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MFP/Pathways Exceeds 700 Transitions

As of December 13, 2012, the MFP/Pathways Program has transitioned 702 individuals since transitions were initiated in February 2009. HFS would like to thank the 300 plus Transition Coordinators for their dedication and ongoing support to MFP participants as they transition to the community. Additionally, we would like to recognize the University of Illinois, College of Nursing, for their focus on the provision of quality services and supports to enable MFP participants to be sustained in the community, and we would like to thank our sister agencies for their support, collaboration, and their continued focus on improving the MFP/Pathways Program.

HFS anticipates the number of MFP transitions to substantially increase over the next several years due to the implementation of the Colbert and Ligas Consent Decrees and the closure of state facilities.

UIC Re-institutionalization Report Presented at November 7, 2012, Stakeholder Meeting

As HFS is constantly striving to improve the quality of the MFP/Pathways Program, one of the goals of HFS is to collect and analyze data in order to implement revisions as a result of what we are learning from the program data. An important tool in analyzing the success of the Pathways program is the number of individuals who are re-institutionalized after transitioning into the community. (As of December 2011, the re-institutionalization rate for Illinois was 11%.) Cheryl Schrader, Director of Policy and Practice Initiatives at the UIC College of Nursing, reviewed the MFP/Pathways 2009-2011 Re-institutionalization report at the Stakeholder Meeting held on November 7th. Analysis of the various causes and contributors to re-institutionalization has prompted MFP to incorporate a more intensive case management approach for individuals who are assessed as having characteristics that are associated with a higher risk of re-institutionalization. These characteristics include: Advanced age; male gender; medical co-morbidity; SMI co-morbidity (including a history of alcohol and/or drug abuse or dependence; poly-pharmacy issues; social isolation and/or lack of family and peer support; functional disability (ADL/IADL limitations); and, multiple hospitalizations.

Money Follows the Person/Pathways forms Inter-agency Mortality Workgroup:

The MFP/Pathways Program recently formed a Mortality Review Workgroup to review the mortalities that have occurred for individuals enrolled in MFP. The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), College of Nursing, conducted an indepth analysis of the 20 individuals that had passed away after transitioning to community under the MFP Program, since the inception of the program in 2009. Through the end of 2011, MFP transitioned 478 individuals with 20 mortalities, which equates to an all-cause mortality rate of 4%. The majority of these mortalities occurred due to natural causes, however; it is the intent of HFS and its sister agencies to learn from these mortalities and make improvements to the MFP Program based on a more indepth analysis of the mortalities.

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In its analysis of the 20 mortalities, UIC identified six characteristics that place individuals for higher risk of mortality post transition, including: chronic pain; morbid obesity; Alzheimer's disease/dementia; COPD; lack of peer support system; and a history of falls. The workgroup plans to develop a system to identify individuals with these characteristics as "high risk" prior to transition, in order to ensure that the Transition Coordinators are aware that certain individuals are deemed at higher risk for mortality due to these characteristics, and subsequently to ensure that the care plan is adequate to address the health/safety for these individuals.

Money Follows the Person Revised Benchmarks:

Establishing transition goals and annual increases in community service expenditures are two of the minimum/standard MFP benchmarks required by Federal CMS. In 2012, benchmarks developed specifically for the Illinois Pathways Programs were revised to include:

- Increase in Annual transitions by 15% every year (2012 – 2016)
- Increase in the percentage of participants remaining in the community (2011 = 80%)
- Decrease in the MFP Disenrollment rate due to readmissions at LTC facilities
- HFS to conduct a random review of case notes after critical incidents in order to ensure compliance with established risk mitigation plans to better inform quality improvement decision
- Increase in affordable, assessable and supportive housing
- Establishment of monthly quality Webinars targeted at Transition Coordinators (TCs)

Housing News:

Several initiatives have been established in conjunction with the defined benchmark of increasing access to affordable housing. These measures include:

- Increasing coordination with Public Housing Authorities and Associations
- Increasing units on the housing locator website <http://ilhousingsearch.org>
- Increasing the number of TCs utilizing the case worker portal featured on the housing locator website
- Increasing interagency communication regarding housing issues via bi-monthly conference calls
- Increasing the availability of rental subsidies for MFP participants

MFP success story!

