

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



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TO: Michael Kakuk, President,
Board of Directors
Spring Meadow Resources

FROM: Cathy Murphy, Quality Improvement Specialist

DATE: June 30, 2008

RE: Quality Assurance Summary Report

Following is the Quality Assurance Evaluation Summary Report ending fiscal year 2008. This report is based on the Quality Assurance Process manual dated July 1, 2007. Information was gathered for this report through on-site visits of various facilities operated by Spring Meadow Resources, reviews of individual consumer plans and programmatic information, review of health and safety practices and protocols, interviews with staff and management personnel, and direct observations.

A copy of this report is being sent to Executive Director of Spring Meadow Resources, with additional copies sent to the Developmental Disabilities Program Region IV Manager, Quality Assurance Specialist, Waiver Specialist, and the Community Services Bureau Chief. In addition, this report will also be made available to the public via the State of Montana website.

I look forward to a continued relationship with Spring Meadow Resources in the delivery of residential and day activity services to individuals with developmental disabilities in the Helena area.

CC: Rick Taylor, Spring Meadow Resources Executive Director
Larry Lovelace, Region IV Manager
Tim Plaska, Community Services Bureau Chief
John Zeeck, Quality Assurance Specialist
Perry Jones, Waiver Specialist

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION

SUMMARY REPORT

FOR

**SPRING MEADOW RESOURCES
2850 BROADWATER AVENUE
HELENA, MONTANA**

**REPORT PERIOD ENDING:
JUNE 30, 2008**

CONDUCTED BY

**CATHERINE MURPHY
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SPECIALIST**

ADMINISTRATIVE

Spring Meadow Resources (SMR) operates six community homes in the Helena area, offers Supported Living services to approximately 50 individuals, and has a Day Activity center at the same facility as their administrative offices. SMR is also a qualified provider of Supported Employment services, but has chosen to focus on more recreational and leisure opportunities for individuals at this time. The administrative site of Spring Meadow Resources is the hub of all activity, and is also the site of a private fishing pond and picnic area that has been developed by Spring Meadow Resources, all of which is accessible to individuals with physical limitations. The Education Center, which is located with the administrative offices, houses a surround sound theater, and has exercise and video gaming areas. Long range plans include developing accessible camping, and possibly converting the nearby group home into a bed and breakfast inn for individuals with disabilities and their families. In addition to providing recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities, Spring Meadow Resources has also sponsored annual community events such as Music in the Meadow, and the Cardboard Cup Regatta at nearby Spring Meadow Lake.

Spring Meadow Resources has a comprehensive Policies and Procedures Manual which is available at any SMR facility. While conducting staff interviews as part of the quality assurance process it was discovered that Spring Meadow Resources' policy on reporting allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation was not in compliance with the Administrative Rules of Montana and the Montana Codes Annotated. Spring Meadow Resources has since revised its policy on Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of Persons Served. The Board of Directors of SMR have also recently approved a new policy on smoking, and revisions to existing policies on Probationary Period, Premium Holiday Pay, and Personal Funds Disbursement (related to consumer monies).

As mentioned above, Spring Meadow Resources operates six community homes. All homes are licensed, as required, indicating each meets the group home licensing standards. Current certificates of licensure are displayed in each community home and are valid through November 2008.

Spring Meadow Resources was accredited by CARF until January 1, 2008. They received a three-year accreditation, which is the maximum period allowed by CARF. Spring Meadow Resources elected not to pursue accreditation again, as this is no longer a requirement by the State of Montana.

Agency internal communication systems are handled primarily through the distribution of memos, and through internet communication. Each residential facility office space is equipped with a computer, internet, and copy machine. Additionally, a notebook is used for staff to communicate significant events or messages from shift-to-shift. Staff have been observed logging entries prior to ending a shift, and reading the log when first arriving on shift. Staff sign or initial indicating they have read the log entries.

A desk review of Audit Report was conducted by the Audit Bureau in March 2007. The results of that review indicate there were no material weaknesses or reportable conditions identified in relation to internal control over financial reporting or internal control over major programs. Additionally, there were no findings or questioned costs in the report.

Spring Meadow Resources also received an extensive audit of client funds for the period of July 1, 2004 through March 31, 2006. As a result of that audit, Spring Meadow Resources did make recommended changes to policies and practices regarding client funds. Additionally, Spring Meadow Resources developed a letter of agreement for individuals for whom SMR does not act as representative payee. This form, which is typically reviewed and agreed upon in a team meeting, has greatly increased communication and clarification of responsibilities on behalf of individuals in service between the representative payee and Spring Meadow Resources.

