The Collaborator

The Collaborator is the quarterly newsletter for the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities (NDCPD). NDCPD is a University of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities in Education, Research, and Services at Minot State University. It is part of a network of similar programs at universities throughout the United States.

Our mission...
To provide leadership and innovation that advances the state-of-the-art and empower people with disabilities to challenge expectations, achieve personal goals and be included in all aspects of community life.

Vision Statement...
We believe that people with disabilities have the same rights as all citizens. We believe that people with disabilities who receive publicly funded services have the right to expect that those services appropriately promote their independence, productivity, integration and inclusion. Furthermore, we believe that the public expects that these services will be provided in an effective manner.

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Part 1: At-A-Glance: The Final Ticket to Work Regulations

By Tom Alexander, Project Director, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant

Under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, the Social Security Administration (SSA) was directed to create a new system of employment services for Social Security beneficiaries. The Ticket to Work Program. The ultimate goal of this Program was to double the number of Social Security beneficiaries leaving the roles due to employment. Recognizing this, SSA proposed new regulations governing the Ticket to Work Program and the final regulations were published in the Federal Register on May 20, 2008. They became effective July 21, 2008. The full text of the new regulations is available at http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-10879.pdf.

This Part 1: At-A-Glance brief summarizes the key changes SSA made through the new regulations. With these changes, SSA has created a payment system based on the attainment of increasing levels of employment over time that is attractive enough to entice ENs to participate. And, SSA has modified the interaction of the VR cost reimbursement system with the Ticket system to encourage collaboration among state VR agencies and private ENs.

I would strongly encourage interested readers to go the Amendment to the Ticket To Work and Self-Sufficency Program: Final Rule located at http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-10879.pdf.

In the next Collaborator newsletter I will highlight the following changes:

- Changes to Eligibility of Beneficiaries and Employment Networks;
- Changes to the Payment System;
- Changes to state Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Relationship with the Ticket to Work Program; and
- Changes to the Timely progress Requirements.

The North Dakota Medicaid Infrastructure Grant will be partnering with Social Security Administration Ticket Team, North Dakota Rehabilitation Consulting and Services and Rehabilitation Services for host two special events to discuss the new Ticket to Work Regulations. First, we will host a state-wide conference call with the Social Security Administrations Ticket Team on January 29, 2009, 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 CDT. Secondly, we will host an in-person day training with the team in the Spring/Summer of 2009.

Anyone interested in participating in this training, please contact Tom Alexander at tom.alexander@minotstateu.edu or 800-233-1737.

Health Promotion Technical Assistance Available

By Kari Arrayan, Project Director, ND Disability Health Project

The ND Disability Health Project can provide training and technical assistance that is tailored to a specific organization or group. The focus of this project is primarily on the promotion of health and wellness for people with disabilities, and prevention of secondary conditions associated with disabilities. However, technical assistance can also include other areas such as disability-specific issues, adaptations, accessibility, and disability awareness. Methods of assistance can include in-service training (on-site or technology based), curriculum/material review and recommendations for accessibility, or phone consultation.

To request technical assistance visit our website at www.ndcopd.org/health and click on 'technical assistance' or call Kari Arrayan, Program Director at 1-800-333-1737 or 701-858-3048. This service is provided free of charge. The ND Disability Health Project, implemented through NDCPD, is funded through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

GPAST Pilot Program Underway

By Barb Johnson, GPAST Family Support Specialist

The Great Plains Autism Spectrum Disorder Treatment program (GPAST) is underway with five pilot families participating in research that will help North Dakota better understand the needs of families raising children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Families will be piloting the effectiveness of multiple forms of technology including software programs, Flip cameras, and web-based training and consultations. Pilot families are also measuring their levels of stress and the financial impact of autism during the project year.

GPAST will also deliver community-based screening and diagnostic clinics in western North Dakota using an interdisciplinary approach and utilizing distance technology to link various professionals with families in their community setting. For more information, log onto www.ndgpd.org/autism.

New Staff

Kora Dockter joins NDCPD as the project director for the North Dakota Integrated Services (NIDS) project. She is a registered nurse and previously worked with the Children’s Special Health Services Division of the ND Dept. of Health and the Medical Home workgroup before joining NDCPD. Kora is a ND native and proud grandmother of Caleb and Jaci.

