The consortium’s next focus is the development of core competencies for direct support supervisors.

1,500+

Direct support professionals from the state and nonprofit sectors have taken part in NADSP code of ethics training to date.



Recognizing Exceptional Efforts during Superstorm Sandy

Many DSPs worked extra hours during Superstorm Sandy to ensure that the individuals in the care of OPWDD were safe. OPWDD employees worked at around-the-clock emergency operations centers to coordinate requests for assistance and to dispatch resources as needed. More than 4,500 OPWDD employees were involved in the response to the storm.

Employee recognition certificates were issued to OPWDD employees for their service and commitment during Superstorm Sandy.

4,500+

Promoting Positive Interactions

More than 400 OPWDD staff members, representing 36 teams from all regions of the state, took part in a two-day training called *Shift Happens*. Offered by nonprofit provider Delaware ARC, the training presented information on how to provide positive, proactive supports that reduce the need for physical interventions. Each of the 36 teams developed action plans to implement at least one change project at their respective work location, which are being monitored for progress and outcomes.

Fostering an Environment of Trust

Successful implementation of OPWDD reform initiatives requires input and awareness of staff at all levels. Since summer 2011, OPWDD has conducted three successive rounds of anonymous employee trust surveys. A total of 3,317 survey responses have been collected from workers in various job roles and work locations across New York State. The goal of the survey is to assess workplace conditions and to monitor issues related to the reporting of abuse and neglect within OPWDD's system.

The last installment of the survey, completed in September of 2012, was expanded to include questions to measure employee burnout, which can affect the overall culture of direct care staff and has the potential to impact the quality of services. Burnout was measured based on factors such as emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment. Of those who responded, OPWDD employees showed fewer incidents of emotional exhaustion and experienced increased feelings of personal accomplishment as compared to social service workers in other fields.



IV. Health and Safety Reforms

The health and safety of individuals with developmental disabilities is OPWDD’s highest priority. The agency’s ongoing reform efforts include onsite visits to inspect for quality and fire safety; improved transparency and accountability; and effective management of concerns arising from allegations of neglect or abuse, among others.

21%

Overall decrease in number of allegations of abuse and serious incidents.

Ensuring Health and Safety

OPWDD’s transparency and accountability reforms have resulted in a sharp reduction in the number of allegations of abuse and serious incidents. When comparing the most recent six-month period ending March 1, 2013 to the six-month time frame ending September 1, 2011, the number of allegations of abuse and serious incidents decreased 35% in state-operated facilities and 16% among nonprofit providers regulated by OPWDD; a 21% decrease overall.

OPWDD has restructured and streamlined its disciplinary review process, creating a statewide disciplinary panel, which has increased consistency and improved performance management. As of 2011, OPWDD’s policy is to seek the termination of employees found to have committed acts of abuse against individuals with developmental disabilities and to adjudicate these cases at arbitration. This policy has contributed to a 670% increase in the number of cases brought to arbitration in 2011-2012 as compared to 2009-2010.

670%

Increase in the number of abuse cases OPWDD took to arbitration in 2011-2012 as compared to 2009-2010.

Decrease in the use of physical interventions at state-operated programs from August 2012 to January 2013.

19%



Reducing Physical Interventions

OPWDD continues to make progress on its goal to end the use of physical restraints. Through the promotion of positive relationships and safe environments, OPWDD has reduced the number of occasions when physical interventions were used by nearly 19% at state-operated facilities from August 2012 to January 2013 as compared to the previous six months.

Newly enacted regulations establish clear requirements for the use of several types of positive interventions before more restrictive techniques may be used. These tools provide employees the supports needed to build positive relationships with individuals, and to identify concerns before reaching a point when individuals are in danger of harming themselves or others.

Increasing Onsite Visits

State operations office directors and deputies have conducted over 3,200 unannounced site visits since March 2011. These visits promote open communication among individuals with developmental disabilities and with OPWDD leadership. They also provide an opportunity to assess services, the physical condition of homes, and staff accountability and familiarity with how to report abuse.

Unannounced visits conducted by OPWDD leadership at homes across the state.

3,200+

Fire Safety

OPWDD worked with nonprofit providers and the state Office of Fire Prevention and Control to create a new mandatory fire safety curriculum. This curriculum includes a train-the-trainer component and is available online for all providers. The content focuses on general fire safety awareness and prevention; identification of hazards; and how to conduct a safe and efficient evacuation. OPWDD also developed several short fire safety training videos that are available on OPWDD's YouTube channel.