RESIDENTIAL

Accomplishments:

Spring Meadow Resources provides congregate community home living to approximately 46 individuals in six community homes. Homes are clean, well maintained and have very home-like atmospheres. The vast majority of individuals living in these homes have their own bedrooms which are decorated to suit their individual personalities. Spring Meadow Resources also operates a congregate supported living site of two bedroom apartments, and also has apartments connected to two of their community home sites. These sites are ideal for those who do not need the level of supervision provided in a group home, but benefit from staffing and supports available to individuals living in community housing.

Programmatic Deficiencies:

During an on-site visit to one of the community homes it was determined, while reviewing medication administration logs, that not all staff assisting consumers with their medications were properly certified to do so.

Corrections to Deficiencies:

The administration of Spring Meadow Resources is recognized for their immediate and comprehensive response to learning of non-certified staff assisting consumers with medications. Medication certification expiration dates have been added to monthly training lists, with follow-up provided by the Training Coordinator, and spot checks by both the Health Specialist and the Residential Services Specialist have occurred. Since these extra measures have been implemented there have been no similar situations identified in any service areas offered by Spring Meadow Resources.

Health and Safety

Spring Meadow Resources owns and maintains a number of vehicles which are used not only by community homes, but also by supported living staff, and the day program. Vehicles receive routine maintenance and are also serviced when problems arise. Spring Meadow Resources verifies that staff-owned vehicles are covered with liability insurance, and provide additional

coverage through the corporation's auto liability coverage in compliance with their contract with the Developmental Disabilities Program.

Consumers are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle including providing nutritious meals and snacks, and opportunities for exercise and physical activity. Many of the group homes and some individuals in Supported Living have chosen to participate in the Rural Institute's Menu/Aids program which promotes nutritious meals and snacks, portions based on individual needs, and includes recipes and complete menu planning tools. There are also opportunities for individuals to go for walks, participate in exercise videos, or attend an exercise club at Spring Meadow Resources' day program facility.

Spring Meadow Resources employs a Licensed Practical Nurse as their Health Specialist. Current licensure was verified through the Department of Labor and Industry. The Health Specialist is involved in assuring the day-to-day health of the consumers of SMR, staff training of healthcare issues, and monitoring of medical/health concerns of consumers. The Health Specialist is also a trained critical incident investigator and conducts investigations with identified medical concerns as needed.

Consumer medications are stored in locked cabinets in congregate settings. During on-site visits these cabinets have been found appropriately secured. Consumers are afforded the amount of assistance needed as documented in each person's individual plan of care, by properly certified staff. During one on-site visit it was discovered that non-certified staff were assisting consumers with medications (QAOS #1). This was immediately corrected by the administration and safeguards were put in place to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future, and none have been discovered or reported. Staff report medication errors on an Incident Report form, with an accompanying Medication Error Report form. The Health Specialist monitors medication errors and had provided additional training when deemed necessary.

In addition to the six community homes and day facility operated by Spring Meadow Resources, there are also supported living apartments that are managed by SMR. Spring Meadow Resources manages one congregate supported living apartment complex and has additional apartments that are attached to two of the community home facilities. Additionally, many supported living consumers rent from local landlords in town. Though this evaluator has certainly not visited all homes of individuals receiving supported living services, the homes that have been visited appear to meet acceptable cleanliness standards. Providers and Targeted Case Managers continue to work together to ensure the health and safety for those individuals who need more assistance with personal and home care tasks. Group homes are also found to be clean, healthy environments and all have a very homey atmosphere. Evacuation drills are conducted with documentation verifying they are carried out across shifts. Health and safety home inspections are also conducted regularly with documentation of findings and corrections available. Emergency back-up exists for all residential services. A phone designated for "on-call" is carried by trained staff at all hours. Each residence and supported living recipient has access to this number and can call for assistance at any time. Additionally, SMR employs a Night Floater. This individual is scheduled to roam from residence to residence to assist and oversee staff with nighttime duties, and also works in homes when the scheduled staff is not able to work.

Service Planning and Delivery

As the service delivery system is changing, individuals receiving supports from Spring Meadow Resources are transitioning from Individual Plans to Personal Support Plans. For the purpose of this review only Individual Plans and corresponding documentation was reviewed. Random samples of plans including plans from each program area were reviewed. Generally, plans were complete and people were satisfied with the outcomes of their goals and objectives. There were some oversights discovered, such as an assessment missing, or incomplete documentation on the review of the previous year's objectives. More significant findings included dissatisfaction with progress of objectives for one person and required protocols not being included with the plan of one individual at the time of the meeting. This was later corrected with the submission of the individual's medication and bathing protocols, and a retooling of objectives for the other individual. A review of Quarterly Reports submitted to the Targeted Case Managers was also reviewed, and it was noted that these are often late. The residential and vocational service specialists have identified this as an area of needed correction and have developed a system to provide complete Quarterly Reports in a timely manner.