Amy Lopez works for the Great Plains Autism Spectrum Treatment program (GPAST) as an Autism Research Professional and will be teaching in the Psychology department this spring as adjunct faculty for Minot State University. She received her master’s in Clinical Psychology from Utrecht University in the Netherlands. She recently moved to Minot with her husband who is a B-52 pilot with the United States Air Force.

Hardik Mody is a recent graduate of Minot State University’s master’s program in Special Education in Deaf Education and has worked as a Special Educator for two years prior to coming to NDCPD. He joins NDCPD as an Early Interventionist for the Minot Infant Development Program.

ND I Can Do It! You Can Do It!

By Kylene Kraft, Project Director, ND I Can Do It!, You Can Do It Program

The New Year brings a time when many of us think about becoming healthier. This year, several children and youth with disabilities in the Minot area will have an excellent opportunity to participate in a program that will encourage regular physical activity and good nutrition. NDCPD received a grant from New Editions Consulting Inc. and the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to implement the I Can Do It, You Can Do It (ICDI) program. ICDI program is a national program by the DHHS, Office on Disability. The Program encourages a one-on-one mentoring relationship over an eight-week period between a trained mentor, who is an adult 18 years or older and who may or may not have a disability, and a “mentee” - a youth with a disability to (1) increase the knowledge of participating youth about the value of physical activity and good nutrition; (2) increase the knowledge of participating youth about physical activities they can do and how to make better nutritional choices; and (3) increase their physical activity and change their eating habits to reflect better nutrition choices.

NDCPD will collaborate with various departments at Minot State University (e.g., Teacher Ed, Special Ed, Physical Education and Human Performance, Communication Disorders, Nursing, Social Work, campus fitness center) and area fitness centers and health centers to recruit mentors. Mentors will be people over the age of 18 who have a genuine interest in supporting others to achieve fitness and wellness goals. NDCPD will also work together with the Minot Public Schools and Souris Valley Special Services to recruit mentees. Mentees recruited will be youth with disabilities, ages 6-21.

If you are interested in participating in this project or have any questions, please contact Kylene Kraft at 701.858.4365 or by email kylene.kraft@minotstateu.edu.

Carroll Announced as New Associate Director at NDCPD

NDCPD’s Executive Director, Dr. Brent Alvirk, announced Dr. Christy Jackson Carroll as the new Associate Director of Development. Dr. Alvirk said, “We are extremely pleased to have Dr. Carroll join NDCPD. She has experience and credentials that will allow NDCPD to progress in our acquisition of external funds. In addition, Dr. Carroll will join our center management team in setting the future for NDCPD.”

Dr. Carroll came all the way from Huntsville, Alabama to join the faculty and staff of NDCPD in September and will also serve as the Research Core Coordinator. Her areas of interest lie in traumatic brain injury and community support services for the military. Dr. Carroll brings with her 25 years of experience in Special Education and Psychology. She holds a PhD in Education from University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa with specializations Technology, Test Assessment, and Consultations. She recently moved to Minot with her husband who is a B-52 pilot with the United States Air Force.

Amy Lopez works for the Great Plains Autism Spectrum Treatment program (GPAST) as an Autism Research Professional and will be teaching in the Psychology department this spring as adjunct faculty for Minot State University. She received her master's in Clinical Psychology from Utrecht University in the Netherlands. She recently moved to Minot with her husband who is a B-52 pilot with the United States Air Force.

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New Grant Awards

ND I Can Do It! You Can Do It!

Funding Agency: New Additions Consultant, Inc. through a contract with US Dept of Health & Human Services

Grant Type: Public Service

Funding Amount: $15,000

MSU Disability Awareness Student Campaign

Funding Agency: Minot State University Diversity Committee

Grant Type: Public Service

Funding Amount: $750

Mini Grants (continued from page 1)

• What are the important research questions in my field?
• What areas need further exploration?
• Could my study fill a gap? Lead to greater understanding?
• Has a great deal of research already been conducted in this topic area?
• Has this study been done before? If so, is there room for improvement?
• Is the timing right for this question to be answered? Is it a hot topic, or is it becoming obsolete?
• Would funding sources be interested?
• If you are proposing a service program, is the target community interested?
• Most importantly, will my study have a significant impact on the field?

