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November 5, 2009

Carol Olson
Executive Director
Department of Human Services
600 E Boulevard
Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Ms. Olson,

The following points represent the concerns and issues facing the North Dakota Association of Community Providers. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input.

1. We appreciate the Department of Human Services working with DD Providers to support wage increases for providers, during the 2009 Legislative session. While it is too early to have definitive data, we anticipate this will help with staff recruitment and retention. We encourage the same process in the next biennium's planning to maintain the labor pool and quality of services.
2. We have significant concerns about impending labor force issues as the population in North Dakota ages and many of our long term staff reach retirement age.
3. We would encourage the Department to look at the pros and cons of other states experience in changing the reimbursement system. We want to be a part of the planning as changes in the reimbursement system are

- examined, to assure that positives in the current service delivery system aren't damaged and that the quality of services is maintained.
4. We appreciate that the Department has recognized the need for a full time DD director and encourage the Division to take a leadership role to in working with providers to downsize the institution and develop community capacity.
 5. We urge the DD Division to continue to meet regularly with providers to examine regulatory and fiscal issues.
 6. There continues to be a lack of community resources and supports for people with disabilities, including dental, psychiatric, psychological, and transportation services. This will negatively impact our ability to complete further deinstitutionalization. The service models we are currently using are 20-25 year old. We need to develop new, creative models of service delivery. We ask the Department to work with providers in implementing new models of service without current categorical limitations.
 7. We urge the Department to work with Providers in giving our Congressional delegates feedback regarding recent regulatory practices of CMS. We believe many of the practices that have stemmed from the deficit reduction act have a negative impact on quality and efficiency.

Sincerely,

Barbara Murry

cc: John Bole