

# Moving On Up With MEPD

## Iowa MEPD Survey Wins Award at CMS New Freedom Initiative Conference

Iowa received an award for “The Best Innovative use of Medicaid Buy-in Data” at the spring New Freedom Initiative Conference held in Baltimore March 5-7, 2007. Iowa conducts a survey of MEPD participants each year and the award was for the use of the information we obtain from the survey.

Results from the participant input on satisfaction with the program

and how it works for them are compiled.

The Department of Human Services and Iowa Medicaid Enterprise use this information to make the program more effective for people with disabilities who work.

Many thanks to those who worked on and participated in the survey!

Tammie Amsbaugh is pictured receiving the award from Joe Razes, Iowa’s Grants officer from the CMS Ticket to Work Team.



## Consumer Workshop Held in Waterloo March 29, 2007

On March 29, 2007, approximately 30 people attended the “Exploring Your Independence Options in Employment and Community Living” workshop held at the AEA267 Conference Center in Waterloo, Iowa. This workshop is the first of a series of workshops designed to provide information about work incentives, employment supports, and the Consumer Choices Option to self-direct Home and Community Based (HCBS) waiver services.



MEPD members and persons using HCBS waiver services received invitations. The half-day workshop consisted of two breakout sessions—Work Incentives 101 and Consumer

Choices Option 101—which were repeated during the afternoon and gave individuals a choice to attend one or both sessions. Work Incentives 101, presented by Sheila Stoeckel and Suzie Paulson from Iowa Work Incentive Planning and

Assistance (IWIPA), covered the Social Security disability provisions designed to help people work. Consumer Choices 101, presented by Brooke Lovelace from Consumer Choices Option, covered this new program allowing people to self-direct HCBS waiver services.

During the break between sessions refreshments were served and an ‘open house’ was held.

Approximately 20 providers, agencies, and independent support brokers set up display tables with brochures and informational material to market their services to consumers.

Additional workshops are planned around the state. Look for your invitation when one is planned for your area. The next workshop will be held in the Ames region. If you are interested in knowing more about the upcoming workshops, contact Karen Ackerman, [kackerm@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:kackerm@dhs.state.ia.us) or call 515-725-1153.

*The consumer workshop series is a collaborative effort with Consumer Choices Option program and the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG).*

## Success Story From the Self-Employment Seminars

Across the state of Iowa, during 2006, consumers using MEPD had the opportunity to attend Self-Employment Seminars. These seminars were presented by Cary Griffin of Griffin-Hammis Associates, LLC of Florence, Montana. The results of these seminars have generated many success stories across Iowa.

The following is from "Mark".

Mark had been developing his own business, but fearful of the rules and regulations of the Social Security Administration and the Department of Human Services. He was afraid to venture forward on his own. There was uncertainty about: the changes in his Social Security benefits; fear of losing his Medi-

care and MEPD coverage; and fear of not enough financial backing to open and develop his business correctly. Mark wanted to be successful but felt he was being held back. Cary Griffin's presentation delivered information and possibilities to Mark. During a twelve (12) month period he was able to develop his business, show gradual growth, and put the business in his own name. He also requested a comprehensive benefits analysis to help him understand any changes in his current benefit status as he made progress with his business.

Mark has been able to utilize a Social Security work incentive called Plan for Achieving Self Support (P.A.S.S.) to invest money in the start-up costs of his

business. He became involved with the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and was able to access a program called First Step to provide some start-up items and technical advice for his office. He is currently applying for funds from the Abilities Fund to expand his business.

With the use of several different programs, and different agencies, Mark is heading towards success as a self-employed business person. His current plans are that by the end of 2007 he will be able to hire at least one, perhaps two employees to assist with his business.

Additional Self-Employment Seminars are being planned for the calendar year 2007.

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## Upcoming Events

### June

On June 6-8, 2007 the Center for Disabilities and Development, Employment Policy Group, will be hosting "A PATH and Community-Building Workshop" in Johnston at the Foxboro Conference Center. This 3-day intensive practice-based training is designed to build effective skills in person-centered planning, strategies for developing personal support networks, and to create your vision using tools you can immediately put into use at work and in your personal life. This is a team-building event and participants are encouraged to come with at least one person who they will work with in the future.

The workshop cost is \$110 per person. A limited number of

scholarships may be available to MEPD members working as Consumer Choices Support Brokers and their clients. Space is limited; you must act now if you are interested. Contact Jack Hillyard, Director, Employment Policy Group, 866-691-4246 (toll-free) or email [e-epg@uiowa.edu](mailto:e-epg@uiowa.edu), let Jack know you are an MEPD member. **Visit online for the latest information: <http://www.e-epg.info/calendar/>**

### July

***The Ninth Annual Iowa Empowerment Conference.***  
July 31-August 2, 2007,  
Marshalltown, Iowa

The theme of the conference is "Joining Hands to Keep Hope Alive" and is designed for persons with mental illness. For the first

time, a portion of the program will be directed toward children with serious emotional disturbances. Registration, meals and lodging for the full conference are \$230.00. Registration and meals with no lodging is \$150.00, and registration for one day only is \$100.00. A number of stipends covering the cost of registration, lodging, and meals for the conference will be available to mental health consumers and the family members of children with serious mental disturbances. Registration materials will be available by May 15. For more information call 1-800-525-2495 pin #00 toll free and ask for Kathy.

