

Services and Strategies that Sustain Employment 2009 MIG/DMIE Summit

On April 28-30, 2009, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services hosted the second annual MIG/DMIE Employment Summit in San Francisco, California. The theme of the 2009 Summit was *Services and Strategies That Sustain Employment*. Like the previous year's event in New Orleans, *Reducing Barriers by Melding Data and Policy*, the Employment Summit was an opportunity for grantees to come together and share information on successful practices within their states that promote competitive employment for people with disabilities. Grantees had the opportunity to submit original abstracts for individual, panel or poster presentations on evidence-based practices in several areas, including benefits counseling and work incentives, the Medicaid Buy-In, supported employment, education and training, outreach, peer support, and personal assistance services. Of special interest to CMS this year were initiatives targeted to transition-age youth or persons with mental illness.

Over 190 people participated in the Summit, including representatives from all 42 MIG states and four DMIE states. Attendees included CMS Central and Regional Office staff; federal partners from the Social Security Administration, Department of Labor, and Government Accountability Office; representatives from both national Technical Assistance centers (the National Consortium for Health Systems Development and the Center for Workers with Disabilities); and staff from CMS contractors Mathematica Policy Research and Ascillon Corporation. Attendance surpassed the 2008 Summit and exceeded initial projections for 2009.

The 2009 Summit was a success; 100% of the completed participant evaluations rated the conference as good, very good or excellent. Attendees positively assessed the keynote address, individual

speakers and presentations, opportunities for networking with colleagues, and relevance of the subject matter to the states' current work and research activities.

CMS hopes that grantees will be able to use the material presented at the Summit to further the programmatic goals of the MIG program. Medicaid Infrastructure Grants help states remove barriers to employment for people with disabilities in a variety of ways, including implementing Medicaid Buy-In programs; enhancing personal assistance, supported employment, and peer support services; and forming linkages between Medicaid and non-Medicaid programs that make them interact more effectively. The intent is for states to create lasting, sustainable changes in their systems of services and supports for people with disabilities. Congress authorized funding for the MIG program in 1999, for 11 years. Prior to 2008, CMS conducted shorter training sessions with MIG grantees during other CMS meetings, but as the program matured it became necessary to have an employment-specific conference that featured more targeted information.

During the Summit states had the opportunity to provide feedback to the federal agencies on policies and regulations that hinder employment for people with disabilities and to present recommendations for reform, particularly in the areas of Medicaid Buy-In eligibility, Medicaid services that support employment, and coordination of Medicaid with other federal and state services.

As in 2008 and 2009, Ascillon will assist CMS to plan and execute the 2010 Employment Summit. Ascillon performs these activities under its contract with CMS for Performance Reporting and Administrative Support for the CMS Medicaid Grant Initiatives. Ascillon is responsible for handling the conference

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logistics, including selecting and contracting with an appropriate hotel; maintaining a Summit website; processing registrations; making arrangements for meeting rooms, audiovisual equipment and meals; producing and shipping print materials; managing all onsite activities; and analyzing participant evaluations.

For more information on the 2010 Summit as it develops, please visit <http://taformfp.com/TAforMFP/mighome.aspx>.

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