



NYS Office For People With Developmental Disabilities

# 2012 Interim Report



NYS Office For People With Developmental Disabilities

**Putting People First**

February 15, 2012

## Background and Context

### **The Mission Statement**

We help people with developmental disabilities live richer lives.

### **The Vision Statement**

People with developmental disabilities enjoy meaningful relationships with friends, family and others in their lives, experience personal health and growth, live in the home of their choice, and fully participate in their communities.

On October 1, 2011, the New York State (NYS) Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) published the Statewide Comprehensive Plan. The plan conceptualized OPWDD's new direction for systemic change through the development of the People First Waiver, an 1115 demonstration waiver requiring authorization from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Over the past few months, the agency collaborated with individuals, families and providers, to further develop its waiver concept and to obtain approval for the People First Waiver by Spring 2012. As the NYS developmental disability community continues to work on the waiver application, much progress has also been made in key outcome areas including home of choice, employment and community participation, meaningful relationships, and health and safety. This Interim Report, required by Mental Hygiene Law 5.07, documents OPWDD's progress in implementing its strategic goals.

The next section of the Interim Report provides an update on OPWDD's key reform initiatives. In the spring of 2012, OPWDD will also issue an annual Commissioner's progress report describing major health and safety reforms.



## Progress Report

### People First Waiver

New York State's People First Waiver is a large scale reform initiative to improve OPWDD's delivery of person-centered services to meet the needs of almost 100,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. As an 1115 research and demonstration waiver, the People First Waiver implements essential programmatic, fiscal, and administrative improvements that will result in a sustainable, high performing, and comprehensive person-centered service system while establishing more transparent funding methodologies.

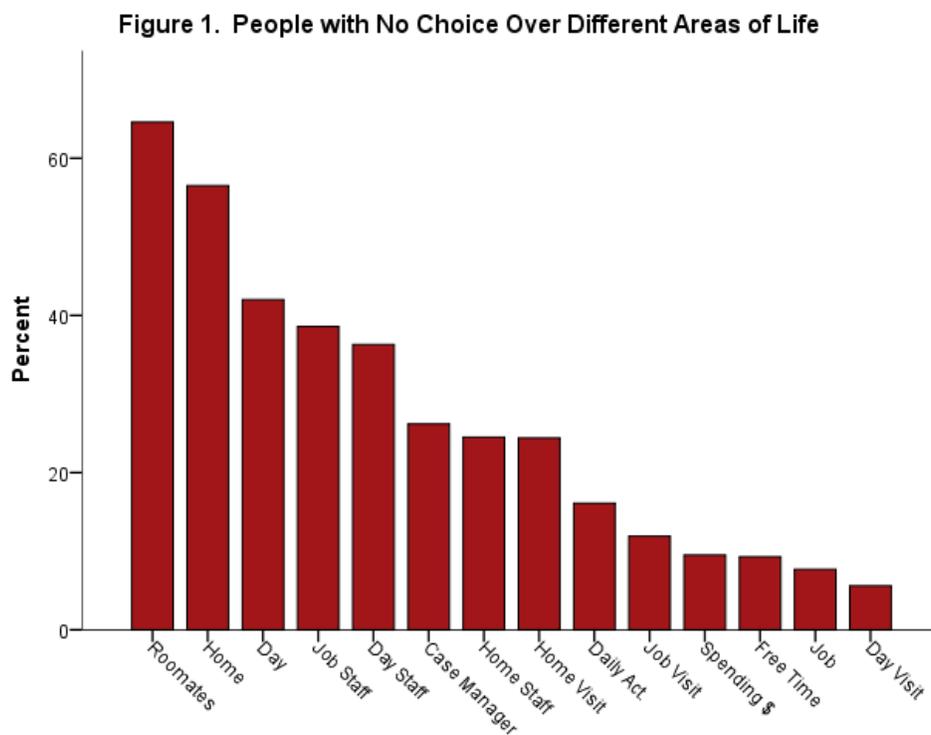
The waiver reforms will establish an integrated system that delivers more flexible, responsive supports and services identified by person-centered planning. This will be supported by a valid, reliable assessment of each person's needs. In the present system, individuals must navigate multiple, complex service systems and sometimes choose which services they need most to the sacrifice of others. Instead, OPWDD must serve each person holistically by providing integrated access to services from many state agencies and support a person's health and long-term care needs. This integration of care will align the OPWDD service system with ongoing Medicaid reform and Governor Cuomo's health care policy. It will break down traditional agency silos to provide people the full range of services through a comprehensive planning and service delivery mechanism, promoting innovation and efficiency while supporting improved outcomes for those receiving services.

