

NOWAC Winter 2011

Newsletter

Northwest Ohio Waiver Administration Council

From the Desk of the Director

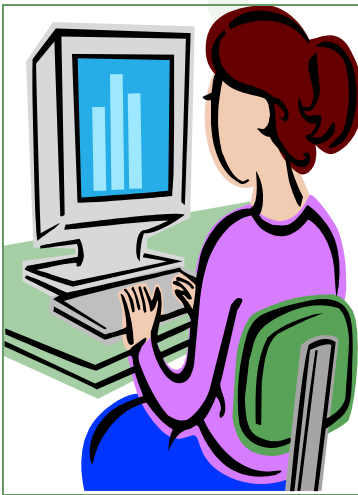
“Our County Board can depend on NOWAC to provide timely and quality responses to our needs”. “Provide expertise at a reasonable cost”. “Creative approaches and problem solving for Individual County board problems”. “Work with a variety of people”. These are a few of the statements written on yellow sticky notes that hang on my office desk. No, all of these statements were not written by me but as a result of our recent NOWAC Board Retreat. At the end of our retreat, Board members were asked to write their thoughts about NOWAC. Fortunately, the written responses were very positive and are a reminder that we are living our Mission Statement. (Below.)

This is especially important while both Governor Kasich and Director Martin have stressed sharing services to achieve greater efficiency.

The NOWAC Retreat, which was facilitated by Robin Elston of Elston Consulting, allowed us to think about other ways we might continue to share services and create efficiencies, as each county board continues to face economic challenges. What better way to meet those challenges than through the COG. The other positive outcome of the NOWAC retreat is that we have been able to lower costs and, in some cases, waived fees for some services. This is primarily due to NOWAC’s partici-

pation in the WAC/MAC program. Our persistence has finally paid off and our member county boards are benefiting financially from our belief that these funds would eventually be released.

Stayed tuned in 2012 as NOWAC pursues new ideas and services to our member County Boards, as we continue to share resources to achieve greater efficiency.



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- *To serve as an extension of county board to meet their identified needs.*
- *To assure quality services for persons with developmental disabilities thru cooperation with service providers.*
- *To offer enhance expertise to county boards thru sharing of resources to achieve greater efficiency.*

QA Corner: Annual Trends and Patterns Report Time

2011 is wrapping up and that means it’s time for the Annual Quality Assurance Trends and Patterns report to be compiled. This report is sent out to county boards so that they may see how their county compares with the other NOWAC counties as a whole. It also allows county boards to see areas where their providers may compare to one another and where their providers may need improvement. The report puts any recommendation

made into a category for either the county board or the provider. Categories include some recommendations that are only applicable to the provider or the county board: Required ISP Components/ISP Compliance (SSA only), ISP Matches Assessments (SSA only), and Service Documentation Compliance (Providers only). Other categories include recommendation that may be applicable to either the provider or the county board; those in-

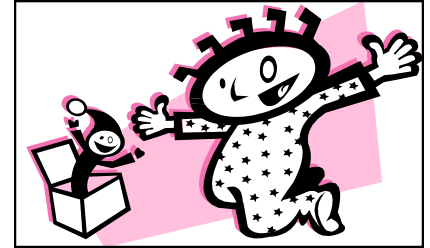
clude: Health, Safety, Additional Needs Identified, Satisfaction, Choices and Options, Personal Income, Service Monitoring, Skill Development, Behavior Support Plan, and UIR/MUI Reporting. Data provided in the report includes how many of a county board’s total recommendations were from which category- each category is given a percentage of the total. (Cont. on page 3...)

Private Eye; MUI

According to a recent Health and Safety Alert sent out by DODD, misappropriation, personal property theft, medication theft, and identity theft against individuals with disabilities has been on the rise in recent years. Theft of property continues to be a significant concern in Ohio. Based on (ITS: Incident Tracking System) data reviewed from calendar year 2010 the following are most likely to be stolen from an individual with a disability: cash (60%), Electronics (20%), Food/Groceries/Supplies (10%), Medications (5%), and Clothing/Other Items (5%).

One example of misappropriation/theft is the misuse of an individual's food stamp card. However- do you know how easy it is to track the use of a food stamp card? Providers are to keep receipts from all purchases with consumer funds. Those receipts have store location, date of purchase, time of purchase, even the register and cashier number. A history of food stamp card purchases is also kept by Job and Family Services if receipts are not available. Once the details of the purchase are

determined, staff schedules can be assessed to see which staff was working at that time, or store security cameras can be viewed to see who made the purchase. It would be wise for agencies and independent providers alike to develop or adopt a policy regarding the proper use of food stamp cards, such as who is authorized to use it (too many people may cause confusion or temptation, but too few people does not allow for checks and balances), how usage is to be documented (i.e. keeping a written log of purchases much like a checkbook ledger or a cash log), what it is to be used for and where it is to be kept. Remember also, that just because a family member is payee or oversees the food stamp card usage, does not mean that they are entitled to any benefits of that card. If an individual is living in his/her own home, the food purchased with that card should be used or consumed by them, in their home. Misappropriation of individual funds happens commonly in this way, and unfortunately it is most common around the stressful and costly holiday season.



