

## MEMORANDUM

TO: MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS,  
DRS DISTRICT OFFICES, &  
SBVI DISTRICT OFFICES

FROM: Amy Iversen-Pollreisz, Division of Mental Health  
Terry Dosch, Council of Mental Health Centers  
Grady Kickul, Division of Rehabilitation Services  
Gaye Mattke, Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired

RE: COORDINATION OF DRS\SBVI AND DMH SERVICES AND  
FUNDING

DATE: NOVEMBER 11, 2009

The benefits from supported and competitive employment for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI) are numerous and significant. Some of the benefits include:

- financial stability
- reduced dependence on public support programs (when possible)
- improved self-esteem and sense of self-worth
- recognition as a fully contributing member of the community
- increased structure in daily activities
- increased sense of self-reliance
- improved opportunities to develop networks of support and friendships in the community
- empowerment to build positive characteristics such as dependability, reliability, trustworthiness, etc.

Employment serves as a vehicle for individuals with mental illness to move forward in the process of recovery. Employment in the community helps to reduce social isolation, discrimination, and stigma while improving feelings of self worth. Employment alongside others who do not have disabilities is one of the most important ways that individuals with severe mental illness can become truly integrated into their communities. The key is coordinated services between the Community Mental Health Centers (CMHCs), Mickelson Center for Neurosciences/Human Services Center (HSC), Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, and other vocational service providers. Coordination of services should follow a continuum of pre-employment skill building to long-term on-going supportive services an individual needs to maintain employment.

This document provides guidance in three areas relative to providing vocational services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness:

1. What services can and should be provided by the Community Mental Health Center?
2. What services are available from Vocational Rehabilitation?

3. Which Division pays for the different services?

This document will serve as a policy directive for the Community Mental Health Centers and Vocational Rehabilitation Offices. It is a cooperative effort between the Division of Mental Health (DMH), Council of Mental Health Centers, Community Mental Health Centers, Divisions of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI). DRS and SBVI have the same federal policies and are referred to as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) throughout this document. Services provided by these agencies need to be well-coordinated to ensure a continuum of vocational services for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. These services are categorized into 4 service groups: Support Services to Obtain Employment, Time-Limited (VR Services), On-going Support to Maintain Employment, and Post-Employment. Following are brief examples of services in these categories and the funding source.

<b>Service Group I</b>	<b>Service Group II</b>	<b>Service Group III</b>	<b>Service Group IV</b>
SUPPORT SERVICES TO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT	TIME-LIMITED (VR SERVICES)	ON-GOING SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT	POST-EMPLOYMENT
<b>Funded by:</b> Division of Mental Health	<b>Funded by:</b> DRS or SBVI	<b>Funded by:</b> Division of Mental Health	<b>Funded by:</b> DRS or SBVI
<b>Provided by:</b> Community Mental Health Centers	<b>Provided by:</b> VR Rehabilitation Counselors or purchased from CMHC or other agencies.	<b>Provided by:</b> Community Mental Health Centers	<b>Provided by:</b> VR Rehabilitation Counselors or purchased from CMHC or other agencies.
<b>Types of Services:</b> Referral to VR Person centered planning Services, training and supports to develop activities of daily living and basic work habits necessary to obtain and/or maintain employment Education to maximize income potential and utilize Social Security work incentives while maintaining benefits or preparing for benefit cessation Activities to increase interest in vocational activities such as job clubs and peer support activities	<b>Types of Services:</b> Vocational Guidance and Counseling Job Readiness classes Job Development Job Placement Job Coaching Follow Along Transitional Employment into the community Situational and other Vocational Assessments Vocational Career planning Vocational training Maintenance Transportation assistance Adaptive equipment and occupational tools	<b>Types of Services:</b> Monitoring symptoms of the mental illness Visiting individual with mental illness at home, community, and/or work site to provide support and monitor effects of mental illness on individual's ability to live, work, and maintain in community Case management and coordination of the individual's natural support system	<b>Types of Services:</b> Time-Limited Services (such as Vocational Guidance and Counseling, Job Coaching, Follow Along etc.) necessary to maintain the employment

## **DESCRIPTION OF DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Adults with severe and persistent mental illness living in community settings have a variety of service needs. Community mental health centers serve as the focal point for services purchased by the Division of Mental Health for adults with severe and persistent mental illnesses. Services and resources include medical, social, educational, vocational and other support services necessary to meet basic human needs. Community mental health services are aimed at helping people experience the hope of recovery and to live successfully in the community.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SERVICES WITHIN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS**

The Division of Mental Health strongly supports and expects vocational services to be an integral part of the Mental Health services provided to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. Community mental health services are comprehensive, person-centered, relationship and recovery focused, and co-occurring, within an integrated system of care which include individually planned treatment, rehabilitation, and support services to identified individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, including those with co-occurring conditions (substance abuse, developmental disabilities, etc.) Community mental health services include:

- case management;
- crisis intervention;
- symptom assessment, illness symptom management, and recovery skills;
- medication prescription, administration, monitoring, and documentation;
- direct assistance to ensure the consumer obtains the basic necessities of life;
- direct assistance to obtain the basic necessities of life and build skills to perform activities of daily living (ADLs);
- development of psychosocial skills;
- active participation and involvement with the consumer's family; and
- assistance and support to find and maintain employment.