The People First (1115) Waiver development process was officially launched in April 2011 when the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the New York State Department of Health (DOH) released a concept paper outlining plans for an 1115 waiver. This concept paper highlighted the following key outcomes New York State would demonstrate through a redesigned service system:

- **Improved care coordination** for people with developmental disabilities with complex medical and behavioral health needs can be achieved through specialized systems of care management and coordination.
- A transformed long-term care system that places **person-centered planning, individual responsibility, and self-determination** at the forefront can enhance care and individual satisfaction while lowering Medicaid costs.
- **New reimbursement models** for institutional and community-based care systems can encourage efficiency, improve accountability, and reduce costs.
- An **expanded range of community-based services** can allow many individuals currently living in institutional settings to transition to the community. Future institutional services can be provided on a temporary transitional basis to prepare individuals for successful community living.
- **Redesigned assessment tools** and eligibility processes can ensure "no wrong door" access for people who need to access Medicaid services under any State agency.
- Improved health and safety outcomes can be assured through a **transformed comprehensive quality management system that is driven by performance metrics and linked to personal outcomes and system performance**.

Figure 1 illustrates one system deficiency that the People first waiver will address. The data is from the 2010-2011 National Core Indicators (NCI) Consumer Survey, OPWDD’s annual individual outcomes survey that is randomly administered to over 2,000 individuals across the state. Individuals answered questions regarding their ability to make everyday choices and life decisions.

Under the current waiver infrastructure<sup>1</sup>, people tend to have less autonomy over major life decisions. Over 60 percent of respondents said that someone else chose who they live with and over 50 percent said that someone else chose their home. These are two areas where NYS clearly struggles to provide individuals with choice. When OPWDD transitions to the People First Waiver, the agency hopes to offer more individuals the opportunity to choose their home, roommates, support staff and provide individuals with more choice in other key aspects of their lives.



**Waiver Development Progress**

Pilot Testing the Managed Care Infrastructure

The People First Waiver Request for Information (RFI) closed on December 30, 2011. The RFI was used to solicit feedback from stakeholders interested in the concepts and recommendations described within the OPWDD’s Statewide Comprehensive Plan. OPWDD received 251 responses to the RFI. Some of the submissions were from groups of people who collaborated and submitted a single response (e.g. multicultural provider agencies and self advocacy organizations). OPWDD is analyzing the responses and will use the results to inform the process of structuring and selecting pilot projects that will test the viability of different care management models late this year. The pilot application process will not begin until federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) approves the waiver application.

<sup>1</sup> The Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Medicaid Waiver is the primary funding mechanism for services provided to individuals within the OPWDD service system. This waiver allows OPWDD to reassign Medicaid funding from institutional settings to community supports which allow individuals to receive supports and services in the most integrated community settings possible.



## OPWDD: Putting People First

OPWDD will coordinate a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of each pilot project. It is likely that most of the pilot projects will deliver long-term habilitative and clinical supports and services typical of the services now provided by OPWDD, DOH and other mental hygiene agencies. Although there may be some pilot projects that elect to provide integrated comprehensive care including medical services.

### Focused Case Studies to Inform Needs Assessment, Care Planning and Quality Improvement

To begin testing the concepts that are identified in the waiver, OPWDD will initiate case studies in agencies that demonstrate high quality practices. The initial agencies identified for these studies are those that have been given COMPASS status. Other agencies that have informed OPWDD that they believe they have COMPASS-comparable practices are being evaluated by OPWDD's Division of Quality Improvement (DQI) to determine if they meet established standards. Agencies that participate will:

- Test assessment tool(s) to determine their adequacy for informing quality person-centered planning;
- Provide for global funding versus fee for service;
- Assist with developing standards for care planning and a related care plan template;
- Assist with developing documentation practices to ensure the health and safety as well as the personal life outcomes desired by people receiving services; and
- Help to identify ways to measure the outcomes for people receiving services for the purpose of improving quality on both an individual and systemic level.

Participating agencies will complete these focused activities with people whose current services may not be supporting the most integrated or successful experience. OPWDD anticipates learning how changes in care planning and an increased focus on innovation in service delivery might support better outcomes. Additionally, agencies who participate in these case studies will work to develop community-based residential support options for people who are currently living in Developmental Centers.

### Ongoing Dialogue with federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

Leadership representatives from OPWDD, the Governor's office and DOH, have been participating in meetings with CMS about the waiver design. The result of these meetings has been a clear articulation of the proposed changes and benefits that the change in structure will bring to the people supported in the system. Additional meetings will occur in February and March, and once available, OPWDD will post answers to CMS's formal questions on the Waiver Web page ([http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/2011\\_waiver/index.jsp](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/2011_waiver/index.jsp)).