Are you on the naughty or the nice list this year? :)

“Remember to be aware of your individual’s rights and other happenings in your workplace!”

How can we protect our individuals from these types of abuse?

1. Secure cash appropriately and reconcile accounts routinely.
2. Avoid allowing too many people access to personal and private information via the ISP. Have a shredder available to destroy personal information before it can be used for identity theft.
3. Keep an inventory and track larger, more expensive items like electronics and furniture to protect individual's personal property.
4. Store medications securely and safely. Monitor the distribution of medication via documentation like a MAR (Medication Administration Record). Avoid overstocking any medications.
5. Assist individuals to protect themselves by offering training and education and making sure they know how and to whom to report potential theft of any kind.
6. Provide training to all providers of service reminding them the importance of protecting the individual's finances and property. Providers should be reminded that theft from a disabled individual is elevated to a felony offense and can also result in placement on the State of Ohio's Abuser Registry list.

Remember to be aware of your individual's rights and other happenings in your workplace. We are all here to do our jobs and give our individuals the highest quality of life!



www.dodd.ohio.gov

Wonderful, Worthwhile Clicks on the New DODD Website

Publications: Did you know that many informative handbooks, memos, and articles can be found in this location?

Glossary: Ever get confused by acronyms, numbers, or other fancy words DODD or County Boards may use? Check out the glossary for a great overview, in alphabetical order!

FAQs: These Frequently Asked Questions range from website assistance, information on waiver services, and certification for providers and county board employees.

Changes at DODD

New and Improved Website!

www.dodd.ohio.gov is the new DODD website launched October 31st of this year. The home page hosts links along the top to navigate to categories such as "Contact Us" toll-free phone numbers, locations and addresses, employee search, etc., "Health and Safety" the newest health and safety alerts, "Medicaid" information about Medicaid waivers, Adult Day Services, waiting lists, hearings, etc., "Residential" developmental centers, facilities, supported living, and capital housing information, as well as Rules, Training, and the "Director's Corner" about the mission, vision, values, and goals of DODD. Running down the left side of the home page is a group of pictures to bring you to places such as the new DODD Gateway (described below), Video Tutorials where you can watch videos about how to use the new website, and Pipeline where you can access various editions of DODD's quarterly newsletter. On the top left corner of

every page you may navigate, you will either see the word 'home' or a picture of an arrow with the web address 'dodd.ohio.gov' inside that brings you back to the home page easily every time. Happy Browsing!

DODD Gateway: DODD Gateway is an internet portal designed by DODD to provide access to services and resources for individuals, families, guardians, county boards, and providers. To search the Gateway, click on the gold key labeled DODD Gateway on the left side of the screen. One can use DODD Gateway to obtain information about rules and policies, available services, and search for providers of services. Providers can use DODD Gateway to apply to become a provider, submit Medicaid (waiver) billing, and access DODD systems and reports. County Board employees use the Gateway on a daily basis for numerous applications and reports.



Going Paperless in Many Ways: Over the last several months, DODD has been slowly but surely trying to go "green" in numerous areas. Beginning with the way SSAs submit various forms using only web-based applications to the way providers submit billing documentation and pay for trainings. DODD is no longer taking "paper" payment from providers; it will be done by electronic money transfers only (credit or debit card, electronic check). As of October 15th, 2011, DODD no longer accepts paper applications for provider certification.

(Continued from: QA Corner on cover page)

(continued from page one) Also, for the providers, it includes how many of the providers' total recommendations were from which category- each category is given a percentage of the total. For example, providers may find that 35% of their recommendations were in the category of documentation, and only 3% of their recommendations were in the category of Service Monitoring.* A county board may find that their recommen-

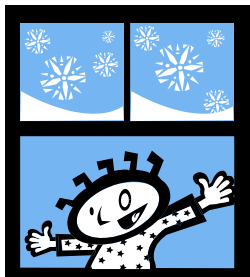
dations were evenly assigned by 20% each in the areas of Health, Required ISP Components, ISP Match Assessments, Personal Income, and Safety.* A county board could also discover through the annual report that counties as a whole are struggling in one particular area, but that county has few recommendations in that very category.

The Annual QA Trends and Patterns Report is a great compilation of information so that county boards can continue to make improvements to their services.

*Data used in this article is fictitious, used for example only, and not from any real annual report.

"The only blind person at Christmastime, is he who has not Christmas in his heart."

