

REAL CHOICE SYSTEMS CHANGE GRANT

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) awarded New York State a \$1.3 million Real Choice Systems Change Grant. Real Choice Systems Change Grant monies were awarded to states to make enduring changes to their long term care systems. Real Choice Systems Change Grant monies will be used here in New York to support State efforts to assure that individuals receive services in the most appropriate setting to their needs.

The New York State Department of Health in partnership with the New York State Office for the Aging issued a Request for Applications (RFA) to all local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), Departments of Social Services (LDSS) and Independent Living Centers throughout the state. The RFA solicited proposals to develop long term care points of entry from consortia of local and/or regional long term care stakeholders who are committed to working together to provide consumers, caregivers and professionals, regardless of payer source, with:

- Comprehensive and unbiased information on all available long term care services and programs
- Assistance in obtaining needed services; and;
- Advocacy services when service needs are not being appropriately met

Demonstration proposals that did not include AAAs and LDSSs as direct consortium members were required to include appropriate letter(s) of support from those agencies, for the areas being served in the proposal, in order to be considered for Demonstration funding. AAAs and LDSSs were encouraged to apply directly as a member of a consortiums' application. Those that chose not to participate directly were encouraged to provide a letter of support, if they so desired, to enable other applicants applying for Demonstration funding. The New York State Office for the Aging and the New York State Department of Health received several applications that demonstrated collaboration among local and regional long term care stakeholders to form consortiums designed to enable Real Choice Systems Change Grant goals and activities.

The following pages contain summaries of the 5 Demonstration projects tentatively selected to be funded with New York State's Real Choice Systems Change grant award for a two-year period. Staff from the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Office for the Aging will provide joint monitoring and technical assistance to the Demonstration projects.

NORTH COUNTRY REAL CHOICE LONG TERM INFORMATION SYSTEM

Lead Agency – The Research Foundation of SUNY for and on behalf of Eastern Adirondak Health Care Network at Plattsburgh State University

Project Summary:

The project builds upon the existing network and consortium relationships with agencies and individuals involved at various county, regional and state levels in long term care and support services. The primary group of agencies forming the long term care consortium is currently part of the existing Eastern Adirondak Health Care Network structure and membership. The network has been in existence since 1996.

The project will create a web based information system for consumers of long term care programs and services in Clinton, Essex, and Franklin Counties. The North Country Real Choice Long Term Information System will have information on all long term care service providers in the tri-county region available through one web site. The site will include information such as but not limited to: support services, advocacy and where consumers and their care givers can obtain personal assistance in accessing long term care programs and services. All providers within the tri-county region will have the opportunity to have their admission and services information available to consumers regardless of their affiliation with the network, hospitals, or other long term care organizations.

The project goes a step further than simply providing information through a web based data network; it takes into account the need for multiple entry points to the system. For those without internet access, they will be able to access the same information through any number of access points such as their doctor's office, any project consortium member, any eastern Adirondak Health Care Network member and other human service agencies throughout the tri-county area. Agency representatives, physicians, office managers and the community at large will have the opportunity to be trained on accessing and utilizing the long term information system. The project will include a tri-county advocacy and information campaign that will include media, church, nutrition sites, child care programs, hospitals and physicians' offices.

Meaningful consumer representation will be included in the project through a consumer subcommittee that will provide a forum to discuss, evaluate and offer suggestions to the county committees and ultimately the tri-county steering committee. A representative of the consumer subcommittee will sit on the steering committee with rights equal to those of other committee members. Local government representation is secured in the support and commitment of personnel and resources from all three counties. County level agencies to be included as active members of the steering committee are: Area Agencies on Aging, Departments of Social Services and Departments of Health. Other members of the project steering committee will include the North Country Independent Living Center and providers of health and long term care programs and services.

NEW TOOLS THAT SPAN THE GENERATIONS – REAL CHOICE SYSTEM CHANGE GRANT

Lead Agency – The Real Choice Consortium consisting of Fulton County Office for the Aging, Fulton County Department of Social Services, Fulton County Chapter NYSARC, Inc. – Lexington Center and the Fulton County Long Term Care Council.

Project Summary:

The Fulton County system has in place the core administrative framework to effectively manage the current system. Memorandums of understanding have been adopted by the Fulton County Board of Supervisors, Department of Social Services and the Area Agency on Aging. Direct services have been secured by contracts with providers. There is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of both Department of Social Services and the Area Agency on Aging in the operations of the Central Assessment and Placement Unit. Any changes and enhancements forth coming from the project will be formally incorporated into the administrative framework. The project will enhance Fulton County's coordinated long term care service delivery system by providing the present system with the data and increased consumer input needed to make the changes and improvements necessary to remain on the cutting edge of coordinated care.

The design of the Fulton County model has two major components, which will enhance the current system. The first is to document and formalize the current system that has a central point of entry through the Central Assessment and Placement Unit. This will include a comprehensive gap analysis to identify both strengths and weaknesses of the current system and gaps in services to consumers and their caregivers. The second component will be the creation of a "New Tool Box" filled with a manual, coalition building tools, new designs for data collection, a new marketing approach, multimedia initiatives and a plan for distribution to better communicate with the public and providers. The project will utilize the professional skills of a marketing consultant/technician to design and implement innovative techniques.