### Ongoing Dialogue with OPWDD Stakeholders

Gathering input from stakeholders across NYS is critical to the successful development of the new waiver. To support a productive two-way dialogue with as many parties as possible, OPWDD has appointed staff liaisons within each DDSO and local People First Waiver Discussion Boards made up of people who receive OPWDD supports, family members, and other participants. Each month OPWDD will host a statewide videoconference (VC) to bring information to the Waiver Discussion Boards and hear their concerns and questions. The Discussion Boards are encouraged to share information with other individuals and families and to bring their concerns back to OPWDD. OPWDD is hosting similar bi-monthly videoconference updates with voluntary service providers and OPWDD employees. In addition, OPWDD will host regional sessions to brief the public on progress with the People First Waiver.



CMS Health Care Innovation Challenge Grant

CMS's recent Health Care Innovation Challenge Program presents a timely opportunity to pursue development of the kind of technological "intelligence" needed to support the comprehensive service integration envisioned under the People First Waiver. If awarded, the Health Care Innovation Challenge grant will provide New York with the technology platform needed to tie New York's numerous service systems together such that shared "life records" will make information available to the individual, family and the many professionals involved in planning and providing whole person support. This platform will allow improved quality oversight, support planning and monitoring and ultimately, better outcomes for New York's citizens with developmental disabilities.

In late January 2012, IBM, and the State University of New York Research Foundation, in support of OPWDD, jointly submitted a grant application to this CMS Challenge Program to fund the People First Care Intelligence Solution: an innovative information framework that will connect all parties within the care delivery system through access to comprehensive care data. The project is designed to:

- Foster information sharing between the individual, family and care provider to transform the service system to be person-centered and cost-effective;
- Establish metrics and electronically integrate data from multiple sources (OPWDD, other state and federal systems, electronic assessment and care management systems, and quality monitoring mechanisms); and
- Offer data that will support delivery of the right care, in the right place, at the right time and at the right cost.

The People First Care Intelligence Solution is a landmark health information project for New York State with potential for improving the delivery of integrated, person-focused care to 100,000 New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. If funded, the resulting information exchange will potentially yield applications in multiple service systems across New York State government and provide a model of effective public/private collaboration for the improvement of human services systems everywhere.

Individualized Supports and Services

In November 2011, OPWDD convened an Individualized Services Workgroup consisting of individuals with developmental disabilities who receive individualized services, family members, providers from all regions of the State, as well as OPWDD Central Office and District Office staff. Their charge is to help OPWDD streamline access to existing individualized service options and create a process to support individualized and self-directed services within the structure of the People First Waiver.

The workgroup met three times and developed the following draft recommendations:

- 1) Create a streamlined, uniform individualized services process and application. Both must be easy for individuals and families to navigate, and must allow for a full array of service options which support people to have as much or as little authority as they choose.
- 2) Develop a full continuum of employment options designed to move individuals toward competitive employment and community activities that are meaningful and productive. The silos of 'pre-vocational services', 'supported employment services' and 'day habilitation' can be integrated as a fluid entity designed to make employment a goal for everyone.



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- 3) Develop a full continuum of housing options for individuals with emphasis on serving individuals in the least restrictive setting. A significant number of people are waiting for a certified residence when many of these individuals can be served in their own home or apartment with the appropriate level of support.
- 4) Create a broader statewide assistive technology agenda through evaluating new and existing technologies that can assist people with disabilities to live, work and recreate more independently in their homes and communities.
- 5) Incentivize re-investment from traditional provider-based services to individualized community-based supports to achieve the goal of supporting individuals in the community.
- 6) Develop a strategy to market a new design for Access to and Point of Entry for Individualized Services that ensures consistency in provision of these service options throughout NYS.

### Next Steps

In the coming months, OPWDD will refine the reform concepts and plans within the People First Waiver to obtain CMS approval of an 1115 waiver agreement. OPWDD will continue to engage in open dialogue with its many stakeholders and to prepare for the activities identified for the first 12 months of the waiver: pilot project selection, case study execution and evaluation, and extensive waiver implementation planning around needs assessment, improved person-centered planning, care coordination, developing an expanded menu of community-based clinical and residential supports, and improved quality oversight.

### People Live in their Home of Choice

#### Olmstead Plan

In 1999 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) unjustifiable institutionalization of a person with a disability who, with proper support, can live in the community is discrimination. In its ruling, the Court said that institutionalization severely limits the person's ability to interact with family and friends, to work and to make a life for him or herself.

In the 2012 State of the State address, Governor Cuomo affirmed NYS's commitment to implement Olmstead and serve individuals with disabilities in the most integrated setting through the development and implementation of the NYS Olmstead Plan.