Spring Meadow Resources is a strong advocate of leisure and recreational activities. As is noted earlier they have developed an accessible fishing pond and recreational area adjacent to their day program and administrative site. Individuals also participate in community activities such as "Alive at Five," county and state fairs, individual and group vacations and community outings. The consumers of Spring Meadow Resources also enjoy a free membership to the local YMCA where they can participate in healthy activities such as swimming and basketball with other members of the community. Documentation verifies that individuals are receiving or exceeding the number of leisure and recreational outings required by contract.

Spring Meadow Resources reviews client rights with individuals on a regular basis and has a formal grievance procedure defined providing an avenue for consumers to have their concerns addressed. During a review of a communication log for one community home, and corresponding individual log it was discovered that on occasion staff have treated an individual in a manner in conflict with his client rights (refer to QAOS #A). The individual for whom this pertains is not currently receiving services from Spring Meadow Resources, however it is advisable that the staff working at that particular residence receive additional training in emotionally responsible care giving and client rights. This will require additional follow-up. During on-site visits at residences and the day program staff are witnessed providing care that would be characterized as emotionally responsible. During interviews with direct care staff, one individual reported she recently received additional training in this area due to a conflict with a consumer. She reported she was very thankful for the additional training and has become more aware of how she could be misinterpreted.

Staffing

Ten staff hire records were sampled as part of the quality assurance review. All staff were found to have appropriate and acceptable background checks completed. Additionally, training records indicate that staff receive necessary training in a timely manner. Training includes agency orientation, Mandt, First Aid and CPR, medication certification, SMR's medication protocol,

vehicle safety, and program/individual specific training. Additionally, staff completed required tiers of the College of Direct Supports within the timeline prescribed by the Developmental Disabilities Program.

At Spring Meadow Resources, staff are typically hired as Relief Staff and encouraged to work at a variety of sights and with a variety of individuals during their probationary period. This affords individuals a wide range of experiences and allows management the opportunity to observe if there are particular settings. As vacancies occur the management of SMR will offer a permanent position to the candidate they deem best suited for the vacancy. As is the case with other community service providers, Spring Meadow Resources has struggled to maintain adequate staffing for the consumers served, though it should be noted that an appropriate staff to consumer staffing ratio has been evidenced during on-site visits. Both the Residential Services Specialist and the Supported Living Specialist have provided direct care support when short-staffed in residential services; as has the Day Services Manager when there is not enough staff to provide for the needs of individuals in the day program.

As part of the comprehensive evaluation a staff survey was completed to assess training and practices of staff. The survey includes questions on abuse/neglect reporting, client rights, behavior support plans and protocols, orientation training, assistance and supervision of medications, behavior interactions with consumers, emotionally responsible care giving, individual plans/personal support plans, and incident reporting. Staff responded with acceptable answers to all categories, with the exception of the abuse/neglect reporting section. As was mentioned earlier, Spring Meadow Resources recently revised their reporting policy. Though staff indicated awareness that the policy had been changed, it had not yet been completely read. Further follow-up to a Quality Assurance Observation Sheet (#3) issued earlier in the year will be required to assure all staff have received training on the policy revision.

Incident Management

Staff document any unusual consumer incidents on the State of Montana Incident Report Form. Staff also utilize the option Medication Error Reporting Form to report medication errors. Documented incidents are reviewed weekly at an Incident Management Committee meeting which typically includes the Incident Management Coordinator who is also the Supported Living Coordinator, Group Home Coordinator, Operations Manager, Health Specialist, Quality Assurance/Training Coordinator, and Assistant Director of Spring Meadow Resources. Also in attendance are the DDP Quality Improvement Specialist and a Targeted Case Management representative. Minutes are recorded for each meeting and are available at Spring Meadow Resources.

Spring Meadow Resources has experienced some challenges meeting all of the requirements of the DDP Incident Management Policy. DDP has provided technical assistance, training, and recommendations as appropriate. Running multiple types of trend reports for trend analysis has been a challenge, and SMR has encountered technical problems when they upgraded software. Additionally, recently an incident categorized as “Reportable” was not reported to the proper individuals (QAOS #B). Further training will be offered by DDP as revisions will soon be made to the DDP Incident Management Policy.