Implementing a Statewide Mortality Review System

In 2012, OPWDD partnered with the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation and Research Center to develop an enhanced statewide mortality review system. The goals include a reduction in preventable deaths and the ongoing advancement of standard of care practices.

The system, which will be fully implemented in 2013, includes a central Mortality Review Committee (MRC) as well as six regional MRCs. The committees will provide an expert review of potentially preventable deaths, identify systems' issues that increase the risk of mortality, and propose solutions to improve the quality of supports and services across the system.



V. Effective Management and Quality Improvement

In 2012, OPWDD reorganized the agency to create a division solely focused on creating and fostering more person-centered services. Agency operations were also realigned to consolidate administrative functions, create efficiencies, improve quality oversight, and streamline service delivery. The agency is building on the use of data to measure outcomes, utilizing technology to connect staff, and improving services while providing reliable indicators of system progress. The reorganization has increased consistency in practice and led to more effective communication agency-wide.

Expanding Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises Partnerships

New York State's Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) initiative focuses on eliminating barriers and leveling the playing field for state contracts. New York State set a goal of achieving 20% MWBE participation in public construction projects and OPWDD has surpassed the goal, awarding almost 23% of the agency's construction, commodities, and service consulting contracts to minority and women-owned businesses.

Provider Performance

OPWDD released online provider performance report cards on the quality of providers' Medicaid service coordination in 2012, and in February 2013 posted report cards for fire safety and physical plant reviews. Quality ratings are computed using data gathered during OPWDD oversight activities. Agency performance data can be compared to statewide performance data or to the performance data of other agencies.

OPWDD shares information about the performance of service providers to:

- Provide information on provider agencies' services, and their ability to meet regulatory and quality expectations.
- Assist individuals with developmental disabilities and their families or advocates with choosing providers and services that will best suit their needs and interests.
- Be transparent and accountable.

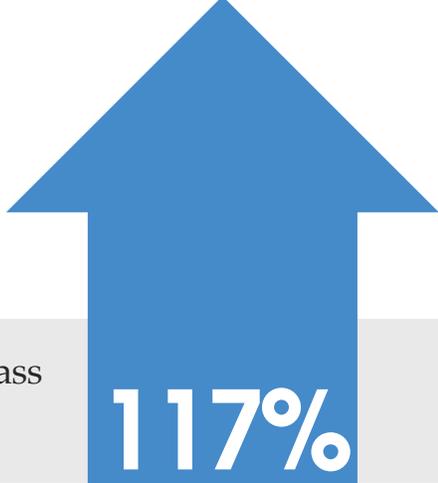
Expanding Excellence through Compass

Compass is an OPWDD initiative that recognizes and promotes nonprofit provider agencies that have progressed beyond minimal regulatory compliance and have achieved excellence in service delivery. Compass agencies engage their entire organization by encouraging individuals with developmental disabilities, families, board members, management, and staff to work together in a person-centered environment with the goal of promoting and achieving valued outcomes for the people served.

OPWDD divides agencies that meet the standards of the Compass designation and those which are working toward that status into three tiers:

- Tier one agencies have achieved the Compass designation.
- Tier two agencies have demonstrated substantial achievement of the criteria.
- Tier three agencies are candidates for Compass that have begun the process.

Increase in the number of agencies that have achieved Compass status or are working toward the designation since 2011.



117%

Currently, there are seven tier one Compass agencies, three agencies in tier two, and 16 tier three agencies. Since 2011, there has been a 117% increase in the number of agencies that have achieved Compass status or are working toward the designation.

Using Technology to Increase Communication and Enhance Services

Of the over 700 nonprofit agencies providing services for OPWDD in New York, more than two thirds are now actively using the CHOICES electronic case management system for data entry. CHOICES currently supports nearly 8,000 nonprofit agency users entering over 23,000 forms per month. The system allows real-time sharing of case-specific information and enhanced care coordination and person-centered planning through the rapid communication of information.

New York State's Office of Information Technology Services has been implementing a three-prong approach to broaden communications and collaboration across OPWDD, including:

- Expanding videoconferencing to all locations across the state.
- Continually expanding the Lync instant messaging and video communication system to all residential and habilitation locations.
- Extensive use of SharePoint collaboration sites.

The OPWDD Facebook page continues to be a great resource for employees and stakeholders. In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, the Facebook page served as an information hub for OPWDD updates, as well as provided links to other state and federal government agencies that could provide assistance. OPWDD training and safety videos, information about upcoming conferences, and important initiatives are all shared on Facebook. The page also serves as a forum for stakeholders to share ideas and concerns.