OPWDD and other state health and human service agencies are collaborating to develop a comprehensive State plan for diverting and transitioning individuals with disabilities from segregated settings. The Olmstead Plan will establish community

*As the Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, people with disabilities have the right to receive care in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. Therefore, we will develop an Olmstead implementation plan that will guide the transition of individuals from institutional to community-based care, provide access to affordable and accessible housing, and promote employment of persons with disabilities. We must erase stigmas and ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are fully recognized and fully protected. - Governor Cuomo*

integration goals for all disability populations and will be organized around housing, employment, transportation, integration and transition planning, and livable communities. In addition, the plan will specify targets, performance measures and funding to support community-based services. Throughout this process OPWDD will work closely with the Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council (MISCC) and other

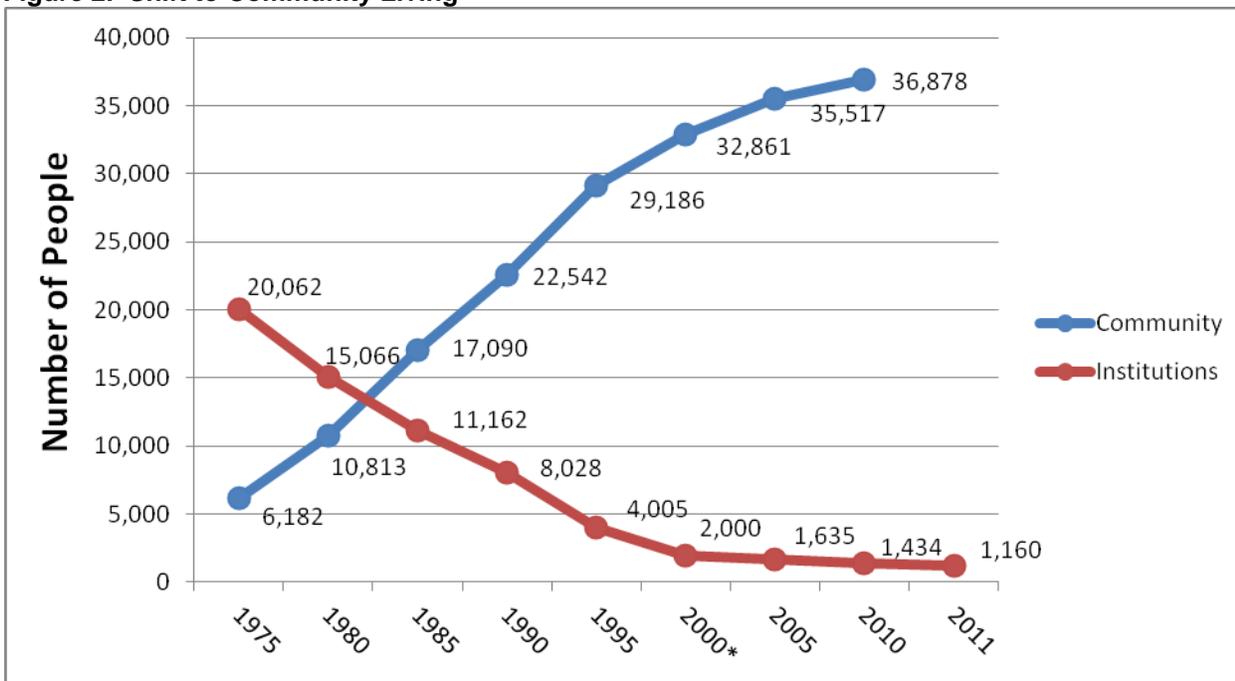


stakeholders to solicit public input on developing the Olmstead Plan. The final plan will be issued by the end of 2012 or beginning of 2013.

**Deinstitutionalization**

Since 1975, OPWDD has engaged in deinstitutionalization efforts and successfully eliminated almost all of its institutional capacity by transitioning nearly 19,000 individuals to community homes and other appropriate residential settings. Figure 2 highlights OPWDD's shift to community living. As of this writing, the institutional census has decreased to 1,160.