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## Prescription Drug Coverage Quick Facts for People with Medicare and Medicaid

If you have **Medicaid**, Medicare will pay for most of your prescription drugs. You will need to join a Medicare drug plan for Medicare to pay for your prescriptions.

### What do you need to know...

- Medicare will pay for your prescription drugs if covered in the plan you select.
- You will have continuous coverage and pay a small amount out of your pocket.
- **You must join a Medicare Drug Plan.**
- Compare your drug plan options and join.

- If you already have **Medicaid** and become eligible for Medicare, your Medicare drug coverage will begin the first day of the month that your Medicare benefits (Part A and/or B) begin. Medicare will enroll you in a plan right away so you don't have a gap in coverage. You can switch drug plans at any time!
- If you already have Medicare and become eligible for **Medicaid**, Medicare will enroll you in a Medicare drug plan if you do not already have one. Your coverage begins the first day of the month you were

eligible for **Medicaid** benefits so you won't have a gap in coverage. You can switch drug plans at any time!

- **Medicaid** will still pay for your other health costs.
- People with both Medicare and Medicaid and people who reside in a long term care facility can join or switch drug plans at any time, limited to once per month.

### Need more information...

Visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) on the web or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

## New Options for MEPD Members with Consumer Choices Option

A new program is available under the Home and Community Based Waiver Services called Consumer Choices Option. This is a self-direction option that allows members to use their waiver dollars to hire their own workers and purchase other goods and services to better meet their needs. MEPD members can take advantage of this option in three ways:

- If you are a Home and Community Based Waiver Services member and would like to have more choice and control on who provides your services and what services you receive, you can enroll in the Consumer Choices Option. Contact your case manager or service worker to find out how to enroll
- Members using Consumer Choices option will also be looking for workers to provide personal care, housecleaning,

transportation, cooking as well as various other services. If you would like to work for Members using this option, you could contact Independent Support Brokers trained in your county to tell them about your availability to provide services. More information about Independent Support Brokers as well as Consumer Choices Option can be found at <http://www.ime.state.ia.us/HCBS/HCBSConsumerOptions.html>

- Members using Consumer Choices option must work with a trained Independent Support Broker. An Independent Support Broker helps the waiver member plan for their dollar amount and support them with this new option. The Independent Support Broker is an employee of the waiver member. Independent Support Broker training is being

conducted across the state. This could be an employment option for you. You would be the key element to help them live their life according to their own personal aspirations and preferences. You would help them design a personal budget for their services, hire their own workers and make any future adjustments to their budget. For each of your clients, you could work approximately 20-26 hours per year for up to \$15 per hour.

Training is available at *no cost*. The training sessions provide hands-on experience and information about finding and working with clients. You must be 18 or older and able to pass background checks.

**Training is limited to the first 25 applicants. You must attend all three training sessions and**

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**complete the necessary assignments to become a certified Independent Support Broker.** Please note that if we do not have at least 8 people in each training session, we may need to cancel the session and combine the trainees with a session at another site.

**The next training sessions are at the following cities from 4:30-8:30pm:**

- Carroll, June, Tuesdays, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> Carroll Recreation Center; 716 N Grant Road, Carroll, IA

- Osceola, June, Thursdays, June 7, 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>. Southwestern Community College, Osceola Center, Rm 108; 2520 College Dr., Osceola, IA 50213
- Des Moines, Thursdays June 28, July 12, July 19<sup>th</sup>, Employment Policy Group, 108 Third Street, Suite 350, Des Moines (limited seating –sign up early!)
- Iowa City, Thursdays June 28, July 12, July 19<sup>th</sup> Center for Disabilities and Development, 100 Hawkins, Iowa City
- Sioux City, Thursdays June 28, July 12, July 19<sup>th</sup> site to be determined

For questions OR to register for the Independent Support Broker training, please call toll free: 1-866-691-4246 ext. 206 or send an email to [e-epg@uiowa.edu](mailto:e-epg@uiowa.edu).

**Online registration available at [www.e-epg.info/conferences](http://www.e-epg.info/conferences)**



## MEPD Advisory Committee “Working together so all can work”

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**People with disabilities, advocates, policy administrators, employers, and medical professionals working together to enhance opportunities for Iowans with disabilities to work and live as they choose.**