

Affiliation: Northwest CMH Affiliation

## Section 5: Expanding Opportunity for Integrated Employment

### Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Expanding opportunities for integrated employment are challenged by the current world-wide economic crisis, the US recession, retraction of the Michigan economy, regional unemployment rates, pending reductions in general fund allocations and no assurance for Medicaid rebasing, all of which remain firmly beyond the span of control of the Northwest CMH Affiliation.

However there are additional challenges that hold some promise for expanding opportunities for integrated employment for those we serve which are definitively within our control and will be addressed. Specifically, our limited conceptualization of integrated employment as being only a job with a paycheck and only facilitated within our existing provider array must be challenged. More progressive conceptualizations of integrated employment focus on income generation, entrepreneurial initiatives such as micro-enterprises and more creative, naturally-conceived initiatives planned, designed and pursued one person at a time. Finally, our own expectations of employment as an ends to effective service delivery must be replaced by an emphasis on employment as a means for people to pursue more meaningful recovery and community participation.

### Methods For Making Improvements

West Michigan CMHS will work with the Department of Human Services and Social Security Office to address barriers to people understanding their social security benefits and the implications for pursuing employment and work to improve employment rates when economic stability returns as well as expand competitive work opportunities where they currently have segregated work opportunities.

Northern Lakes CMH will primarily expand its focus on expanding integrated employment opportunities through its development and support of three 2-county transition and self determination initiatives. Although the groups are still in their infancy, core group participants including young adults, their families, local school districts and ISDs have already expressed renewed expectations for income generation as central transition goal and have begun to exchange examples of creative employment opportunities to be pursued while students are finishing school. In addition, transitional employment will continue to be a priority in the two PSR programs serving adults with mental illness.

Perhaps the most substantial method for improvement rests in the PIHP establishing consistent data assumptions and reporting protocols to monitor integrated employment outcomes across the affiliation. The Quality Oversight Committee will develop these as an additional component to its FY 09 work plan as well as incorporate regular review of employment outcomes in its FY 10 Quality Assessment Performance Improvement Plan, Appendix D Agenda Content Schedule.

### Methods to Measure Success

With the inclusion of integrated employment monitoring in the QAPI Plan the QOC will focus its oversight authority in an area that has received little attention in recent years but is essential to

community participation and recovery. In addition, the additional oversight focus will be coordinated with local CMHSP quality improvement functions to ensure continual improvement.