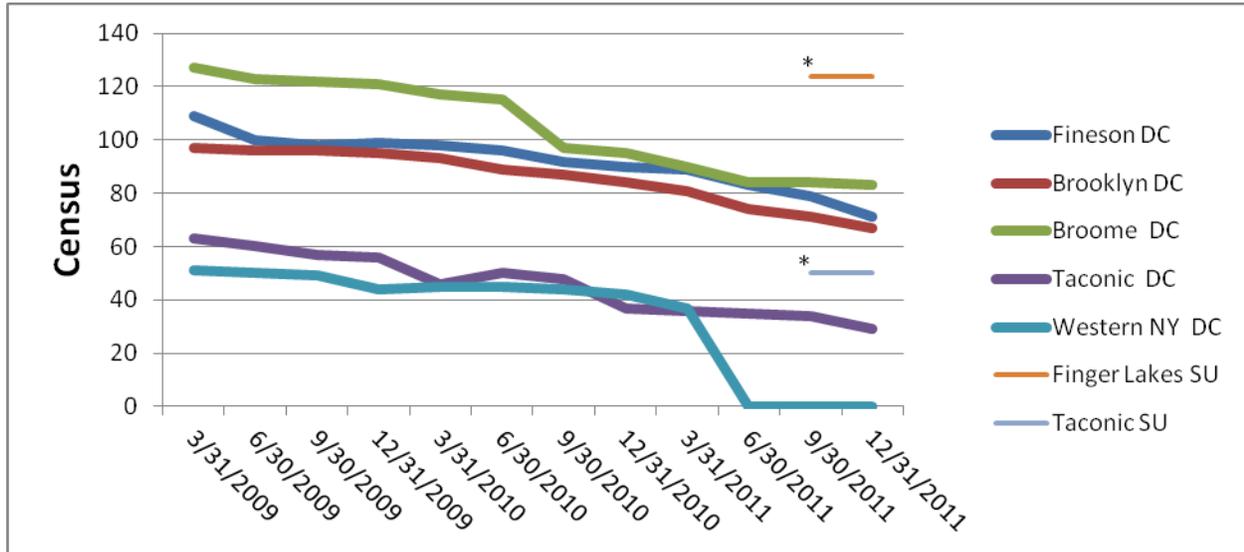
**Figure 2. Shift to Community Living**



OPWDD is committed to further decreasing overall institutional capacity and is in the middle of a multi-year plan to downsize and close the developmental centers (DCs) including the full closure of the Taconic and Finger Lakes campuses. Western NY DC closed its doors in May 2011, the Taconic and Finger Lakes campuses will fully close by 12/31/13 and the two remaining developmental centers (Bernard Fineson and Brooklyn) are scheduled to close in 2014. In addition, the Staten Island Multiply Disabled Unit (MDU) will close by 6/30/12. In less than three years, the institutional census has declined from 1,492 to 1,160 (between 3/31/09 and 12/31/11), a reduction of 332 or 22%. Over the next year, more than 100 community opportunities will be offered to individuals currently residing on OPWDD campuses.



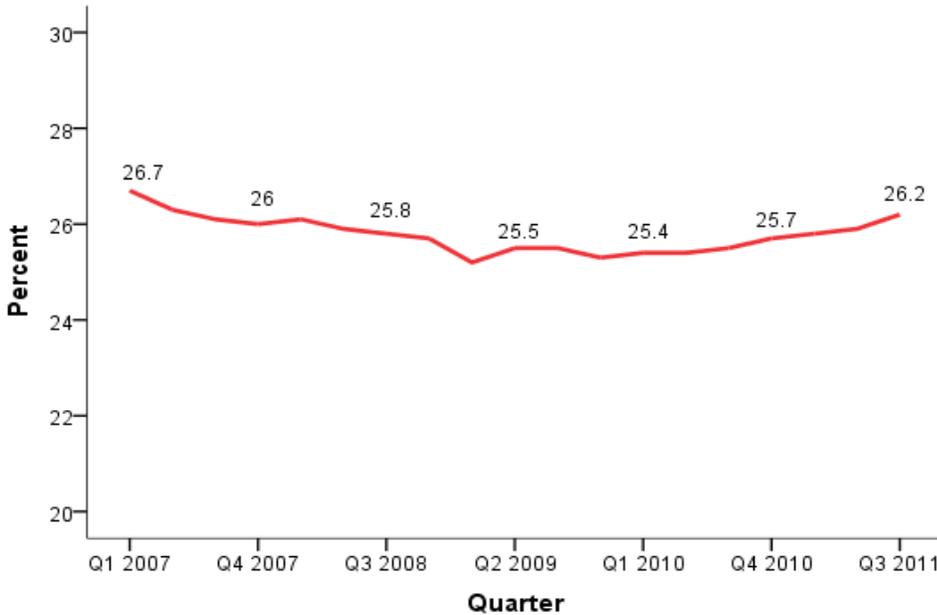
**Figure 3. Summary of Developmental Center Census**



Closure Targets - Western NY: 05/01/11 Broome: 03/31/13 Taconic: 03/31/13 Brooklyn: 03/31/14 Fineson: 03/31/14 Finger Lakes: 12/31/13 \* Finger Lakes and Taconic Special Unit Closure Plans initiated 10/01/2011

To assess progress, OPWDD is tracking the number of individuals who live in less restrictive settings. OPWDD defines a less restrictive residential setting as a home in the community with less than 24 hour staff support. These environments include Supportive Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs), Supportive Community Residences (CRs), Family Care, Individualized Support Services (rent subsidies to maintain an independent living situation), and individuals at home receiving Community Habilitation. Figure 4 shows the trend for people living in less restrictive settings.

**Figure 4. Individuals Living in a Less Restrictive Setting**



Over the four years depicted, the percentage of people living in less restrictive settings has remained relatively steady at about 26 percent. OPWDD will expand opportunities for people to access these types of living arrangements and continue the recent upward trend. As the agency improves its ability to support individuals in their own home or family home, people are more likely to have their needs met in a community-based setting.



