

## Facts About Pre-Vocational Services

November 5, 2009

This is written to help clear up any misunderstandings regarding what you may have heard about prevocational services and Family Care. There are people who are saying that the Department of Health Services (DHS) in Wisconsin is trying to shut down sheltered workshops/work centers. **THEY ARE NOT TELLING YOU THE TRUTH.**

Here are the facts:

- ❖ DHS has to file an application with the federal government to renew the Family Care waiver. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is the part of the federal government DHS has to work with.
- ❖ The federal government through CMS has said that Medicaid waiver funding (Family Care funding) should not be used to support people forever in sheltered work. DHS revised its prevocational services definition to reflect that. See attached paper for the actual 'Prevocational Services Definition for Family Care Waivers' written by DHS.
- ❖ In the past, prevocational training (sheltered workshops) has been provided to some people with disabilities as a permanent placement. But now the federal government/CMS is saying that prevocational training should not be used as a permanent placement but used instead as a transitional activity which leads to community employment.
- ❖ With these new guidelines, a person in need of prevocational training can continue to receive those services, as long as it is considered a 'stepping stone' to community based employment.
- ❖ There will be no on/off switch for prevocational services - any changes for sheltered workshop providers or people with disabilities will be gradual and will be based on the individual needs and goals of each person with disabilities.
- ❖ DHS is not trying to close sheltered workshops/work centers - no sheltered workshops have to go out of business - they will still be paid to provide prevocational services in the community but how they provide those prevocational services to individuals will need to change. Prevocational services will mean just that - prevocational - the provision of learning and work experiences where a participant can develop

- general, non-job-task-specific strengths and skills that contribute to employability in paid employment in integrated, community settings.
- ❖ These changes were not proposed or made in secret as some people are saying. These changes came from the written recommendations of the Employment and Managed Care Task Force. The Task Force included people from around Wisconsin who represented all the stakeholder categories, including members of People First Wisconsin (one staff person, one parent advisor and one self-advocate board member). The Task Force written report and recommendations were made available on-line and at public hearings across the state.
  - ❖ DHS has committed an additional \$1.5 million dollars over two years to provide 'rebalancing toward providing more community employment' grants and technical assistance to prevocational providers developing new models to support people with disabilities.
  - ❖ Supporting more opportunities for integrated community employment has been a priority of the members of People First Wisconsin for over seven years. Two booklets that feature twenty stories of people with disabilities from around the state who are working in the community will be available for distribution by the end of this year. These stories were gathered by People First Wisconsin to celebrate the possibilities of integrated community employment for all people with disabilities, especially intellectual disabilities in Wisconsin.

\* Please share this information with self-advocates and their families. If you have any questions regarding this current advocacy issue or would like to get involved directly in advocating with legislators about this issue please contact Mary Clare Carlson at the People First Wisconsin office, 414-483-2546.

People First Wisconsin



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