The project will develop new ways to help consumers and their care givers prepare and negotiate for the care that is needed. The tools that will be developed and the methods tested in the project will be documented and available for replication across the state. Consumers will benefit by having user friendly materials that clearly describe what services are available, who to call for assistance, what the process is and methods of payment. Materials will be adapted to different consumer levels and languages. The materials will have wide distribution so that they reach all consumers and their care givers. Practitioners and their staff, staff from human service agencies along with other key stakeholders will benefit by becoming more informed about the choices and access to long term care programs and services.

BROOMES' CHOICES, YOUR SOLUTIONS

Lead Agency – Broome County Alternative Systems Agency

Project Summary:

Since 1989, a coalition of nearly 30 agencies has worked together as Broome County's Aging Futures Partnership. The task of this group has been to provide an ongoing community assessment of service needs and the subsequent identification of gaps in the long term care and supportive services. Members of this group include representatives from government, hospitals, home care agencies, mental health providers, nursing homes, educational institutions, consumer advocacy groups, politicians, social service agencies, the Southern Tier Independence Center and others, in addition to the sponsoring agency, Broome County Office of the Aging. This impressive consortium of long term care stakeholders combined with Broome's well defined entry system to long term care programs and services already in place will enable the project to enhance the availability of unbiased information, education and assistance regarding the wealth of services available in Broome County.

The Broome County Community Alternatives Systems Agency provides a coordinated access point to long term care in the community, but people can still access long term care at other entry points. The project will work to ensure that access at each entry point assists the consumer and their care giver and directs them to the most appropriate care to meet their needs. The Broome County Community Alternatives Systems Agency will work in partnership to educate the community as well as health, social service and long term care professionals in accessing long term care services for people of all ages.

The project will develop and implement a multi-dimensional long term care education and assistance program that features four primary programmatic areas: consumer education, professional education, consumer advocacy and case assistance. Consumer, volunteer and professional curricula will address, at a minimum, the following topics: paying for long term care, understanding levels of care, housing alternatives and home modifications, early intervention and issues facing young disabled persons, the nursing home to community model, practical steps to finding quality nursing home care, helpful tips for caregivers by caregivers and understanding the rights of individuals under the Americans with Disabilities Act. By combining group education experiences that use curricula with one-on-one assistance, via volunteer consumer advocate and/or a professional client case assistant, consumers and their care givers will be better able to access existing resources and to use them to their fullest advantage.

MONROE CHOICE

Lead Agency – Eldersource

Project Summary:

In 1995, Monroe County's two largest non-medical aging service providers formed Eldersource, a single access point for unbiased information, assistance, guidance and advocacy for older consumers and their caregivers. Unfortunately, a central point of access for all people of all ages with disabilities and their caregivers seeking long term care programs and services still does not exist. Instead, there are multiple entry points all of which are disease specific and do not have the capacity to provide information, assistance and advocacy for all consumers with disabilities. The project will establish a single entry point for all people of all ages with disabilities. The enhanced single entry point within Eldersource will provide information, guidance, referral and advocacy regarding long term care programs and services for consumers and their caregivers. To accomplish this, Eldersource has formed a consortium of providers from both the aging and disability fields that includes the Monroe County Department of Human and Health Services and the regional Center for Independent Living.

The project builds on the current Eldersource model and will work to: enhance existing Eldersource services (access to long term care services) for all consumers and their caregivers, build in information and advocacy service access for people of all ages with disabilities regarding long term care services, strengthen Eldersource's efficacy as an access system that is built on sound and replicable clinical and technological processes and strengthen Eldersource's education and advocacy role regarding the Olmstead Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The project will produce education and training manuals that will be utilized by consortium staff regarding consumer rights, the Olmstead Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as an educational brochure for consumers and caregivers regarding the same. The project will develop and publish specific protocols for consumer interactions with regard to information, assistance and advocacy based on the principles of the Olmstead decision and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Currently, there are no other broad-based service consortiums that have such protocols in place. The project will develop an enhanced data file that contains information on all community resources. The database will include all community based non-medical support services for consumers of all ages as well as specific advocacy services related to disabilities. Finally, the project will enable enhancements to the current Provider Resource Network secured intranet system and extend its capacity to community based disability agencies.

COORDINATED INDEPENDENT LIVING ASSISTANCE FOR NURSING FACILITY DIVERSION

Lead Agency – Center for Disability Rights, Inc.

Please Note:

The RFA Review Committee ranked this proposal in fifth position based on their review and scoring in relation to all proposals submitted. Based on the ranking, this proposal cannot be funded at the amount requested considering funding available for all grant proposals submitted. This proposal will be revised in order to balance the proposed program intervention with available funding.

Summary of Original Proposal:

The proposed project consists of a consortium of eight Independent Living Centers and the New York State Coalition for Aging that would develop a series of coordinated nursing facility diversion projects around the state.

The proposed project would:

- 1) promote consumer independence and freedom of choice by increasing community awareness of community based alternatives to nursing home placement and informing individuals with disabilities and their families about their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Olmstead Decision;
- 2) divert seniors and other individuals with disabilities from nursing home placement by providing them with information, assistance and advocacy; and
- 3) create Real Systems Change by (a) identifying barriers that impede individuals from living in the Most integrated Setting, (b) documenting the lessons learned through the project and best practices which promote community living, and (c) training the full network of New York State's Independent Living Centers in nursing facility diversion.