

## Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Subcommittee Report

June 11, 2010 Council on Workforce Investment

The Medicaid Infrastructure Grant Subcommittee (CWI-MIG) met on May 6, 2010. As part of the Subcommittee's discussion on Managed Care and Employment Task Force recommendations, the Subcommittee unanimously endorsed the following motion:

**"Recommend that the CWI encourage the Governor to support the changes that the Department of Health Services (DHS) proposed for the Medicaid Assistance Purchase Plan in order to increase higher levels of employment, wages and sustainable assets. This would include any other enhancements recommended by the Managed Care and Employment Task Force."**

**The Subcommittee has requested that the CWI Chair forward a communication to the Governor with the above motion.** This change would help eliminate some significant impediments for persons with disabilities to have full employment, reach self-sufficiency, and be able to retire with assets as other workers. The Medicaid Assistance Purchase Plan (MAPP) offers people with disabilities who are working or interested in working the opportunity to buy health care coverage through the Wisconsin Medicaid Program. Depending on an individual's income, a premium payment may be required for this health care coverage. The proposed administrative changes are allowable by law, and would: open up more options for persons to be optimally engaged in work; allow more affordable coverage; and, provide comprehensive services such as Work Incentives Benefits Counseling (or other similar service that would improve employment retention and career ladder advancement). Essentially, this would correct some major flaws in MAPP that for the past ten years were hindrances to persons being able to be engaged in private sector employment or retire with full benefits. There are approximately 17,000 Wisconsinites currently in MAPP.

The other recommendation unanimously adopted that was forwarded from the Subcommittee Chair, Jeffrey Steren, to the DHS Division of Long-Term Support Deputy Administrator Fredi Ellen Bove:

**"The CWI-MIG Subcommittee recommends that the numbered memo relating to the Policy on Employment be formally adopted by the Department as soon as possible. If it will not be adopted, to report back to the group why it is not being adopted."**

Other highlights of the meeting included:

- ✓ Status of the 80-plus Pathways to Independence initiatives funded by DHS from the federal \$ 13 million grant for 2010. Efforts are targeted to maximize employment for people with disabilities, and increase inclusive workplaces.
- ✓ On-the-Job Training- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program: Funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act were targeted for this initiative anticipated to serve 1,000 individuals. Since the program started last fall, 369 persons are now in a job. Employer benefits of an on-the-job training agreement include: no-cost recruiting; pre-screened VR referrals; tax credit opportunities; a more diversified workforce; and, an opportunity to train a new employee on the job at a 50% reduced cost to the business.
- ✓ Mental Health and Employment Programs: The full array of services was summarized from prevention and early intervention to specific MIG initiatives in this area-- Supported employment and Peer Specialist assistance for individuals to transition in the workplace and retain employment.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 5, 2010.