Read how agencies in suburban Chicago are collaborating in order to provide adequate housing for disabled individuals enrolled in MFP.

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Organizations collaborate to provide accessible housing for the disabled

By Deb Quantock McCarey

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Marc Lucas lost everything in his life when he became a quadriplegic after a car crash in 2004. For eight years, Lucas, 27, lived at the Berkshire Nursing and Rehab Center in Forest Park hoping to get out.

November 1st, he says, was his independence day, as that is when Lucas moved into one of two newly created wheelchair-accessible apartments of the Oak Park Residence Corporation's multi-unit building at 901 Pleasant Street.

As a participant in the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Program, which is administered by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, and thanks to a recent collaboration with the Oak Park Housing Authority and the Progress Center for Independent Living in Forest Park, Lucas is a rent-paying tenant.

"[The Progress Center] asked me if I wanted to come back out into the community, and said we can offer you this. I said, 'Yeah, I'm ready,'" recalls Lucas. "It was time to get out of the nursing home. It was not the place for me."

Medicaid has helped fund his transition from an institutional facility to the vintage two-bedroom apartment in Oak Park. He also has a nonelderly disabled voucher via the Oak Park Housing Authority. Three years ago, in a nationwide HUD initiative, the federal agency was awarded a special allocation of 15 housing vouchers for use in helping transition individuals out of nursing homes and back into the community, says Ed Solan, executive director of Oak Park Residence Corporation.

"We knew we had the units in our Pleasant Street building that could appropriately be retrofitted and rehabbed into rentals for persons with disabilities who use a wheelchair, and Mr. Lucas is a beneficiary of one of these HUD vouchers," says Solan.

The housing initiative, adds Dan Burke, who is Gov. Pat Quinn's statewide housing coordinator for long-term care reform, is specifically targeted to a population of individuals who are below age 61, and who are disabled and living in a nursing institution. To qualify for the program, the person must be willing and capable of moving out and into a community-based setting.

The cost of an individual with a disability to reside in an institutional setting can end up in the range of \$50,000 to \$75,000 per year, whereas the cost of funding an individual in a community-based setting is about \$25,000 to \$30,000, according to Horacio Esparza, executive director of the Progress Center for Independent Living.

As part of that cost a governmental subsidy covers approximately \$7,500. To this sum the tenant will pitch in an additional \$2,500 from his/her social security disability check, or just over \$200 a month in rent.

"These individuals do have skin in the game, in terms of paying something out of their very small check for their housing," Burke says.

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The accessibility makeover

The renovation work began on the two rental units more than a year ago when the resident corporation tapped Oak Park architect Frank Heitzman to design the new space with a budget of about \$70,000, says Solan.

"A roll-in shower is a difficult thing to do because you have to fit an accessible bathroom into a very small apartment unit," says Heitzman.

"Bathrooms that are accessible with a roll-in shower tend to take up a lot of space, because you have to make the whole bathroom, in a sense, a shower."

Likewise in the kitchen, Heitzman had to be aware of the type of appliances to install as well as the height of the cabinets and countertop. Everything needed to be wheelchair-friendly.

"We also provided the tenant with an electronic [entry pad], where instead of using a key, he can swipe this FOB pad against the receiver and open up an iron gate, which is locked and hard to open, and the doors," says Heitzman. "In case of emergencies, we also put in an uninterruptable power supply just for that opener, which was kind of unique, and something that isn't done that often."

On deck for the Oak Park Resident Corporation, adds Solan, is locating 13 additional local property owners who are able and willing to join in on this type of accessible housing.

"Our goal and role in this project is to provide assistance and support for the transition process," Burke says, "because under the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Program there are a series of protocols and follow-ups with the service agency (Progress Center) to ensure that the person is receiving appropriate care in the community, so we do have an ongoing role. We are interested in Oak Park's success, under this program, because it mirrors what the state of Illinois is undertaking at a more global level to achieve as many transitions from long-term care facilities to the community as possible."

The state of this state

Mandating this effort, adds Burke, are two landmark court decisions. First, in 1999, in rejecting the State of Georgia's appeal to enforce institutionalization of individuals with disabilities, the Supreme Court affirmed the right of individuals with disabilities to live in their community.

