

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



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TO: Rick Dittman, Board Chair
Priscilla Halcro, HBCS Director
Jan Cahill, CEO

FROM: Lori Wertz, QIS

SUBJECT: Home Based Services Review--FY06

The following should serve as annual summary of your HBS programs for FY 06. It is based on the onsite file review as well as home visits throughout this past year as well as reports and information submitted by your agency.

The format for this report looks a bit different from previous years. A table is attached that rates agency standards as followed in the quality assurance tool. The basic data is provided in that table with notation of other important information outlined in this summary.

It is a pleasure to work with QLC's HCBS staff. Their continued commitment to the families they serve is an example of caregiving excellence. Their ability to adapt to the changes in our system, their thoughtful questions and their over all ability to advocate for both the system and their families is much appreciated.

As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me. In the meantime, I look forward to the privilege of working with Home Based Services this coming year.

cc: file
DDP/Central Office

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION REPORTS:

QLC received a three-year accreditation by CARF in August 2004. No new accreditation was required during this review period. Commendations from the 04 report can be seen in the FY05 summary.

CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS:

The return rate for this data was at 51%. Results indicated that families know and understand their rights and that services have helped families to effectively help their child learn and develop. Families also noted that they wished for more community and social participation.

It is noted that in addition to these surveys, employee satisfaction surveys as well as interagency surveys were used. Employee surveys belied a general enjoyment of their jobs and felt they were making a difference for families. Some noted that caseloads were high and that too many meetings and paperwork were issues of concern. The interagency survey was sent to 49 agencies with a 35% return rate, with all but one agency returning a rating of good or excellent. The one negative rating did not identify the sender and so HCBS was unable to follow-up to provide resolution.

New in July 05, HCBS also instituted a process to survey new families about their satisfaction with the FSS. The information gleaned from this process is shared with the FSS and his/her supervisor. 49 families were involved in this process from June 05 to May 06, with the overall response being very positive.

FSSAC PARENT REPRESENTATIVE INPUT:

The FSSAC parent position has not had any real contact with this office.

HOME VISITS/FAMILY CONTACTS:

Home visits have occurred consistently over the past year. All service areas were represented (Part C, FES and IFES) with no significant issues to report. Personal visits with families have mirrored consumer survey information. The number one concern for families remains the availability of respite or hab aide providers. HCBS has a list of providers available to families. Family choice continues to impact this provision—and turnover in this position remains an issue for some families.

INTERNAL MONITORING SYSTEMS:

This agency has a thorough monitoring system in place. Files evidence ongoing reviews to ensure consistent application of policy as well as service delivery. Quarterly summaries are routinely shared with the Regional Office and communication across this division is tremendous strength. The agency continues to change and update their internal processes to ensure that services are well delivered and family friendly.

DOCUMENTATION OF PRAISE OR COMPLAINTS:

One complaint was noted for FY06 and involved a family's request to pursue services from out of state that were adequately provided in Montana. A letter was sent to the Governor by the family who chose not utilize the internal grievance procedures of the agency.

A complaint has been lodged for FY 07 (July) involving the hiring of a hab aide. The issues have been addressed and the family at this point appears to be happy with the results.

Praises of the program are many and often cite the knowledge and skills of the family support specialists as an agency strength.

LICENSING INFORMATION

QLC is licensed as a child placing agency and that license is current. Shared placements are encouraged and natural families are expected to provide respite for their child from a foster placement. HCBS staff continue to perform the home studies for potential host families, with updates annually as required by licensing. Having the child and/or natural family meet a potential host family remains a standard for this program.

FINANCIAL AUDITS:

HCBS continues to run a check and balance system that ensures expenditures are appropriate under the waiver. Documentation is well provided to ensure that expenditures are approved as appropriate by the agency's internal system as well as the Regional Office.

While the overall QLC audit from the state audit bureau noted some concerns regarding safeguards or inconsistencies in the adult program, there have been no similar concerns noted for HCBS.

FSS CERTIFICATIONS:

HBCS currently has 24 certified specialists (20 are fully certified, four are primary).

Crisis Response:

The agency continues to respond quickly and appropriately to crisis situations. Advocating for difficult to place persons, recruiting and training host families, and even management staff working to provide respite hours for families are but a few of the examples of responses on file in this office.

FILE REVIEW:

Files were reviewed in accordance with the November 2003 version of Montana Evaluation Process for Family Education and Support Services. A total of 19 files were reviewed to include files from FES, Part C and IFES as well as children who exited Part C and those in transition to other services. Files document consistent use of multi-dimensional assessments, medical information and parental observations which determine the course of the IFSPs.

It is noted that due to the increase in the number of kids 0-3 early intervention, the agency was forced to eliminate respite from that program in order to meet entitled categories of service.

There were NO significant issues to report as a result of the file review. The attached table and Quality Assurance Observation Sheets reflect the findings.

OTHER INFORMATION:

Agency policy reflects updated requirements for Part C, including ECHO. Additionally, it is noted that the HCBS program has included state policy for swallowing evaluations as a standard across services areas. They have also embraced the incident management system and have several trained investigators in the program.

Outreach, family support groups, training and community involvement continue to be priorities for the HCBS program. Examples include: training parents the correct way to install car seats (Havre), Positive Peers for young teens in services (a mentoring program involving teens in the Havre community-with notation that program was given a grant to start this program in Great Falls beginning Sept 06), Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies involvement (10 week course in "Partnership to Strengthen Families"), Nurturing Pathways (an integrated program of movement through music and dance for kids 0-3) in Havre & Shelby, the continuation of therapies (noted last eval) out of the Shelby office and providing services to Browning, Cutbank, Shelby and Conrad, Behavioral Training Workshops presented in Browning and Rocky Boy for Early Head Start, involvement in Children's Mental Health, LINC'S, Child Protective Teams, Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Councils, and various Partnership Councils. The HCBS Division is also employed as the Disabilities Coordinator for Early Head Start (Rocky Boy) and the agency is a full participating member of the High Risk Review at Benefis Hospital. This is by no means an inclusive list of accomplishments, but certainly does detail the level of commitment and community presence and involvement of this staff.

It has been once again a pleasure to work with this program over this past year. I very much enjoy the open communication with the management staff as well as the family support specialists. The HCBS Vision, Mission and Values are apparent in the services provided, as well as the day to day interactions this group of people have with each other, and with the other agencies and people they see. Their values are as diverse as their skills—reputation, credibility, education of families, family choice, respect for diversity, acceptance, compassion—are balanced against fun, humor, play, community and resources. It is a pleasure to work with such progressive, thoughtful staff.