

DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR

JOAN MILES  
DIRECTOR

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STATE OF MONTANA

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DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES PROGRAM  
3075 N. Montana Ave. Room 108  
PO Box 202955  
Helena, MT 59620-2955  
June 25, 2007

John and Pam Barragato  
PO Box 464  
Boulder, MT 59632

Dear John and Pam,

Attached is the Annual Quality Assurance Report for Fiscal Year 2007. The review was conducted based on standards identified in the Quality Assurance Process Handbook effective July 1, 2005. In addition to you receiving the report, a copy is also sent to pertinent staff at the DDP Central Office, a copy is maintained in the contract file at the Regional Office, and a copy will be posted on the State of Montana Website.

It was a pleasure to conduct this review. I trust you will find the information in the attached report to be an accurate representation of the Supported Living and Community Supports services provided by Alliance Outreach Services. It is obvious that you and your staff are dedicated to the individuals for whom you provide services.

I look forward to a continued relationship with Alliance Outreach Services in the delivery of quality services for individuals with developmental disabilities in the the State of Montana.

Respectfully,

*Catherine A. Murphy*

Catherine A. Murphy,  
Quality Improvement Specialist

CC: Larry Lovelace, Region IV Manager  
Tim Plaska, Community Services Bureau Chief  
Jannis Conselyea, Program Supports Bureau Chief  
John Zeeck, Quality Assurance Specialist  
Perry Jones, Medicaid Waiver Specialist  
Contract File

TO: John and Pam Barragato, Co-Directors  
Alliance Outreach Services

FROM: Cathy Murphy, Quality Improvement Specialist

DATE: June 25, 2007

RE: FY 2007 Quality Assurance Evaluation

Please allow me to present the Annual Quality Assurance Evaluation for Alliance Outreach Services for fiscal year 2007.

The annual on-site review portion of the quality assurance process was conducted on April 5, 2007. References and guidelines for this review are found in the Developmental Disabilities Program handbook titled "Quality Assurance Process for Adult and Group Home Services" dated July 1, 2005. This report contains findings, comments, and recommendations noted during the on-site review and observations over the past year. These are also noted on Quality Assurance Observation Sheets (QAOS), which accompany this report.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE

Alliance Outreach Services, LLC is a for profit corporation providing Supported Living services to adults with developmental disabilities in Regions IV and V. Community Support services are provided to one consumer in Region V at this time. AOS has two Co-Directors, John and Pam Barragato. John acts as the primary Program Manager, while Pam's current role is primarily as the Fiscal Manager. Additional staff are employed to work directly with consumers, with the Barragatos also providing direct support to each consumer.

#### Significant events:

Alliance Outreach Services began providing Supported Living services in 2001 to one consumer. Currently Supported Living services are provided to seven individuals in Region IV, and Community Supports services are provided to one individual in Region V. Expansion of Supported Living services in Region V is planned. AOS is also considering becoming a qualified provider of Vocational (Supported Employment) services.

#### Policies & Administrative (DDP) Directives:

Alliance Outreach Services has written policies and procedures. These include a statement of philosophy; contingency plan; abuse, neglect and exploitation; support services; hiring; probationary period for employees; employee evaluation; family relationships in employment; harassment; termination of employment; termination for cause; staff training; and incident reporting. These policies and procedures were last updated on February 2, 2007.

#### Licensing:

No licensing is required for the services provided by Alliance Outreach Services. AOS has met the qualifications to be a Qualified Provider for Residential Habilitation and Support and currently provides Supported Living and related transportation services.

Accreditation:

It is not required by the State of Montana that service providers be accredited.

Agency Internal Communication Systems:

The Co-Director/Owner of Alliance Outreach Services maintains regular contact with employees and consumers. Internal communication systems include informal verbal communication and written communication as needed.

Fiscal:

There is no A133 Audit on file. There have been no referrals to Medicaid Fraud or requests for a QAD review.

Appendix I:

All service to consumers receiving Supported Living services is provided in accordance with the cost plan and IP team decision. Staffing ratio is 1:1 when staff is in attendance. On call service is provided 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.

RESIDENTIAL

**Accomplishments:**

Major accomplishments noted by AOS include “providing person centered services to consumers who have had difficulties with other providers and ported to AOS and remain successfully placed and happy; specialized services to adults with disabilities who live with parents or guardians; and successful expansion to Region V.”

**Programmatic Deficiencies:**

There were no programmatic deficiencies noted in the previous comprehensive evaluation.

**Corrections to Deficiencies:**

None required.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Alliance Outreach Services does not own any vehicles for consumer transport. Consumers are transported via community transportation systems, and by AOS staff in private vehicles. Employees submit verification of auto insurance.