**OPWDD
Facebook Page:
2,900+ "Likes."**



Enhanced Early Alert Process

OPWDD's Early Alert Committee oversees nonprofit providers to more effectively prevent serious and/or systematic problems. The agency continues to make quality improvements to the process. Revised criteria were developed, implemented, and posted on OPWDD's website, and guidelines have been written and implemented to address the accountability process, including when sanctions or adverse actions may result. Since reinvigorating the early alert process in July 2011, 23 agencies have been placed on early alert status. As of March 2013:

- 8 agencies demonstrated improvement and were taken off of early alert status
- 9 nonprofit providers received fines for failing to comply with regulations
- 41 residences have been transferred to another nonprofit provider agency
- 4 nonprofit providers no longer provide services through OPWDD
- 11 agencies remain on early alert

The OPWDD website provides information on organizations receiving public funds that have had substantial issues maintaining quality services and/or fiscal viability.

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.

The quality improvement strategy involves the development of quality goals, indicators, and performance metrics. Barriers to reaching quality goals are determined, and action plans to address issues of concern are developed to improve supports and services for individuals. Progress toward reaching improvement targets is reviewed and evaluated regularly.

OPWDD is also working with a national quality improvement expert to develop and test consistent service outcome measures for person-centered planning and individualized supports. These outcome measures address areas of importance to individuals and their families, and serve as a way to confirm the supports provided to an individual are being delivered correctly and are effective.





VI. Next Steps

The accomplishments highlighted in this report are the results of extraordinary commitment and collaboration among individuals, families, advocates, nonprofit providers, OPWDD employees, and other stakeholders. These reforms are among the many necessary steps we are taking to provide services that truly result in a system that supports more than just acceptance of individuals with developmental disabilities in their communities, but fosters true inclusion that reflects the choices and self-direction to which they are entitled.

Stakeholder Transformation Teams

A great deal has been achieved in the last two years, setting the stage for continued efforts to further transform New York's system into one that is more person-centered and sustainable. In the coming months, OPWDD will continue to engage stakeholders through transformation work teams. These work teams will focus on broad reform areas such as achieving person-centered goals, transitioning to care management, provider efficiency and flexibility, and quality and workforce enhancement. OPWDD has developed documents to explain its goals around these areas of transformation in more detail, including a broad overview of the many reforms at OPWDD and a more detailed explanation of the agency's commitments around employment, self-direction, and deinstitutionalization. These documents, as well as detailed information on the People First Waiver, are available on the OPWDD website. Some of the highlights include:

Employment

OPWDD's goal is to increase the number of people with developmental disabilities who are competitively employed by prioritizing youth transitioning from high school; redesigning and implementing the "Pathway to Employment" to enable people to transition from day habilitation, workshops, pre-vocation, and high school to supported employment; and developing a work plan and timeline related to the closure of sheltered workshops. By April 1, 2014, the agency plans to increase the number of individuals who are competitively employed by 700.

Self-Direction

OPWDD will be increasing the number of individuals who self-direct some or all of their supports and services through a number of initiatives, including the streamlining of processes associated with the Consolidated Services and Supports (CSS) program. OPWDD has committed to increasing the number of individuals who choose to self-direct at least a portion of their services to 1,245 by March 31, 2014.



Deinstitutionalization

In its plans to successfully transition individuals to community-based living options, the agency is developing a continuum of supportive housing opportunities. It is the transformation goal to complete OPWDD's downsizing of institutional services to a minimal capacity, and to continue to transition people to even more integrated community settings.

Specialized Managed Care

OPWDD will also continue to create specialized managed care plans for people with developmental disabilities. In April, OPWDD issued a request for applications (RFA) for pilot DISCOs that will coordinate long-term supports and services for individuals with developmental disabilities who voluntarily enroll. The RFA is a critical step in OPWDD's transition from the current fee-for-service system infrastructure to a managed care model.

Regional Payment Rate Equity

As part of its transformation, OPWDD has also been in the process of restructuring the fiscal platform of the service system. A new reimbursement rate structure will provide greater alignment of rates with the costs of services and greater standardization of rates for like services across the state.

Regulatory Reform and Balancing Risk

Together with self-advocates, families, and providers, OPWDD is working on regulatory reform in the areas of workforce, quality, habilitative services, financial, and service delivery. The goal is to streamline regulations, policies, and administrative actions to enable providers to be more effective and focused while reducing costs and allowing individuals to lead more integrated lives.

To date, four work groups have:

- Developed a comprehensive resource guide on OPWDD's training and professional requirements, which is available on the agency website.
- Drafted guidance to OPWDD providers regarding methods of medication administration.
- Identified the need to reduce the amount of time direct support professionals spend doing paperwork; recommendations will be made on documentation efficiencies.

