

## MONTANA -- 2001 Community PASS Grant

### **Identified Problems with the States' Long-Term Care System**

- Declining workforce and low unemployment makes recruitment and retention of PAS workers very difficult.
- Inadequate wages and benefits for PAS workers.
- Limited and inconsistent training requirements for PAS workers.
- Inadequate compensation to PAS workers for long travel times.
- Inappropriate utilization of PAS workers (they are pressured to provide services beyond the scope of the program or their skill level, or donate time to keep the consumer happy).
- PAS under the Medicaid state plan program are generally limited to the consumer's home.
- Negative perception of PAS due to the instability or quality of the workforce, or due to lack of program education.

### **Perceived Strengths**

- PAS are available statewide through the state Medicaid plan, which has a self-directed option. Extended PAS are available through the waiver program.
- The state ranks fourth in the nation on per capita spending for PAS.
- The state has a standardized authorization process so providers must compete on quality of services rather than inflating authorization levels.
- Every ILC in Montana is an enrolled Self-Directed PAS provider and participates on the Self-Direct Personal Assistance oversight committee.
- An interactive Quality Assurance (QA) program with provisions for consumer input.

### **Primary Focus of Grant Activities**

- Address PAS worker recruitment and retention issues.
- Address negative perceptions of PAS program.
- Address program restrictions that do not allow for full community integration.
- Address consumers' need for knowledge and information about optimization of PAS services in both the agency-based and self-direct program.

## **Goals, Objectives, and Activities**

**Overall Goal.** To promote integrated community living through personal assistance services.

**Goal.** Educate the public, consumers, and providers about the purpose and need for PAS programs.

### ***Objectives/Activities***

- Issue an RFP for public education activities to increase the visibility and positive perceptions of the PAS program.
- Develop an interactive training program targeting all participants of the PAS program to increase understanding of the PAS benefit.

**Goal.** Maximize consumer control in all models of PAS.

### ***Objectives/Activities***

- Develop training models to educate consumers to manage their PAS whether or not they are in the self-direct program, and to educate providers and case managers to provide an environment that enables consumers to assume control over their services.
- Provide web-based training about attendant management for consumers and family members.

**Goal.** Increase the supply and Quality of the PAS workforce.

### ***Objectives/Activities***

- Partner with Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) to develop, implement, evaluate, and replicate a Seniors Helping Seniors (SHS) pilot program, designed to attract, train and place older workers into the PAS program.
- Create PROJECT ACCESS (Attendant Center for Communication, Education, and Support Services) as a central point for recruitment, screening, and education of PAS workers. Replicate the program.
- Use Tuscon Arizona's Caregiver Resource Center as a model for developing the ACCESS program.
- Travel to the University of Montana to study the Early Childhood Education Project in relation to the development of ACCESS. The Early Childhood Project has similar goals and focus for a different population.
- Develop a web site for attendants to provide training modules to individuals wishing to perfect attendant skills from a distance.
- Work with established support groups for formal and informal caregivers to develop a blue print for replicating these groups across the state.
- Address wage and benefit issues.

### **Key Activities and Products**

- Develop an interactive training program for PAS program participants to increase understanding of the PAS benefit.
- Develop training models to educate consumers to manage their PAS whether or not they are in the self-direct program, and to educate providers and case managers to provide an environment that enables consumers to assume control over their services.
- Develop, implement, evaluate, and replicate a Seniors Helping Seniors (SHS) pilot program, designed to attract, train and place older workers into the PAS program.
- Create a central point for recruitment, screening, and education of PAS workers. Replicate this ACCESS program.

### **Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Planning Activities**

Input from consumers and attendants was solicited through focus groups. Eighteen focus groups with 304 individuals were held across the state. The focus groups provided an opportunity for consumers and attendants to discuss the PAS program and make suggestions for improvements to the program.

### **Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Implementation Activities**

Consumers will be involved in all aspects of program design, implementation, and evaluation through participation on the oversight committee, focus groups, task forces, and the Web workgroup.

- Consumers in the Missoula area, with the assistance of Summit Independent Living Center, will participate in development, testing, and launching of the web site.
- Four focus groups with consumers will be conducted to obtain input about various issues the project is addressing.

### **Public Partners**

- Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Disability Services Division.
- DPHHS Addictive and Mental Disorders Division.
- The Montana Department of Labor.

### **Private Partners and Subcontractors**

- Spectrum Medical, a subsidiary of a local hospital, which provides a wide range of home and community services.
- Summit Independent Living Center (ILC) is a self-direct provider.
- Area Agencies on Aging (AAA).

## **Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in the Planning Phase**

### **Public Partners**

- The regional program officers who manage the field operations of all the programs in the Community Service Bureau organized and conducted 18 focus groups with 304 individuals.
- To coordinate efforts with other Department divisions, twice-monthly meetings were held with the Disability Services Division and the Addictive and Mental Disorders Division.
- The staff of the Department's Community Services Bureau spent two days in retreat to discuss how to strengthen Montana's home care programs. The retreat ended with a planning session to create the opportunity for consumers, attendants, and providers to provide input.

### **Private Partners**

Spectrum, Summit and the AAAs were all consulted regarding their particular area of expertise and all gave information and support for the grant goals and focus. All three provide services to state consumers.

## **Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in Implementation**

### **Public Partners**

- The Montana Department of Labor will complete an analysis of the labor issues affecting the direct care workforce.
- Regional program officers who manage the field operations of all the programs in the Community Service Bureau will conduct the focus groups, provide training, participate in task groups, and complete some evaluation work.

### **Private Partners**

The Senior Long-Term Care Division (the lead agency) will:

- Work with Spectrum Medical to develop the ACCESS program.
- Contract with Summit ILC to develop web-based attendant management training.
- Contract with the AAAs in areas II and X to develop the Seniors Helping Seniors Program.

## **Oversight/Advisory Committee**

- An oversight committee and three task groups will oversee the project. The committee will comprise approximately 15 individuals, including consumers, providers, and attendant representatives. Attendants will be represented by provider and advocacy groups. The Focus Groups will also continue in order to bring attendants into the oversight process. The committee will review project progress and make decisions about public relations. The committee will review materials that the public relations contractor develops and give suggestions for methods of dissemination and make necessary adjustments. The committee will act as "the people's voice" and give suggestions as to focus and improving attendant services.

- There will be a task group for each of the project's major initiatives: education, services, and workforce.

### **Formative Learning and Evaluation Activities**

- Presentations on the project's progress will be made at Montana conferences, such as the Governor's Conference on Aging.
- In the third year of the grant, the project's major activities will be formally evaluated by the Montana Department of Public Health & Human Service—Long-Term Care Division—Community Services Bureau staff in conjunction with the Oversight Committee. If indicated, plans for replication will also be developed.

### **Evidence of Enduring Change/Sustainability**

- The major pilot programs that will be implemented under this Grant all have replication as a goal.
- The Public Relations campaign and the Web site will be maintained and updated after the grant ends by the Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services—Long-Term Care Division—Community Services and Aging Bureau staff.
- The PAS program will be redesigned to allow for community-integration, increased consumer control, and the provision of timely and appropriate information to both consumers and attendants.

### **Geographic Focus**

Statewide.