Position Statement on
Self-Directed Services

Issue

The service delivery system for persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities must be reformed. Currently, the system is neither fully cost effective nor fully responsive to the differing needs of individuals with disabilities.

The current system is extremely complex, with a myriad of rules and regulations at the federal, state, and local levels. Each funding stream has its own rules and restrictions, which often result in consumers being confused and being required to use services they do not need or want in order to receive other services they do need.

The current system often forces individuals with disabilities to live non-productive and limited lives because of its regulations, not because of individuals' disabilities. It also severely limits the exercise of freedom and responsibility by most recipients of public supports.

In considering reforms, federal and state officials generally focus on fiscal issues which, to be sure, must be addressed by all stakeholders. However, individuals with disabilities have also demanded a stronger emphasis on self-determination and consumer control in the planning and delivery of services. They focus on the pursuit of a meaningful life and envision reforms giving individuals more choices and more control of their services and funding, rather than current funding categories and regulations which restrict their choices and disregard their individual desires.

Position

The Arc of Minnesota believes the current service delivery system must be reformed following the principles of self-determination and individual control, to improve the quality of life for persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. The principles of self-determination include control over a place to call home, real membership in the community, support for long-term relationships with others, and the generation of private income through work. These principles are necessary to achieve meaningful lives for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Changes must to be made at the federal and state levels. The Arc of Minnesota supports changes in the service systems which foster individual choice and control throughout the state for all, regardless of funding stream. Rules and regulations which hinder self-determination and choice must be revised. As reforms are made, care must be taken to avoid micromanagement by state and local entities, while ensuring fiscal responsibility.

Self-directed services envision a new model for providing services. This model has been shown to increase individual satisfaction and quality of life, while often achieving cost efficiencies.

Some examples of how self-directed services could improve lives:

1. Individuals would control the hiring, firing, and training of staff and are not required to use certain providers.
2. The consumer would use technical support services such as fiscal agents, payroll services or employer of record service.
3. A meaningful quality assurance process would exist to measure an individual's satisfaction and outcomes guided by principles of self-determination.
4. Sufficient funding would be available for individual needs while issues of cost efficiencies are addressed when appropriate.
5. On-going training and technical assistance would be available to consumers, families, providers, and county and state personnel.
6. Provision would be made for unanticipated expenses due to acute care or crisis services.
7. Funding would be used to achieve greater control over one's living situation.
8. Funding would be used to achieve meaningful work opportunities with earned income which does not terminate needed services that cannot be obtained elsewhere.
9. Funding would be used to facilitate one's participation and membership in the community, including the use of assistive technology.
10. Funding would be used to facilitate meaningful relationships with people who are not paid staff or family members.
11. Self-directed services would be available to all who wish to use them across the state, regardless of funding stream.
12. Sufficient funding and support would be made available for individuals to participate and connect with local, state, and national self-advocacy movements.

The Arc of Minnesota is committed to supporting self-directed services and more individual control of the service system to achieve meaningful lives for all persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities in Minnesota.

This statement was approved by the Delegate Body at The Arc of Minnesota Annual Business Meeting on October 28, 2007.

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