In addition, all mini-grant award seekers are required to prepare a paper summarizing their research results that will be included in the “2008-09 NDCPD Research Proceedings.” The proceedings will be published by the Office of the Associate Director of Development and distributed to various funding agencies.
Director’s Message: The Importance of Diversity in our Field

By Brent A. Askvig, Ph.D. NDCPD Executive Director

Diversity is often defined as “identifiable difference.” When same characteristics is used to differentiate one person from another, we have diversity. There are many possible factors which might be used to separate one person from another. It may be language, mobility, hair color, height, or any of innumerable characteristics. While the labeling process to identify differences may not always be viewed positively, I believe it is good that we acknowledge difference.

The reason I say this is good is perspective. When people are different, they often bring a variety of outlooks to situations and issues. Obviously, we’ve seen this in the recent national political discussions, but we also see it in our daily work. University Centers of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) value diversity and varied perspectives. Different opinions can be a healthy way to more fully discuss all aspects of an issue. When done in respectful and collegial ways, these different opinions and outlooks allow us to examine unique viewpoints of problems and solutions. Thus with diversity comes a greater understanding.

Over the past several months, NDCPD has become more diverse UCEDD. This has been an exciting time for us and allowed us to grow. We have staff from different countries, which helps us better understand systems and services for those persons we serve. We have staff with differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds, which makes us understand various value systems. We have staff that have varying languages, which makes us more clearly describe our views and ideas. And we have staff that have varying abilities, which makes us better understand what is really important.

The growth in acknowledging and understanding varied perspectives has been tremendous. I see this leading us closer to the goal of Excellence. And I believe this will allow us to more completely tackle the complex issues we face in the disability field. But challenges still remain. Diversity demands that we take time. Diversity demands that we respect. These things always have and will always challenge us, but I see that the result will be better.

So as we go forward toward a new year and new challenges in our state and our country, and as we continue our work with and for persons with disabilities, embrace diversity. Look for diversity. Acknowledge diversity, and draw on diversity. Then continue to do the good work our field demands.

NDCPD Staff Recognized

Mary Mercer, Community Training Core Coordinator for NDCPD’s core grant was elected as Chair of the National Community Education Director’s Council (NCEDC). NDCED is one of five councils within the Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD). As chair Ms. Mercer will also serve as an AUCD board member. Prior to her nomination, Ms. Mercer served as Vice Chair of NCEDC for three years. As vice-chair she was a member of the NCEDC steering committee and chaired the AUCD Training Symposium planning committee in 2008.

As a University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), one of NDCPD’s core functions is to offer community service activities that include community education and technical assistance for and with individuals with developmental disabilities, their family members, professionals, paraprofessionals, students and volunteers. The NCEDC:

- Serves as a focus and forum for the identification and discussion of issues of community education and technical assistance.
- Functions as a representative voice of community education interests and concerns within the UCEDD network.
- Influences the development and implementation of national community education policies and initiatives.
- Shares resources and exemplary community education programs developed and used by UCEDDs across the nation.

Tom Alexander, Project Director and Amy Armstrong, Project Coordinator for the Medicare Infrastructure Grant at NDCPD were elected to positions on the North Dakota Disability Advocacy Consortium (NDDAC) Executive Board. Mr. Alexander was elected as the treasurer and Ms. Armstrong as secretary. NDDAC is a consortium of organizations that work together to advocate and educate to affect positive change for people with disabilities. The NDDAC advocates for public policy to ensure that people with disabilities have the support and services they need to be productive and independent. Membership is open to all organizations that have advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities as a primary focus of their mission and supports the mission and the activities of the NDDAC.

Mary Mercer, new Chair of National Community Education Directors Council.

Tom Alexander, new Treasurer of North Dakota Disability Advocacy Consortium.

Amy Armstrong, new Secretary of North Dakota Disability Advocacy Consortium.

For additional copies of the Collaborator contact Cynthia Salazar at 1-800-233-1737, or email @Cynthia.salazar@minnottstateu.edu

Upcoming Conferences & Training Events

Upcoming CD/Webcasts

What is the Secondary General Education Teacher’s Role in the Transition IEP Planning Process? Presenters: From the North Dakota Education Association and the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction Date: March 24, 2009 Time: 1:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M. Fee: $30.00 per site

Cognitive Skills for Challenging Behaviors Presenters: Karen Eden Data: April 15, 2009 Time: 2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M. Fee: $30.00 per site

For more information contact: Vicki Brabandt @ 1-800-233-1737 or email @vicki.brabandt@minnottstateu.edu

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