## Health and Safety

### Behavior Management

Teaching and supporting positive adaptive behaviors, and the effective management of challenging, maladaptive, or inappropriate behaviors, are important components of the services provided through the OPWDD system. Employing a range of behavioral interventions and managing behavior appropriately can significantly enrich the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities, and enable them to become more independent and successful in many aspects of their lives. Furthermore, poor behavior management practices may have tragic consequences, resulting in serious injury or death.

OPWDD is proposing the addition of new regulations that specify requirements for the management of maladaptive and inappropriate behavior. These new requirements will help agencies provide higher quality services and will protect the rights and welfare of individuals receiving services.

The regulation emphasizes that positive approaches, strategies and supports are always preferred when managing maladaptive or inappropriate behavior. In addition, the regulation establishes specific procedures that must be followed in order to safeguard the individual and regulates the use of specific behavior interventions that limit rights or have potentially adverse impacts.

Among the provisions are the following:

- Aversive conditioning is prohibited.
- Agencies must conduct a functional behavioral assessment to obtain relevant information for effective intervention planning before a behavior support plan is developed to address maladaptive or inappropriate behavior.
- Behavior support plans must be developed that are specific to each person who exhibits maladaptive or inappropriate behavior.
- Additional safeguards are established for plans that contain “restrictive/intrusive interventions” or limitations on a person’s rights.
- Additional safeguards are established for the limitations for the use of “time-out”, use of mechanical restraining devices, and use of medication to modify or control maladaptive or inappropriate behavior.

For a comprehensive listing of the new provisions, see the memo and proposed regulations on the OPWDD website: [http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/regs/hp\\_regs\\_behavior\\_management.jsp](http://www.opwdd.ny.gov/regs/hp_regs_behavior_management.jsp)

Public comments have been received and are being analyzed; the behavior management regulations will be finalized in the coming months.

### PROMOTE

Changing rules and regulations is the first step to improve behavior management practices at OPWDD. The next step is training staff to address challenging behaviors positively, limiting possible health and safety risks.

OPWDD is developing a new staff training curriculum to address challenging behaviors of individuals with developmental disabilities by fostering positive and functional relationships, environments, communication, and respect to reduce the likelihood of such behaviors. Positive Relationships Offer More Opportunity to



Everyone (PROMOTE) teaches staff the necessary skills to ensure health and safety of both the individuals served and the staff alike. The training will provide staff the necessary tools to increase an individual's self-confidence, connections to others, and opportunities for recreation and relaxation. PROMOTE has undergone an extensive review and pilot process. Once completed, it will be made available to instructors who will train other instructors and staff. It is expected that PROMOTE training will be made available to direct care professionals beginning in the summer of 2012.

## Work and Contribution

OPWDD has embarked on an ambitious effort to double the number of people with developmental disabilities who are employed. Individuals with disabilities should have opportunities to work in the community alongside individuals who do not have disabilities. They should also have opportunities to earn wages that are at or above minimum wage. At the end of 2011, participation in supported employment programs grew to 9,490 people and OPWDD's goal is to encourage growth through various initiatives.

OPWDD is working on multiple fronts to foster employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The agency is focused on developing job readiness skills for individuals who want to work, expanding opportunities for individuals to engage in volunteerism and other meaningful activities, building provider capacity to do quality job development and job coaching, strengthening partnerships with other state agencies and building relationships with the business community. OPWDD is seeking to move away from day services silos to meaningful community activities. OPWDD will accomplish this by eliminating the silos within existing employment programs and blending funding streams in ways that incentivize the delivery of employment supports. The People First Waiver will not only expand opportunities for individuals to live in the community, but also expand opportunities to engage in meaningful community activities. The ultimate outcomes are to help individuals achieve their maximum level of independence and develop the skills necessary to interact with and be actively engaged in their community. These outcomes are consistent with the goals of Olmstead.

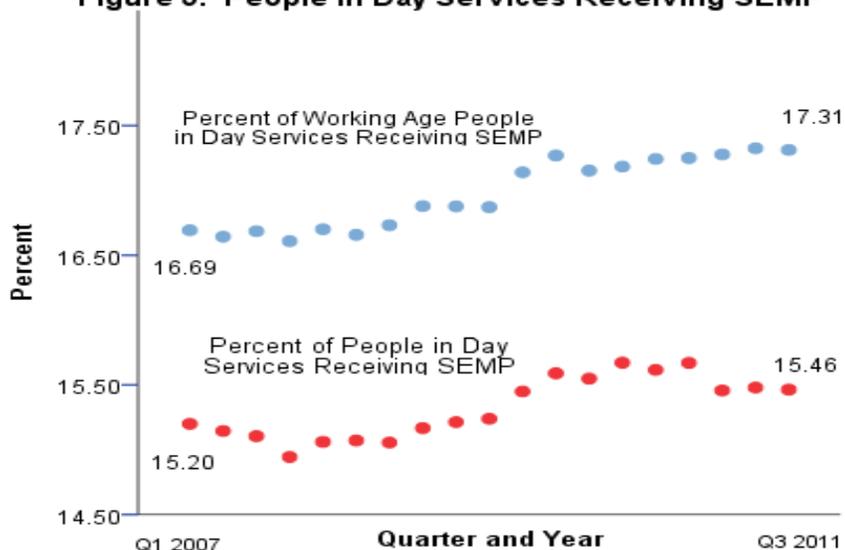
OPWDD is particularly focused on youth graduating from high school and the system changes that are needed to make employment the first and best option. In addition, individuals who participate in day habilitation, sheltered workshop or pre-vocational services should have opportunities, if they so desire, to work in integrated community settings.

