

## NORTHCARE NETWORK

**POLICY TITLE:** Consumer Employment Policy      **REVISED/REVIEWED:** 03/18/03;  
**POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE:** June 26, 2002      10/13/04; 12/16/04 (MS);  
**BOARD ADOPTED:** 6-26-02      4-28-06  
**BOARD APPROVED REVISIONS:** 8/27/03; 5/3/06

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### PURPOSE

To ensure that consumers throughout the NorthCare Network service area have opportunities to learn and practice vocational skills, and to ensure there are ample employment opportunities for those individuals who identify a vocational or prevocational outcome during the person-centered planning process.

### POLICY

- NorthCare shall compile an ongoing list of all employment opportunities that have been utilized in the region. This shall include recognition of employers who have been involved in support of employment for people with disabilities. These resources shall be posted on NorthCare's website and updated as there are changes in employer status or at least annually.
- Regular input via focus groups and/or Consumer Advisory Councils shall be sought and documented re: consumer recommendations and needs for employment opportunities and/or services.
- Each affiliate within the NorthCare Network is expected to review affirmative action policies and practices. This should also include review of subcontract language re: expectations for consumer employment.
- Employers who provide vocational experiences for consumers are encouraged to follow established employment guidelines where consumers are employed. *The Americans Disabilities Act (particularly Title I and Title II) will be the standard used to assure individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity for employment.* Performance evaluations, promotions and pay raises should be provided commensurate with performance and according to company policy and procedure. Employers must not apply these policies differentially for consumer-employees.
- Personnel and Human Resource departments of all CMHSP's need to be involved in promoting the CMHSP system as being a community leader in the employment of individuals with disabilities and/or mental illness. Any job postings within the CMHSP system shall be distributed to agency Employment Specialists and/or Supported Employment staff. In addition, agency job postings shall also be posted on each CMHSP website, in local newspapers, and in public areas of the CMHSP offices and program sites (e.g., drop-in centers). Employment staff shall regularly review all job postings available with consideration of the match between job requirements and consumers' qualifications and interests, and assist consumers in the application process as needed. Employment Specialists at each CMHSP shall monitor this process and

forward summary data to NorthCare on an annual basis for review by NorthCare's Consumer Employment Committee.

- The NorthCare Consumer Employment Committee will meet as necessary or at least annually to review employment services data and monitor policy implementation.
- Each NorthCare affiliate shall maintain a standardized screening protocol for consumers requesting access to the continuum of vocational services. The essential elements that should be included in an effective screening process are outlined as follows, and each affiliate is expected to establish policies and procedures that are consistent with these guidelines. This process should reflect a consumer-driven, single-point of entry model for all vocational services provided within the NorthCare network.

#### Essential Elements

- A team process shall be established within each CMHSP for regular review of all requests for vocational services. Membership of this review team should include: agency employment specialist(s), clinical specialists familiar with developmental disabilities and/or mental illness, and a representative from Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). In areas where vocational services are primarily delivered by a contractual entity, a member or members of the providing agency should also be included. It is also essential that both the consumer and case manager are active participants in the employment screening process.
- For each individual consumer request, the referring clinician, case manager, or supports coordinator, together with the consumer, must be an integral part of the referral and screening process. When a desire for employment is identified during the person-centered planning process the consumer, together with the assigned case manager or supports coordinator, completes an application/referral form for vocational services. This application is then forwarded to the Employment Specialist at the CMHSP, who schedules a time for review and informs the consumer and/or guardian and referring clinician when and where this meeting will be held. The consumer's application materials and the Individual Plan of Service are then forwarded to all members of the team who will be participating in the review process.
- At the review team meeting, the consumer and referring clinician may provide additional information re: consumer skills, strengths, and aspirations. Team members should ask questions that relate to the completed application and examination of consumer-identified outcomes. The team shall function on a 'think tank' model, generating ideas, options and plans for vocational services. The goal of this review process is to develop an acceptable plan for attaining employment.
- Inquiries must be made re: any legal history that may warrant special consideration (i.e., felony conviction). Pre-vocational, extended assessment and/or additional clinical services may be recommended prior to the initiation of employment services.

- Funding for vocational services is also addressed at this meeting. Entry and access to CMHSP funded work programs, Michigan Rehabilitation Services or other local community resources should be decisions supported by all team members.
- A vocational plan and/or referral recommendations are developed with the consumer and csm/sc. Plans of actions inclusive of time frames and person responsible should be in place and authorized at the close of the meeting. Vocational services for any consumer shall not be provided or reimbursed without prior authorization from the review team.
- The referring clinician is responsible for amending the IPOS with the consumer to incorporate the agreed upon vocational plan or other recommendations. The vocational plan and progress toward identified vocational outcomes should be reviewed by the team on a quarterly basis, with the IPOS updated accordingly.
- Data resulting from the Employment Screening process shall be compiled by fiscal quarter and submitted to NorthCare for annual review by the Consumer Employment Committee.

#### Employment Services Data

- An ongoing database of consumer employment services to will be established and maintained by NorthCare UM/QI staff. Regional data for supported employment services (# of consumers and # hours reported) is available via regional data warehouse. Employment Specialists will also monitor consumers placed in various employment programs and settings in the categories of: competitive independent employment, supported individual employment, enclaves, mobile crews, and organizational employment. This data shall be compiled quarterly and forwarded to NorthCare for review by the Consumer Employment Committee. It is expected that within the near future, summary data for all employment services will be available electronically.
- Summary data re: number of consumers referred to internal CMHSP Personnel/HR departments, number obtaining interviews, and the number of consumers placed in regular job positions shall be forwarded to NorthCare on an annual basis, and reviewed by NorthCare's Consumer Employment Committee.
- Data resulting from the Employment Screening process shall be tracked re: number of consumers screened and placed in various employment settings, and also those consumers referred to alternative, prerequisite services (e.g., skill development or employment preparation activities).

#### Special Considerations

NorthCare recognizes the importance of meaningful employment in the overall rehabilitation and recovery of **all** individuals involved in mental health treatment. Some consumers may have legal histories (i.e., felony conviction) that require special consideration for employment services. Although these individuals may participate in a CMHSP (provided or contractual) work place setting or program, they are NOT considered CMHSP employees under the governance of

Personnel Policies and Procedures. Each CMHSP should have a procedure for addressing services to convicted felons who request vocational services during the person-centered planning process. These individuals present a unique challenge to address liability issues and ensure safeguards for other consumers, staff, and community members. Recommendations for vocational skill development, work in certain settings or with certain populations may be appropriate. It is not NorthCare's intent to restrict or limit the employment opportunities available for convicted felons, but to recognize the special considerations that may be warranted under these circumstances.

## REFERENCES

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) [www.ADA.gov](http://www.ADA.gov)