One of the responsibilities of community mental health centers is to provide direct assistance to individuals interested in pursuing employment goals. Direct assistance includes providing the skill building activities, services, and on-going supports necessary for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness to obtain and/or maintain employment. These services could include building skills towards activities of daily living, education on community transportation, education on skills necessary to find/maintain employment, and linking to formal vocational services. These services are billable activities under the Division of Mental Health.

### **Service Group I – Support Services to Obtain Employment**

This category includes training and support with activities of daily living, referral to and coordination with the VR counselor on behalf of the consumer, and activities that build work readiness and interest in employment goals. We do respect and honor the consumer's choice and recognize an individualized approach must be taken with individuals interested in seeking employment. The Division of Mental Health expects Community Mental Health Centers to offer

skill building and supportive services to obtain/maintain employment to every consumer with a severe and persistent mental illness needing and requesting them.

### **Service Group III – On-Going Support Services**

On-going support services which consist of any activities provided after the individual has obtained employment, received hands-on job training, and/or time-limited follow along services funded by VR. Prior to the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor closing the consumer's case successfully rehabilitated, VR can provide directly or purchase time limited on-going support services from the CMHC or another provider that will consist of:

- two monthly contacts with the supported employee at the work site to assess job stability; or
- if under special circumstances, especially at the request of the consumer, it is determined that off-site monitoring is more appropriate, two monthly meetings off-site monitoring with the consumer is acceptable.

On-going support services provided by the Community Mental Health Center can occur simultaneously with the Vocational Rehabilitation Services and also after VR case has been closed. Community Mental Health Services are to include all aspects of the person's life, including the on-going support services to maintain employment. Services are individualized to each consumer at the level of service needed, and can be provided at the worksite. Meeting the consumer at the work site could provide opportunities for CMHC staff to assess work performance and interactions with co-workers and the employer. The following list contains examples of monitoring activities allowed as part of on-going support services:

1. Monitoring the effect of the individual's mental illness on his/her employment;
2. Assisting the individual to work out issues or difficulties on the job that may be associated with symptoms of the mental illness and therefore affecting the work performance;
3. Assisting the individual with establishing and maintaining positive relationships with the supervisor and co-workers;
4. Preventive and crisis intervention services on the job;
5. Training and education on appropriate hygiene, grooming, clothing, and behaviors on the job; and/or
6. Addressing the effects of employment on the individual's mental health, i.e., stress, fatigue, self-doubt, etc. to increase the individual's self-confidence and thereby improving the opportunity for the individual to realize success in the community.

Direct skills training or teaching of actual job duties (job coaching) should be provided and funded only with VR services in Service Group II.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**

The primary purpose of vocational rehabilitation is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain employment. This goal is accomplished by providing skills training, vocational guidance and counseling, job development and other essential services to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve their vocational goals. A complete description of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services, office locations and procedures can be found at: <http://dhs.sd.gov/drs/vocrehab/vr.aspx>

Since each individual's employment goal, disability and needs are unique, services need to be individualized. The amount and scope of services are identified in each consumer's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor may conduct a comprehensive assessment of a consumer to help assess and determine the vocational rehabilitation needs. This assessment can consist of reviewing existing records or purchasing additional assessments and could include job readiness classes if pre-authorized by the VR counselor. Job readiness classes must be curriculum-based and follow a syllabus of specific content areas.

The IPE is a written agreement between the consumer and VR Counselor identifying the vocational goal, services necessary to meet the goal, service provider, and cost for services with identified funding source. The IPE is flexible, easily modified and reviewed at least annually. Development and amendments to the IPE should include involvement from the consumer's family, representatives from the CMHC or other individuals the consumer may want to participate. During the development of the IPE, the VR Counselor will inform the consumer about available providers of the services identified on the IPE. Some VR services such as vocational evaluations, job placement, transitional employment, job coaching and follow along services can be purchased from Community Mental Health Centers, job shops, private providers or other agencies approved by the Division of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired. The selection of provider is made per the consumer's informed choice after consulting with their VR Counselor. If the CMHC is chosen, the VR Counselor will authorize the services and process payment after the services have been provided and receipt of a report documenting the provided services.