-Helen Keller



Will we get snow
on Christmas this
year?!

NOWAC Board Members

PRESIDENT: BETH FRIESS, Fulton County

VICE PRESIDENT: JAMES STRIPE, Van Wert County

SECRETARY: BRUCE ABELL, Williams County

FISCAL OFFICER: RICK EDMONDS, Defiance County

DOUG MCVEY, Paulding County

MELINDA SLUSSER, Henry County



Bridges to Transition

The Bridges to Transition program was designed to provide the training and resources needed to ensure a successful transition from school to work for individuals with developmental disabilities ages 16-22. This opportunity is a partnership between the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC), Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB), Defiance County Board of Developmental Disabilities (DCBDD), school districts, employers, students and their families. The overall purpose of this partnership is to provide a successful transition from school to work with the appropriate supports in place to achieve employment goals.

To be eligible for this program, the youth must be enrolled in Defiance County School District (Ayersville, Central Local, Defiance City, Hicksville, or Northeastern Local) and must meet the eligibility requirements of the Defiance County Board of Developmental Disabilities. The disability must substantially interfere with employment, and the individual needs to be able to benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome. The RSC Coordinator will make the final eligibility determination.

Services of this program include education for individuals and families about training and employment options, developing and monitoring the progress of a plan that fits the individual's employment needs, coordinating services with the school system for an easy transition from school into the workforce upon graduation, providing the individual with skills necessary to succeed in the workplace (could be grooming/hygiene, work attitudes, attendance), and linking individuals to the appropriate services such as job shadowing, job coaching, job placement, and personal adjustment in the workplace.

Chris Palmer MSW, LSW, Vocational Rehabilitation Coordinator, is heading up this program that boasts 11 current participants and 16 total participants anticipated in the next few months. Chris states that they are already seeing the benefits as two individuals set to graduate this spring already have stable jobs in the community! For more information, Chris may be contacted by phone at 419.782.0858 or by email at chris.palmer@rsc.ohio.gov

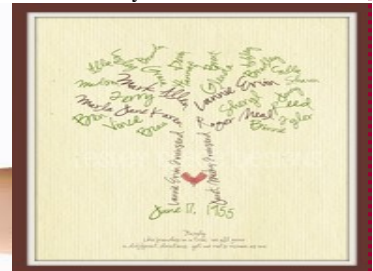
"We are already seeing the benefits [of this program] as two individuals set to graduate this spring already have stable jobs in the community!"

-Chris Palmer

Unique or Homemade Gifts

Christmas is a time of gift-giving, and I wanted to share some unique gifts I've come across this season that are sure to give you a laugh. Also, homemade gifts are always affordable and meaningful. Never underestimate the power of a homemade gift! (A simple internet search for the following keywords should direct you to more information on each gift below.)

- Giant Gummy Bear (Unique)
- Mason Jar Bath Scrub (Homemade)
- Personalized Storybook (Unique)
- Peppermint Bark (Homemade)
- Family Tree Wall Art (Unique and Homemade)
- Cookie or Bread Jar Mixes (Homemade)
- Character Chia Pet: Obama, Spongebob, Shrek (Unique)
- Fleece Blanket or Scarf (Homemade)
- Word Search Puzzle Shower Curtain (Unique)
- Puppy Chow or Chex Mix in Decorative Tin (Homemade)
- Eggnog Soap (Unique)



In the Spotlight: Melinda Slusser (excerpts taken from *The Crescent News, Defiance*— used with permission— writer: Angela Assaf)

Melinda Slusser, the new superintendent of Henry County Board of Developmental Disabilities, HOPE Services, has always been aware of the importance of giving back to the community where she lives and works. She says, initially she thought that she would be a school teacher and then looked toward being a licensed counselor. Once she worked in the field of serving people with disabilities, she was hooked, she says. Building relationships with people and making a difference every day is what has kept her going. “I like being a part of the lives of those we serve and I like working in a system that makes decisions based upon the feedback and input of the individuals we serve and their families.”

Slusser found out about her new position from Dan Ohler, executive director of Ohio Association of County Boards serving people with Developmental Disabilities. She recalls, he contacted her to see if she would be interested in a shared position since Henry County was looking for a superintendent. Since this kind of arrangement had worked well in other counties, Oh-

ler thought it might work for Ottawa and Henry county to share a superintendent.”

In recent times, HOPE Services, like other programs across Ohio, has experienced the loss of state and federal funding. “We will need to strike out a plan to live within our budget while providing excellent services and ensuring health and safety,” explains Slusser. She also says that HOPE needs to do a better job of “telling its story” to the community so there is a much greater awareness about the agency. “HOPE provides services in a variety of settings through retirement age and this doesn’t appear to be well known.”