SMR has several core staff trained to investigate critical incidents. Though the Incident Management Coordinator completes most of the investigations, the Health Specialist is typically assigned any medically related incidents. The Quality Assurance/Training Coordinator has also completed investigations, and both the Group Home Coordinator and Operations Manager are trained investigators. Investigation reports are typically submitted in a timely manner.

WORK/DAY/COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

Spring Meadow Resources operates a day program known as CAP, or the Creative Activities Program. Primarily this is a day activity program for individuals who are interested in engaging in activities and learning opportunities, rather than pursuing vocational options. CAP offers daily activities and classes on various arts and crafts, sewing, and sign language to name a few. CAP participants also have available to them a movie theater, exercise and game room. Additionally, outdoor activities are encouraged in warmer months at SMR's accessible pond and recreation area.

Spring Meadow Resources is also a qualified provider of Supported Employment; however they have chosen not to provide this service to individuals at this time.

Health and Safety

Please refer to the Health and Safety section of the Residential portion of this report.

Service Planning and Delivery

Please refer to the Service Planning and Delivery section of the Residential portion of this report.

Staffing

Please refer to the Staffing section of the Residential portion of this report.

Incident Management

Please refer to the Incident Management section of the Residential portion of this report.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Accomplishments:

Spring Meadow Resources currently serves two individuals in Community Supports. Both plans were reviewed as part of the quality assurance evaluation with more detailed information provided below. Currently, Spring Meadow Resources charges a 25% administrative fee for Community Supports Agreements.

Programmatic Deficiencies:

None noted.

Corrections to Deficiencies:
None required.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of individuals receiving Community Supports receives the same attention as for those receiving Supported Living services. In reviewing Community Supports Agreements of the two individuals receiving Community Supports from Spring Meadow Resources, both include services to assist with health and safety, and medical needs of the individuals.

Spring Meadow Resources employs a Licensed Practical Nurse as their Health Specialist. Current licensure was verified through the Department of Labor and Industry. The Health Specialist is involved in monitoring health concerns of the consumers of SMR, including those receiving Community Supports. The Health Specialist also provides staff training of healthcare issues.

Emergency back-up exists for individuals receiving Community Supports services. In fact, one service plan includes funding to pay for basic phone service so the individual will have access to emergency support services. A phone designated for "on-call" is carried by trained staff at all hours.

Service Planning and Delivery

Spring Meadow Resources currently offers Community Supports to two individuals. Plans for both individuals were reviewed as part of the quality assurance evaluation. Residential habilitation is included in both plans to provide assistance with activities of daily living; such as budgeting, shopping, and household assistance. Transportation services are also included in both plans to assist individuals in accessing medical services, shopping, and recreational activities. One plan also includes assisting the individual in participating in weekly recreational/leisure activities and paying for basic phone service to assure access to staffing in the event of an emergency. Services to these individuals are provided through SMR's Supported Living department. Staff is trained, and demonstrate emotionally responsible care giving.

Individuals receiving Community Supports services from Spring Meadow Resources effectively receive the same service as many Supported Living consumers. Consumer rights are reviewed at least annually with individuals, and a grievance procedure is in place should an individual have a complaint about services. Neither consumer receiving Community Supports has an approved Rights Restriction in place, neither was evidence found of any rights violations occurring.

Access to medical/health care and leisure/recreational opportunities is included in both Community Supports agreements. Individuals are assisted in participating in community leisure/recreational/social activities through providing transportation and staff time.

Staffing

As is noted above, Supported Living staff provide services to individuals receiving Community Supports through Spring Meadow Resources. As such, there is no difference in the hiring or

training processes. Staff background checks are completed and must be acceptable to be hired. Once hired, staff complete orientation and training which includes SMR policies and procedures, incident management, First Aid/CPR, Mandt, medication certification and SMR's medication assistance protocols, training on individual consumer needs, and the College of Direct Supports.

Incident Management

Incidents involving individuals receiving Community Supports are handled in the same manner as those for consumers receiving other services from Spring Meadow Resources. Staff document any unusual consumer incidents on the State of Montana Incident Report Form. Staff also utilize the option Medication Error Reporting Form to report medication errors.

Documented incidents are reviewed weekly at an Incident Management Committee meeting which typically includes the Incident Management Coordinator who is also the Supported Living Coordinator, Group Home Coordinator, Operations Manager, Health Specialist, Quality Assurance/Training Coordinator, and Assistant Director of Spring Meadow Resources. Also in attendance are the DDP Quality Improvement Specialist and a Targeted Case Management representative. Minutes are recorded for each meeting and are available at Spring Meadow Resources.

