

ALABAMA – 2001 Real Choice Systems Change Grant

Identified Problems with the States' Long-Term Care System

- Providers and agencies make choices for consumers instead of using person-centered planning.
- There is no centralized access point for information about all available programs.
- More funding needs to be diverted from institutional care to serving people in their homes.
- Consumers need additional financial resources to pay for medicine and therapy.
- Categorical eligibility requirements prevent some consumers from receiving services.
- There are numerous gaps in services, particularly in personal assistance and home health.
- Services need to be better coordinated.

Perceived Strengths

- Core Olmstead workgroup members have received training on various issues.
- The state has worked with other states to benefit from their successes and failures.
- The governor established an Office on Disability.
- A Senior Citizen Trust Fund was created to help expand HCBS.
- The state has already committed significant resources toward deinstitutionalization of hundreds of people with disabilities through the *Wyatt* settlement.

Primary Focus of Grant Activities

- Improve information dissemination.
- Increase use of Person-Centered Planning.
- Expand better resources for HCBS.
- Ensure opportunities for consumer/family participation in disability/aging policy formulation.

Goals, Objectives, and Activities

Overall Goal. To improve access to services by providing better information dissemination, more opportunity for consumer direction, and more resources to support HCBS.

Goal. Enhance access to home and community based services through improved information dissemination and service coordination.

Objectives/Activities

- Develop a community-based information and referral clearinghouse through collaborative public/private partnerships.

- Develop and implement a required Service Coordination Core Training Module to cross train Medicaid service coordinators in basic competencies and information.
- Complete, and implement recommendations from, a comprehensive study of the feasibility of a single point of entry and/or coordination for home and community based services.

Goal. Create and expand system-wide opportunities for consumer choice and control over home and community services.

Objectives/Activities

- Establish infrastructure for consumer input for individuals with mental retardation and/or developmental disabilities.
- Expand the Psychiatric Rehabilitation model to all community mental health centers and all other units of state hospitals over a three-year period.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate a person-centered assessment tool and process as a basis for a consumer-directed system of senior services.

Goal. Expand resources for home and community services through effective planning, advocacy, and education.

Objectives/Activities

- Establish a permanent Disability/Aging Policy Advisory Group within the Medicaid Agency's Long-Term Care Division to formalize the mechanisms for ongoing consumer input and enhanced coordination of services.
- Develop advocacy and informational materials to educate consumers and family members, legislators, policymakers and others regarding the state's Olmstead Plan.
- Establish an Outreach and Education Unit within the Medicaid Agency's Long-Term Care Division.

Key Activities and Products

- Service Coordination Core Training Module for Medicaid service coordinators.
- Report of the feasibility of a single point of entry and/or coordination for HCBS.
- Person-centered assessment tool for senior services.
- Advocacy and educational materials to educate consumers and others on the State Olmstead Plan.

Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Planning Activities

- A subgroup of the existing Olmstead planning group, which included several consumers, developed the grant.
- The state conducted focus groups in six cities throughout the state to get consumer input regarding the grant's goals and activities.

Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Implementation Activities

- A committee of the Olmstead workgroup will help develop a training module targeted to Medicaid service coordinators.
- The co-chairs of the Olmstead Core Workgroup Consumer Task Force will serve on the project management team.
- A Disability/Aging Policy Advisory Group will be established to promote ongoing consumer participation in the formulation of disability/aging policy.
- A Consumer Coalition will be formed to help develop self-advocacy networks statewide.

Public Partners

- Alabama Department of Public Health.
- Alabama Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation.
- Alabama Department of Senior Services.
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services.
- Alabama Medicaid Agency.
- Division of Mental Retardation.
- Outreach and Education Unit in the Medicaid LTC Division.

Private Partners and Subcontractors

- Volunteer and Information Center.
- BCPR Consulting, Inc. (affiliated with the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Boston University).
- Alabama Cares.
- Alabama Elder Connect Program.
- Care Team Network.

Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in the Planning Phase

Public Partners

The grant application was developed as a collaborative effort among the Alabama Medicaid Agency (lead agency), the Department of Senior Services, the Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation, and the Governor's Office on Disability. Other public partners, including the Department of Public Health and the Department of Rehabilitation Services, participated in early meetings to provide overall direction for the proposal. The Office of the Governor was also instrumental in the development of the 211 Connects component of the proposal.

Private Partners

The grant was developed with input from the Olmstead Core Workgroup, a 40-member planning body with significant representation from both private and public partners, which includes a high percentage of consumers and family members. Much of the direction of the application derived from the preliminary work of this group. Public members of the Core Workgroup also were given seats on the statewide Steering Committee for 211 Connects to facilitate coordinated planning.

Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in Implementation

Public Partners

- An ad hoc committee of the Olmstead Core Workgroup will assist the lead agency to develop a training module targeted to Medicaid service coordinators.
- Alabama Department of Senior Services will develop a consumer-directed assessment tool.
- Outreach and Education Unit in the Medicaid LTC Division will oversee and provide training to consumers and LTC providers as appropriate.
- Alabama Department of Mental Health/Mental Retardation and the Alabama Department of Senior Services will both work to implement consumer-directed systems changes.
- Division of Mental Retardation will sponsor training in Social Role Valorization, PASSING, and Positive Behavior Support.

Private Partners

- The Volunteer and Information Center is taking the lead on developing an information clearinghouse.
- BCPR Consulting, Inc. will provide training related to a Psychiatric Rehabilitation Model.
- Alabama Cares program and the Alabama Elder Connect Program will help Medicaid case managers identify resources for implementation of consumer-directed care.
- Care Team Network will expand training to other areas of the state.

Existing Partnerships That Will Be Utilized to Leverage or Support Project Activities

- The Olmstead Planning Initiative has grant support from several sources to further the work of the Olmstead workgroup.
- The Alabama Housing Finance Authority will use HOME funds and Housing Credits for tenants with special needs.
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and Alabama Medicaid will implement expanded consumer-directed personal assistance services in the Homebound waiver with grant funds awarded from the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG).

Oversight/Advisory Committee

The Olmstead Core Workgroup will be involved in program design, implementation, evaluation, and reporting.

Formative Learning and Evaluation Activities

Quarterly reports from Alabama Medicaid and all subcontractors on progress, barriers, challenges, and lessons learned will be reviewed by project staff and the Consumer Task Force of the Olmstead Core Workgroup. Recommendations will be forwarded to appropriate parties.

Evidence of Enduring Change/Sustainability

- Service Coordination Core Training will be updated and modified as needed.
- The feasibility study for the single point of entry will inform decisions over time.
- The Disability/Aging Policy Advisory Group and the Outreach and Education group hopefully will survive past the end of the grant to continue to inform state activities.

Geographic Focus

Statewide.