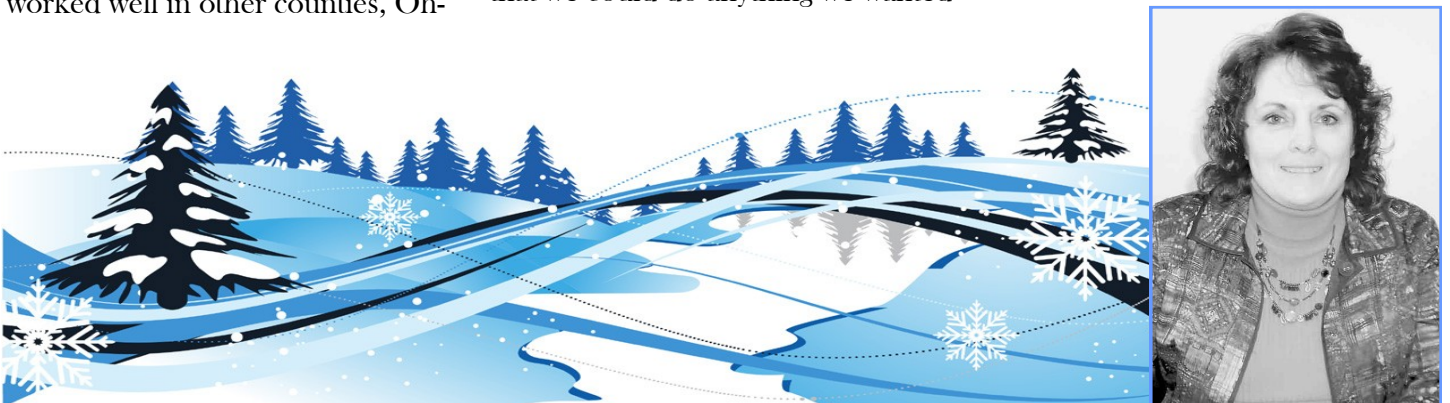
Slusser grew up a “country girl” near Vaughnsville in Putnam County. The youngest of four children, her father was a farmer and her mother worked in the school cafeteria along with being a full-time homemaker. She recalls, “We never went hungry, but I wore a lot of hand-me-downs from my older sister.”

“There were never any limits based on my being a woman or us being a farm family. My parents always taught that we could do anything we wanted

if we were willing to work hard and stay focused.”

...Slusser always wanted to go to college and was the only one in her family to do so. After graduating from Bowling Green State University with her bachelor’s degree in music education, she taught for a year at Bedford Public Schools in Michigan. She began working for the Wood County Board of DD immediately after that, and then went on to obtain her master’s degree and also her law degree while going to school part time and working full time. She held a variety of positions from direct service to middle and upper management at Wood Lane and worked there for more than 24 years.

Slusser has been involved with Zonta International for quite some time and had been active with the Bowling Green chapter for a number of years. She is also active in the state and local bar associations, as well. To melt away stress, she plays piano and bikes (both mountain and road) and takes every opportunity to get outdoors.





NOWAC

For ALL Your
Certification & Training Needs!

www.nowac.com

NOWAC courses have been approved for Ohio Department of DD continuing professional development credits or seminars

Available by Correspondence

30 hour Seminars/College Credit

- Orientation Training–For SSA, Adult Services, EI & Investigative Agents
 - Principles of Self–Determination Seminar
 - Intro to DD Seminar
 - Principles of Habilitation
 - Principles of Behavior Support
- College Credit in partnership with Northwest State Community College

Trainings

- Major Unusual Incidents–2 hours
- Individual Rights–2 hours
- Overview of Serving Individuals with DD, Basic Principles & Requirements of Providing Home & Community Based Services (HBCS) Waiver Services–2 hours
- Blood Borne Pathogens & Universal Precautions–2 hours
- Provider Certification Rule Training– 8 hours
- Community Connections–2 hours

Classroom Training Courses

- Provider Certification Rule Training–8 hours
- Medication Administration Training–14 hours
- Medication Administration Renewal Training–2 hours
- TEAM Training–“Together Everyone Achieves More”–8 hours

Visit our Website: www.nowac.com for additional information and online registration & payment
Please contact us about holding group trainings at your location

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NOWAC: Northwest Ohio Waiver Administration Council

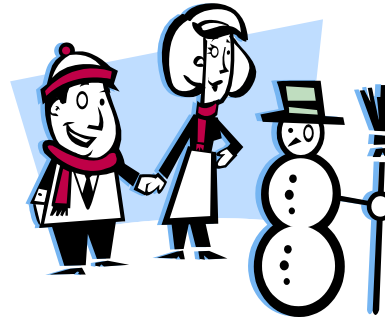


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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.NOWAC.COM**



“There must have been some magic in the old silk hat they found... for when they placed it on his head, he began to dance around!”

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*denotes contracted