As the service delivery system transitions to the People First Waiver, OPWDD will support the employment goals of individuals who receive services. In addition, the agency is strengthening partnerships with the Department of Labor, State Education Department and Office of Mental Health to better leverage resources and tools that will result in better employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities.

OPWDD collaborates with the NYS Office of Mental Health (OMH) on a federally funded Medicaid Infrastructure grant, *New York Makes Work Pay*. The purpose of the grant is to facilitate employment of people with disabilities through increased awareness and utilization of Social Security Work Incentives and Medicaid Buy-In Programs. Another aspect of this collaboration involves Department of Labor coordination and collection of employment data to provide job leads to people with disabilities. This system will promote cross systems coordination of employment activities and supports, and increase opportunities for individuals to access job leads in real time.



**Figure 5. People in Day Services Receiving SEMP**



OPWDD has developed indicators measuring the extent to which our service delivery system supports individuals who choose to work. The percentage of people enrolled in day services who receive supported employment (SEMP) is presented in Figure 5.

The red line represents people who are working age (23-64) and the blue line represents all individuals. As expected, individuals age 23-64 are more likely to access supported employment services (17.31%). Overall the trend line has moved in a positive direction over the past four years.

## Relationships

Enjoying meaningful relationships with friends and family, and participating in the community are essential components to quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities. OPWDD helps individuals develop relationships through a variety of projects, including the Siblings Need Assessment and the Faith Based Initiative.

### Siblings Needs Assessment

One of OPWDD’s strengths is its close partnership with stakeholders, including family members of individuals with developmental disabilities. Increasingly, siblings of people with developmental disabilities are stepping into the role of advocate or primary caregiver when their parents are no longer able to provide natural supports to their adult child. For many siblings, this is a new role and little is known about the type of supports currently available to these family members.

In response OPWDD began working with the NYS Developmental Disability Planning Council’s (DDPC) Systems Coordination and Community Education Committee to develop a grant project to assess sibling needs in NYS. The needs assessment will include:

- General demographic information about siblings including the resources, services and supports they receive and their current needs;
- Current adult sibling resources and supports by geographic regions and statewide;
- Sibling readiness to serve as principle advocate and any training needs or desires pertaining to generic disability or sibling-specific issues; and
- Current knowledge of sibling initiatives including the Sibling Leadership Network, SibsNY and local efforts as well as an examination of how an organized statewide sibling network could be most helpful and effective and encourage active participation.

The DDPC awarded the grant to Cornell University in summer 2011. As a first step, the grantee will administer a survey to provider agencies pertaining to currently available sibling services and trainings. This will provide DDPC and OPWDD with baseline data to determine the existing supports available to this



population. In addition, Cornell will administer a second data collection effort targeting brothers and sisters of individuals with developmental disabilities to determine unaddressed needs.

When the needs assessment activities are completed, OPWDD and DDPC will gain a better understanding of the needs of siblings and develop interventions to better support these important caregivers.

### **Faith Based Initiative**

One of the important ways people with disabilities develop relationships and participate in the community is through involvement in their faith community of choice. OPWDD continues to support individuals in this area through the Faith Based Initiative Program. The goals of the program are to:

- Support state and voluntary agencies with staff training in faith community inclusion;
- Work with internal and external partners to highlight faith community integration as part of a holistic approach to full community integration;
- Work with Federal Government Agencies (e.g., Housing and Urban Development Faith Based Liaisons <http://www.hud.gov/local/shared/working/r2/fbci/index.cfm?state=ny>) to provide technical assistance to faith communities; and
- Develop connections within the faith community to:
  - Support faith leaders to foster welcoming congregations and communities for individuals with developmental disabilities;
  - Facilitate community awareness seminars that will provide materials and forums on people-first language and disability etiquette; and
  - Assist advocacy groups (i.e. Self Advocacy Association of New York and NYS Parent to Parent) to connect to faith communities.