"That was the opening of the door in this area, the 1999 U.S Supreme Court decision, and it spurred a number of lawsuits in the State of Illinois in the following decade," Solan explains. "The most important of which is what is called the Colbert Decision, where a group of individuals with disabilities sued then Governor (Rod) Blagojevich, in the name of the State of Illinois and won a consent decree, which said the state had to discontinue the practice of placing people in nursing homes if they didn't want to be there, and if they didn't have to be there."

Recently, adds Burke, under the principles of the decision made in Georgia, the court approved an implementation plan in the case of Colbert v. Quinn that requires the state of Illinois to offer community housing opportunities, with support services, to residents receiving Medicaid in 185 nursing homes in Cook County.

They have agreed to achieve 1,100 of these transitions over the next 30 months, according to Burke.

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Meanwhile, on Pleasant Street, Marc Lucas has a new neighbor, and Solan is hoping that soon 13 more mobility impaired individuals will be moving out of a local nursing home and into one of his collaboration's newly identified wheelchair accessible rental units in Oak Park.

"Mr. Lucas, he needs more assistance than the new consumer we are moving now, who is more independent," says Esparza, who is blind and oversees the Progress Center's offices in Forest Park and Blue Island. "Nursing homes for a person with a disability are the worst option.

"We firmly believe that people with disabilities have the right to live in the community, make their own choices like anyone else, and, 'we' have the right to succeed and to fail.

"We have a list of people we are working with; Marc is not the only one. We have people we have already moved out, and others behind him on the list."

[Organizations collaborate to provide accessible housing for the disabled](#)

Training for Transition Coordinators:

HFS encourages all TCs to participate in a twelve part series of Quality Assurance Webinars. The focus of these Webinars will be on improving the quality of services people receive after they have transitioned into the community, in order to ensure that individuals are not re-institutionalized after moving out of a long term care facility. It is the hope of HFS, in collaboration with UIC, that these "Quality" Webinars will provide the tools needed by the TCs to ensure this important benchmark is met. Webinars are held on a monthly basis from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., and each month will feature a different topic.

The following is a tentative schedule of TC "Quality" training Webinars for 2013: January 17; February 21; March 21; April 18; May 16; June 20; July 18; August 15; September 9; October 17; and November 28.

Additionally, in response to program guidance provided by Mathematica, HFS will begin hosting refresher Webinars for TCs administering the Quality of Life (QoL) survey, which is a federal requirement for MFP participants. All TCs who were previously trained to administer this survey will be asked to attend one refresher training session in 2013. TCs are welcome to attend one of the quarterly QoL trainings scheduled for new TCs, to be held on: January 16 (9-10 a.m.); April 16 (9-10 a.m.); July 16 (9-10 a.m.); and October 15 (9-10 a.m.). Pre-registration is required. HFS will also schedule additional trainings at other times for anyone unable to attend on these dates. If you have any questions regarding the Quality of Life Survey, please e-mail [Mary McGuire](#) at HFS.

MFP Referral Process

HFS is in the process of revising the method in which MFP referrals are currently handled in an effort to streamline these referrals and increase efficiency for all agencies and individuals involved with MFP. Once these procedures are finalized, information regarding the referral process will be distributed.

Pathways to Community Living Stakeholder Newsletter

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Colbert Consent Decree – Update:

The Colbert Implementation plan was filed in court on November 8, 2012. The finalized version of the plan can be accessed on the [MFP Program Web site](#).

Outreach & Marketing Update:

The new marketing and outreach material developed for the MFP/Pathways to Community Living program is available on the [MFP Program Web site](#)! Spanish versions of the material are also available on the website. Additionally, HFS has hard copies available for distribution upon request. If you are interested in attaining printed copies, please e-mail [Lora McCurdy](#).

Future Meetings:

HFS recently released the calendar of MFP Implementation and Stakeholder meetings for 2013:

MFP Stakeholder Committee Meetings

- March 26, 2013, 10 a.m. – Noon
- July 10, 2013, 10 a.m. – Noon
- November 19, 2013, 10 a.m. – Noon

We would like to encourage greater consumer participation in the committee meetings. If you would like to refer an individual or know someone who would like to participate, please let us know! You may email that information to Pathways to Community Living Staff by selecting the “contact us” link on the [MFP Program Web site](#).

Happy Holidays,

Lora McCurdy
Pathways to Community Living/MFP Project Director
Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services