Alliance Outreach Services currently provides Supported Living services to seven individuals. Two of these individuals ported to Alliance Outreach from another area service provider in FY07. A third individual is scheduled to port to Alliance Outreach at the beginning of FY08. No individuals ported out of AOS services during FY07. The majority of AOS service recipients live with family or in an apartment complex for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Health and safety is assured through natural supports of their residential environments with additional support from the staff of AOS.

Alliance Outreach Services does not currently have any staff that are certified by the State of Montana to assist individuals with developmental disabilities with their

medications. Consumers who require this assistance are supported by staff who are Licensed Practical Nurses, or by either of the Co-Directors of AOS, both of whom are also Licensed Practical Nurses. License status has been verified with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry.

As is mentioned above, most consumers live either with family, or in a supervised apartment setting for seniors and people with disabilities. Of the five Individual Plans reviewed, there is documentation in all five IPs of each individual's ability to appropriately exit the premises during a fire or other emergency evacuation. Other safety considerations are also documented and discussed at the individual's annual planning meeting. It is recommended that Alliance Outreach Services develop and implement formal safety checklists documenting monthly smoke detector checks, fire extinguisher inspections, egress evaluation, and emergency evacuation response and time.

Two apartments of supported living recipients have been visited at the invitation of the consumers. Each apartment was found to be acceptably clean with furnishings and décor reflecting the personality of the individual. Safety requirements are met (adequate egress, smoke detectors).

Emergency back-up exists for all consumers receiving support from Alliance Outreach Services. Crises or emergencies can be addressed 24 hours a day with by calling the on-call/crisis phone. This is typically carried by the Co-Director, with the other Co-Director and a staff member designated as back-ups.

#### SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY

Individual Plans for five consumers were reviewed as part of the annual comprehensive evaluation. Comprehensive assessment information was present in four of the five files reviewed. The fifth individual had ported services from another residential provider and had comprehensive assessments completed only months prior to the port occurring.

Many AOS consumers regularly participate in Social Club and other community activities. Leisure and recreation preferences are identified by consumers with staff facilitating opportunities, as needed or requested.

There are no consumers served by Alliance Outreach Services who have a rights restriction in place. IP documentation indicates consumer rights are reviewed with individuals on at least an annual basis. Alliance Outreach Services does not have a formal grievance procedure identified for consumers. As AOS policies and procedures are revised, it is recommended that a formal grievance procedure for consumers be developed.

Several of the individuals who receive services from Alliance Outreach Services have significant medical issues. As mentioned previously, both of the Co-Directors, as well as some AOS staff, are Licensed Practical Nurses. As such, medical and health care issues are identified and addressed in a timely manner. Given the high level of independence of some of the consumers, this can sometimes be quite challenging, yet Alliance Outreach

Services has done a commendable job on caring for the medical and health care needs of their consumers. This is particularly true of one individual who has gone from monthly emergency hospital visits to quarterly medical intervention.

#### STAFFING

The Director/Owner of Alliance Outreach Services works personally with each consumer, directly trains all employees, and as specified in AOS policies and procedures is the primary contact person to whom any concerns or questions should be addressed. Consumers and involved family members are very involved in the recruitment and hiring process of employees. In fact, the majority of employees are recommended to AOS from consumers and/or their family members. Alliance Outreach Services is to be commended for their exemplary practice of involving consumers in the recruitment and selection of staff.

Background checks and orientation training records were reviewed for five employees hired within the past 12 months. In all five cases acceptable background checks were received prior to the employee's first day of work. In addition to basic orientation which includes company policies, planning and service delivery process, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and incident reporting/management; employees also receive training specific to the individual (s) they are working with. Staff Surveys were completed with two AOS staff. Both employees responded appropriately to questions regarding Abuse/Neglect Reporting, Client Rights, Behavior Support Plans & Protocols, Orientation Training, Assistance and Supervision of Medications, Behavior Interactions with Consumers, Emotionally Responsible Caregiving, Individual Plans/Personal Support Plans, and Incident Reporting.

#### INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

As noted above, staff are trained to recognize situations of potential abuse, neglect or exploitation and have demonstrated knowledge to report such allegations to Adult Protective Services. There have been no allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation on behalf of consumers receiving services from Alliance Outreach Services.

A review of Critical Incidents was also conducted as part of the annual evaluation process. Since May 2006, there have been six critical incidents, all involving one consumer. Through the dedication of the Co-Director of Alliance Outreach Services and staff working with this individual, incidents have decreased from one per month for four consecutive months to a time span of 2.5 and three months between incidents.

A specific time is designated for weekly Incident Management Committee meetings. These meetings occur as needed to review incidents or discuss possible trends. More commonly, verbal and written communication occurs between Alliance Outreach Services and DDP staff addressing consumer issues and developing concerns prior to actual incidents occurring.