As the agency and field seek to provide greater self-direction and choice for individuals, regulatory reform is also being reviewed to accommodate the "dignity of risk," in which the rights of the individual to pursue life goals are balanced with supports for health and safety. Assessment of current regulatory and cultural barriers to the risks inherent in person-centered planning is under way to create a proactive strategy that will address important quality of life goals for individuals.



Reinvestment

As OPWDD's system of service delivery changes, nonprofit providers will want to find new and better ways to serve people with developmental disabilities in the most integrated settings. One way providers can do that is by identifying reinvestment strategies. In order to develop policies and procedures to allow for reinvestment of service dollars, OPWDD has developed a team of stakeholders to:

- Review and modify existing processes, procedures, and templates—or develop new ones—that enable providers to reinvest dollars associated with existing services that support more choice and better outcomes for individuals, while also serving more people;
- Develop consistent policies, procedures, and reports that OPWDD can utilize to better manage existing resources; and
- Create policies that can be put in place to shift management of current resources around people and the supports they need.

Supports for the Workforce

As an outcome of the DSP dialogues, OPWDD established a Direct Support Professional Advisory Council, representing both the state and nonprofit provider agencies, to advise on the ongoing challenges and opportunities of the profession. Also, as a continued support for the code of ethics and core competencies for direct support professionals, the agency will establish five regional centers for workforce development that will be made up of stakeholders that champion DSP development. Within these academies without walls, OPWDD will create lasting positive culture changes in DSP development in both sectors; advance the core competencies and code of ethics; assist nonprofit providers; advance regional leading practices in DSP development; promote the sharing of staff development and leadership resources; and gather training modules within each region that will lead to the eventual development of a curriculum for the core competencies.





VII. Conclusion

The past two years have been a time of transformation for the entire system of services and supports for people with developmental disabilities in New York State. Initial reform efforts in 2011 were focused around improving health and safety across the system, as well laying the foundation for a system of care management, continued deinstitutionalization, and enhancing how to think about person-centered planning and supports. This report highlights the major programmatic changes under way, as well as measurable results from the changes.

After two years of involvement and input from self-advocates, families, providers, employees, and others, OPWDD is now moving forward with a transformation plan that reimagines how services will be delivered. The reimagined future focuses on the potential of what individuals can achieve with the right supports. It is a more creative and more sustainable system. Going forward, OPWDD is committed to continuing to involve and work with the many people who make the system so strong.





VIII. Appendix I: Six-Month, One-Year, and 18-Month 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.

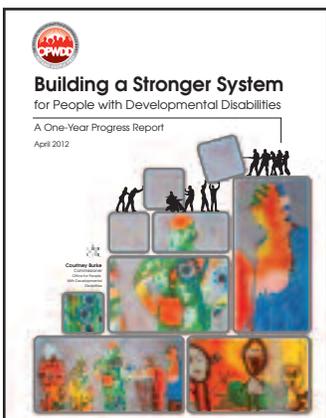
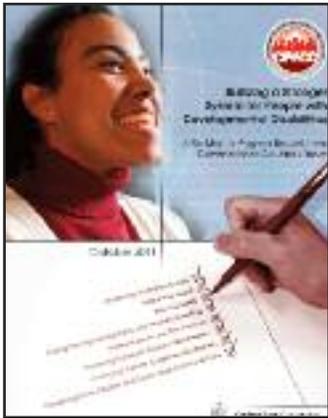
ONE YEAR (October 2011–April 2012)

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.
- Currently 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 individuals with developmental disabilities and families 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.

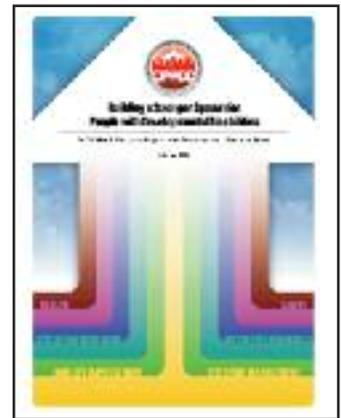
Strengthening Supports and Services

- 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.

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 interventions.
- Developed and will begin piloting a coordinated assessment system tool for all who receive services to better match supports with individuals' needs.
- Expanded housing options for individuals.
- Working to more effectively transition those eligible for OPWDD services out of residential schools. 49% of individuals from both in- and out-of-state residential schools have transitioned to receiving adult services through July 2011.



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 the 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; 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.





IX. Appendix II: 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 the state.

Currently, 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. Approximately 1,000 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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