## **Service Group II – Time-Limited Services**

There are a wide variety of services available through the vocational rehabilitation program. Some of the services listed below require a financial needs test. Individuals who are Social Security recipients because of their disability are exempt from the financial needs test. A specific list of these requirements is available in the Administrative Rules of South Dakota 46:30:06:04 and South Dakota Codified Laws 28-9-32 and 28-10-11. The VR Counselor must determine, prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services to an eligible individual, whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual. Duplicate funding for services is not allowed. Comparable benefits may include funding from other sources such as Title 19, DMH Services, Division of Drug and Alcohol services, and/or Pell Grants. Below is a listing of VR services available to eligible individuals:

- Assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs and goals, including a comprehensive assessment;
- Vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance;
- Physical and mental restoration services (Restoration services may include medically related services provided by physicians, dentists, nurses, and other health-related professionals including diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments);
- Vocational and other training services, including tuition, fees, on-the-job training, books, tools, and other training materials;
- Maintenance: Federal Regulations define Maintenance as: "monetary support provided to an individual for expenses such as food, shelter, and clothing that are in excess of the normal expenses of the individual and that are necessitated by the individual's

participation in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or the individual's receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under an IPE.";

- Transportation in connection with VR services;
- Job search and placement assistance and job retention services;
- Supported employment services;
- Personal assistance services;
- Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies;
- Rehabilitation technology;
- Transition services (The term 'Transition Services' means a set of coordinated activities for a student that promotes movement from school to post secondary activities);
- Work site modifications; and/or
- Other goods and services determined necessary for the individual with a disability to achieve an employment outcome (including support services for self-employment and referrals for benefits analysis).

### **Vocational Guidance and Counseling**

Many individuals with severe and persistent mental illness have limited work history, a lack of understanding of employment options, employment maturity, accommodations that could be made at the work site, vocational interests, employment aptitudes, or availability of rehabilitation services. These barriers make it difficult for individuals to select a vocational goal. It is critical that the VR Counselors directly provide vocational guidance and counseling services for these individuals. Assisting individuals through the process of determining their vocational goal is a key step in the vocational rehabilitation program.

The VR Counselor should be creative in providing vocational guidance and counseling to best accommodate the individual's disability. Counselors are encouraged to meet consumers at their home, employment, community setting or CMHC. Situational assessments, job shadowing or other innovative techniques should be used to help identify the vocational goal. If it is determined that the consumer will need supported employment services as part of their vocational goal, the VR Counselor, consumer, and CMHC staff and/or provider should determine how many hours of employment can be achieved and what supports will be needed to help maintain the employment.

### **Supported Employment Services**

Many individuals with severe and persistent mental illness will require supported employment services to be successfully employed. VR can fund the services to help the individual obtain employment and learn the skills necessary to perform the job duties. These services typically consist of:

- Vocational Evaluations
- Employment Skills Training (EST) or Work Adjustment Training (WAT)
- Transitional Employment in a Business Setting
- Job Development and Placement Services
- Job Coaching
- Time-Limited Employment/Follow Along Services

The amount and intensity of services will vary because of the individualization of each person's needs. Determining the amount of job coaching is easily measured by how well the person is

performing the job duties. Determining the amount of follow along services is more difficult and should be individualized according to the needs of the consumer.

### **Transition to On-Going Supports**

Services provided by VR are time-limited. The on-going supports for individuals with severe and persistent mental illness need to be provided by the CMHC. The Transition to On-Going Supports needs to be uninterrupted and seamless to insure the individual's success in employment. The transition from VR services to the on-going support services provided by the CMHC will occur when employment is stable or when 18 months of job coaching and follow along services have been provided. In exceptional cases, job coaching and follow along services can be provided beyond 18 months if the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) addresses the need for additional services in order for the employment to become stable.

Prior to the individual transitioning to the on-going supports provided by the CMHC, the VR Counselor will assess the person's needs and identify the supports necessary for the individual to maintain their employment. This assessment will specifically identify the type, amount and responsible party in providing on-going supports. The VR Counselor must review their assessment with the consumer and CMHC to ensure all entities understand the support needs.

For individuals with severe and persistent mental illness who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and/or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), the VR counselor needs to determine if they have a Ticket to Work and discuss Ticket assignment options with the consumers. The VR counselor should ensure a Plan for Sustaining Employment is developed between DRS/SBVI, the consumer, and the provider (CMHC or other provider) to ensure on-going follow along supports are in place after VR case closure.

### **Service Group IV – Post-Employment**

Post-employment services consist of one or more of the time-limited vocational rehabilitation services, after the VR case has been closed. These services are intended to meet an individual's short-term or emergency needs to maintain employment. If more comprehensive services are required to maintain the placement or if the job is lost despite the additional VR services, then a new VR application should be taken and a new rehabilitation plan should be developed.

This memorandum will clarify the roles and responsibilities between the Divisions, the Council of Mental Health Centers, and Community Mental Health Centers and help improve the service delivery system for the individuals whom we serve. Please share this information with the appropriate personnel in your agency. If you have any questions, please contact the appropriate DRS or SBVI Assistant Director or DMH Program Specialist.