Alliance Outreach Services has a brief Incident Reporting policy and procedure which appears adequate for the current consumers and types of incidents typically generated. It

is recommended, however, that a more formal incident management system be developed, especially as Alliance Outreach Services plans to expand in the number of individuals, and geographical area served. Information on incident management system requirements is detailed in the Incident Management Policy and DDP incident Management System (revised and effective 11/04/2005), sections V. Responsibilities, and VI. Processes.

## WORK/DAY/COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

Alliance Outreach Services does not currently provide Work, Day, or Community Employment services. AOS has, however, submitted notification that the program is planning on expanding and will be submitting a plan to become a qualified provider of these services.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

### **Accomplishments:**

Community Supports is an area of service Alliance Outreach Services successfully delivers in Region V. Similar to its Residential Services, AOS utilizes an individual's natural supports to recruit and develop staff.

### **Programmatic Deficiencies:**

There were no Programmatic Deficiencies related to Community Supports services noted in the previous evaluation.

### **Corrections to Deficiencies:**

None required.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Alliance Outreach Services currently provides Community Support services to one individual. Health and safety is assured through natural supports of family and friends, with additional support from the staff of AOS.

Alliance Outreach Services does not currently have any staff that are certified by the State of Montana to assist individuals with developmental disabilities with their medications. The individual receiving Community Supports through AOS does not require assistance with medications at this time.

The individual receiving Community Supports has purchased, and maintains, her own vehicle with the assistance of Alliance Outreach Services.

Emergency back-up exists for all consumers receiving support, including Community Support services, from Alliance Outreach Services. Crises or emergencies can be addressed 24 hours a day with by calling the on-call/crisis phone. This is typically carried by the Co-Director, with the other Co-Director and a staff member designated as back-ups.

## SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY

As is noted above, Alliance Outreach Services provides Community Support services to one individual at this time. The Community Supports Agreement was reviewed as part of the information gathering process for the Quality Assurance Review.

The current Community Supports Agreement contains objectives to assist the individual in the purchase and maintenance of a vehicle, and a Residential Habilitation objective of budget training. The individual has graduated the budgeting program, and a reliable vehicle has also been purchased by the individual. This individual is able to participate in leisure/recreation and social activities without the support of paid staff. She is also able to care for her own medical needs, with additional assistance available from family and other natural supports.

## STAFFING

The individual receiving Community Supports does not currently require individual staffing. If staffing were required, however, the hiring and orientation practices are the same as identified above in the Residential section of this report. This includes background checks and orientation which includes company policies, planning and service delivery process, abuse, neglect and exploitation, and incident reporting/management. Employees also receive training specific to the individual (s) they are working with.

## INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

As noted above, staff are trained to recognize situations of potential abuse, neglect or exploitation and have demonstrated knowledge to report such allegations to Adult Protective Services. There have been no allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation related to the consumer receiving Community Supports services from Alliance Outreach Services. Neither have there been any Reportable or Critical Incidents involving this individual.

A specific time is designated for weekly Incident Management Committee meetings. These meetings occur as needed to review incidents or discuss possible trends. More commonly, verbal and written communication occurs between Alliance Outreach Services and DDP staff addressing consumer issues and developing concerns prior to actual incidents occurring.

Alliance Outreach Services has a brief Incident Reporting policy and procedure which appears adequate for the current consumers and types of incidents typically generated. It is recommended, however, that a more formal incident management system be developed, especially as Alliance Outreach Services plans to expand in the number of individuals, and geographical area served. Information on incident management system requirements is detailed in the Incident Management Policy and DDP incident Management System (revised and effective 11/04/2005), sections V. Responsibilities, and VI. Processes.

## CONCLUSION

As a result of this review there are four recommendations identified to enhance the quality of services delivered by Alliance Outreach Services, LLC. They are:

1. Develop a formal safety checklist (rather than the current informal system) to be used routinely with all individuals receiving Supported Living services from Alliance Outreach Services.
2. Develop a formal grievance procedure for consumers, including identifying each step of the grievance process.
3. Develop a more detailed Incident Management policy and process. This will become more critical as Alliance Outreach Services continue to expand in Regions IV and V requiring the Co-directors spend more time on administrative duties.
4. Review vehicle liability insurance policies and make any necessary adjustments to comply with contract requirements as specified in the FY08 contract for services.

Alliance Outreach Services, LLC is to be commended on their individualized approach to providing supported living services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Not only are services tailored to meet the individual's needs and desires, but staff are also hired with direct involvement of the consumer. Additionally, due to the availability of medical personnel, some consumers with significant health and medical issues are served with great success in the community. Finally, two individuals who were experiencing service challenges ported to Alliance Outreach from another area provider and are now being served quite successfully. It is the opinion of this evaluator that this is due, in no small part, to working closely with involved family members, and other interested parties; effectively addressing the individual's needs and desires through the IP and service delivery process; and hiring staff who are good matches to the individual's personality and needs.