OPWDD is involved in two ongoing projects to advance these goals:

- Faith Community Inclusion Project

This project was developed to address concerns about closing the developmental centers and the loss of Chaplains to provide spiritual supports to individuals with developmental disabilities. The participating offices in the project are Finger Lakes DDSO and Capital District DDSO. Agency staff received training with the Spiritual Indicator and Faith Community Inclusion guides to help them understand, empathize and support individuals who want to explore or connect with faith communities of their choice. In the second phase, Finger Lakes and Capital District DDSOs will focus on supporting individuals in faith integration through person-centered planning and support from professional staff.

- Faith Community Development Grant

The Faith Community Development Grant is funded by the New York Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. The purpose of this grant is to support faith communities to integrate individuals with developmental disabilities into their communities. The participating agencies will use best



practices identified by other DDPC funded grants such as the *Spirit Project* and *Putting People First through Self Direction*.

Throughout 2012, OPWDD will continue to develop tools such as the Quality of Life Metric survey to help support provider agency involvement in faith community inclusion and faith/spiritual supports tools that compliment person-centered planning for individuals who want faith inclusion as a valued outcome. Work with OPWDD’s Advisory Board will continue to assist with Faith Community Development Grant activities. In addition, OPWDD will continue its work with agencies, advocates and other interested stakeholders to identify barriers related to individualized community living and develop effective solutions.

### Relationship Indicators

The personal relationships individuals develop and maintain are central to their overall sense of belonging and well-being. Given the essential nature and benefit of friends and family relations, OPWDD tracks the following indicators in an annual National Core Indicators Consumer Survey (referenced in the first section of this Progress Report).

**Figure 6. Relationship Indicators from 2010-2011 NCI Sample (Preliminary)**

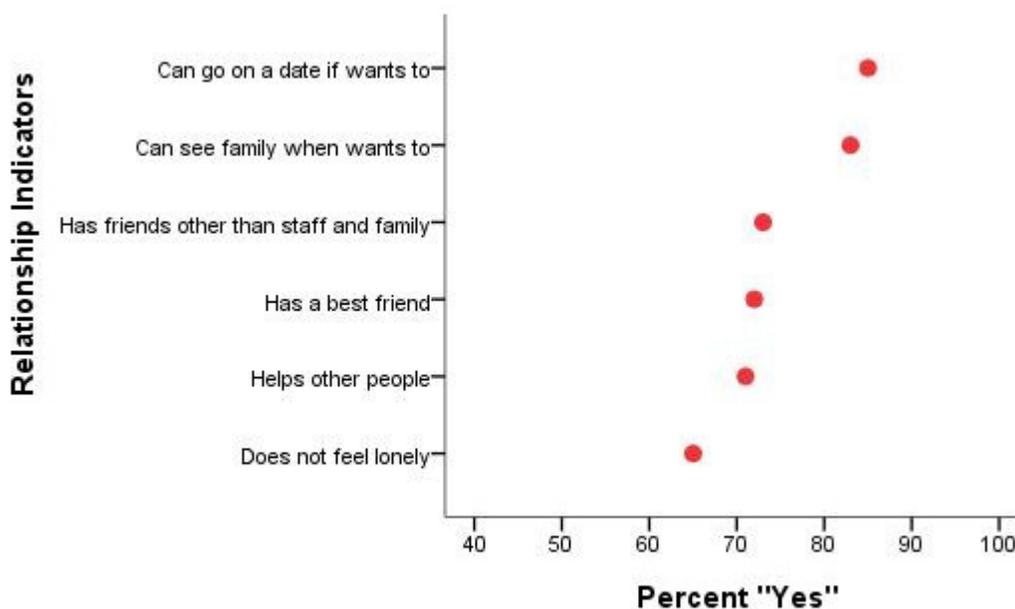


Figure 6 shows that the vast majority supported by OPWDD’s service system are doing quite well in these areas, easily breaching the 70% mark for the ability to see family, experience dating, and have friends (including best friends). The bottom two data points show interrelated topics where improvements should be targeted: increasing the number of people who never feel lonely and increasing opportunities to help others (roughly 30-35% now lack these aspects within their social lives).

### Conclusion

This report highlighted OPWDD’s progress on important initiatives since the Statewide Comprehensive Plan was published in October 2011. OPWDD will move the People First Waiver application forward, communicating with stakeholders and asking for feedback throughout the process. The comments from the RFI will help the agency further develop the Developmental Disabilities Individual Support and Care



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## OPWDD: Putting People First

Organization (DISCO) concept and engage in future pilot projects. Responses to the RFI are being analyzed and will be shared publicly after the release of the Interim Report.

OPWDD also made significant strides toward deinstitutionalization and is following Governor Cuomo's lead in developing a comprehensive Olmstead Plan for all New Yorkers with disabilities. In spite of fiscal challenges in the past four years, OPWDD has maintained steady development of less restrictive residential options for people with developmental disabilities and continues to increase the number of individuals accessing supported employment.

OPWDD envisions a future where state agency silos no longer exist and people with developmental disabilities will be able to get the appropriate amount of services and supports, at the right time and in the setting of their choice.