SMR has several core staff trained to investigate critical incidents. Though the Incident Management Coordinator completes most of the investigations, the Health Specialist is typically assigned any medically related incidents. The Quality Assurance/Training Coordinator has also conducted investigations, and both the Group Home Coordinator and Operations Manager are trained investigators.

Of the two individuals currently receiving Community Supports from Spring Meadow Resources, neither has experienced a reportable or critical incident for which staff submitted an Incident Report for several years.

TRANSPORTATION

Accomplishments:

As is noted earlier in this report, Spring Meadow Resources maintains a fleet of vehicles from passenger cars to large vans capable of transporting 15 individuals, or individuals using wheelchairs. Vehicles are available at CAP, Spring Meadow Resources' day program; each of the residential facilities; and in the Supported Living program.

Consumers are provided transportation to leisure/recreation/social opportunities, medical appointments, and to attend to personal needs. Some individuals also receive transportation to and from work or day services, depending on geographic location and individualized needs.

Periodically it is necessary for staff to utilize their own personal vehicles to transport consumers. In order for a vehicle to be eligible for consumer transportation use the employee must first provide verification of auto liability insurance. In addition, Spring Meadow Resources maintains

additional auto insurance coverage in compliance with their contract with the Developmental Disabilities Program.

CASE MANAGEMENT

Spring Meadow Resources does not provide case management services in the State of Montana.

CONCLUSION

Findings Closed:

As is noted earlier, Spring Meadow Resources did have an occasion in which staff who were not properly certified were assisting individuals with their medications (QAOS #1). The administration of Spring Meadow Resources responded quickly and comprehensively in creating and implementing practices to assure this will not happen in the future. No further instances have been discovered.

A Quality Assurance Observation Sheet (QAOS #3) was also issued when it was discovered that the abuse reporting policy of Spring Meadow Resources did not comply with the Administrative Rules of Montana. Spring Meadow Resources has since revised their reporting policy and this policy has been approved by the Board of Directors of Spring Meadow Resources.

Findings Open:

Quality Assurance Observation Sheet #2 was issued due to a consumer receiving Supported Living services requiring training to maximize independence. Though this issue was addressed in the individual's Personal Support Plan, no follow-up on the QAOS sheet was provided by Spring Meadow Resources. This will be required to close the finding.

Quality Assurance Observation Sheet #3, which was also issued as a routine part of quality assurance activities addressed the reporting policy of Spring Meadow Resources. Though SMR has revised the policy, the QAOS sheet remains open due to Spring Meadow Resources not submitting a plan or verification of staff training on the policy revision. It was also evident in completing staff interviews that staff still believe it is mandatory to notify a supervisor, rather than APS when they witness or suspect abuse, neglect, or exploitation. This QAOS sheet will be closed when Spring Meadow Resources provides verification that staff have received training in the policy revision.

QAOS #A was issued based on discovery of client rights violations while reading entries involving one consumer in a community home staff log. It will be closed when SMR provides verification that staff have been trained on client rights.

Finally, QAOS #B is the result of an incident involving a consumer which met the definition of a "reportable incident." This means Spring Meadow Resources was required to notify the Guardian, Case Manager, and Quality Improvement Specialist of the incident. This was not done according to the DDP Incident Management Policy. Additionally, this incident was elevated to "Critical" in accordance with the DDP Incident Management Policy; however, to date

no investigative summary has been submitted to DDP. The Quality Improvement Specialist will offer training to members of the Incident Management Committee, and the QAOS will be closed when SMR provides verification that additional training regarding “Reportable” and “Critical” incidents is provided to staff, and submits a Critical Incident Investigation Final Report.

Closing comments:

The State of Montana is in the process of transitioning to a “fee for service” structure. Spring Meadow Resources will be entering this new system on July 1, 2008. The Chief Financial Officer of SMR has participated in a statewide committee to facilitate this transition. In preparation for this new structure, Spring Meadow Resources has also been revising documentation practices of services provided.

The State of Montana has also implemented a new individual plan of care, the Personal Support Plan. The PSP is a person-centered plan to address the health and safety needs, and dreams or visions of individuals receiving services through the Developmental Disabilities Program. Several of the management staff of Spring Meadow Resources have attended PSP training, are participating in the development of individual Personal Support Plans, and are assisting staff in transitioning to this new service model.

Spring Meadow Resources has continued to stay abreast of the many changes taking place within the services of the Developmental Disabilities Program. Given this, it is anticipated that Spring Meadow Resources will continue to improve the quality of services provided to individuals with developmental disabilities as we move into a new era of service delivery in the State of Montana.

Respectfully submitted by,



Catherine A. Murphy
Quality Improvement Specialist