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# QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT: COMPREHENSIVE REPORT

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Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs

NorthStar Support Services

Supports Coordination Organization

*November 22, 2017*

## **Introduction**

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) Quality Assessment and Improvement (QA&I) process is designed to conduct a comprehensive quality management review of county programs, Administrative Entities (AE), Supports Coordination Organizations (SCO) and Providers delivering services and supports to individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. The focus of this process is on quality assessment and improvement as it relates to the participants' experience with services and supports.

The mission of the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is to support Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, choice and opportunity in their lives. The office seeks to continuously improve an effective system of accessible services and supports that are flexible, innovative and person-centered. In keeping with the mission and vision, the QA&I process integrates Everyday Lives Values in Action, ISAC recommendations, and the Consolidated and/or Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) waiver performance measures. Additionally, the QA&I process collects data for and validates that AEs comply with the AE Operating Agreement.

The QA&I process is accomplished by using a combination of self-assessment, desk review, onsite review and corrective action and quality improvement plans. The Quality Assessment and Improvement Comprehensive Report has been developed to provide you with both information and data that has been collected during the self-assessment you have completed, the review of the core and level of care sample that has been selected for your organization, and information both gathered and shared during the on-site portion of the process. This year the QA&I process focused included ensuring everyone has an Everyday Life, and promoting the following ISAC recommendations: Improve Quality, Employment and Communication.

## **Summary of Entity**

NorthStar Support Services is currently providing services in Blair County. NSS works with Southern Alleghenies Support Management Group and Blair County to provide supports to individuals and families. Highlights below were submitted by NSS to show accomplishments and ongoing initiatives from this SCO:

**“Employment-** Supporting people to reach their employment goals is an important part of the work that we do. We are currently partnering with many

key stakeholders to launch an Employment Expo on October 31, 2017 that will be attended by students, families, provider vendors, school districts, OVR, and business partners to get the word out on what is available in Blair County to help persons to pursue their desire to become employed. NSS, Inc. has a point person for employment that works with SC's, OVR, and others to coordinate efforts to pave the way to employment. She is considered the OVR liaison for the agency and assures that referrals are received by OVR and works to identify barriers. She also works closely with the SC's/SCS that are involved in school age transition to assure that activities continue beyond graduation. Our point person had previously been a supervisor for an employment services provider agency. We understand that training for support coordinators is important and we offer many opportunities for sc's to attend face to face trainings throughout the state and webinars on the subject of employment.

Below is some excerpts of our PowerPoint highlighting the work that we have done and are planning to do going forward.

- We recognize the overall goal of "Transition to Adult Life" is to enhance the quality of life for individuals with special needs in the areas of employment, employment training, social skills, parenting, health/medical, safety, residential, mobility, recreational and leisure activities.
- North Star Services was an original member of The Blair County Transition Council which was established in 1986 to service school-age special education students.
- North Star Services has over 30 years of experience collaboratively working with the 7 School Districts of Blair County, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Adult Provider agencies to enhance transition services.
  - Attend IEP meetings of individuals who are age 14 and older with open cases.
  - Developed Transition Matrix According to Exceptionality in collaboration with the local Transition Council.
    - Explore Transition Opportunities in the area of employment and employment training.
      - Network and Collaborate with community partners.
        - Form work groups to address areas of concern.
          - Develop inter-agency agreements.
          - Conduct post graduation surveys.

- Received recognition from the Department of Education and the Governor's Office for efforts to improve the quality of life for students with disabilities.
- Facilitated county wide presentations by Jonathan Mooney and Dave Carson.
  - Arranged and hosted presentations on Transition
- Made presentations at annual Pennsylvania Department of Special Education Transition Conference
- In collaboration with local Transition Council hosted county wide Transition Expos and Job Fairs.
- Arranged and hosted "One Page Profile" trainings to educators, students, families.
  - Develop workshops where parents develop action plans, i.e., 1-page planner, electronic resume/portfolio, etc.
- Develop strategies to coordinate services from school to adult services.
  - Offer the opportunity for continued cross system training.
  - More transition events for families and transition youth.

New Committee to address the subject of Sexual Assault/Rape for persons with Intellectual Disabilities.

NSS, Inc. has formed a workgroup to look at this issue. We have invited provider agencies as well as our local rape crisis/victims service agency to join our workgroup. Our first task was to plan a kick off training for all providers and support coordinators to learn more about the subject and we are partnering with PCAR to provide the training on November 16, 2017. A local church has offered us the use of their facilities for the training and is pleased to become acquainted with the ID service system. We have also invited agencies from the behavioral health system to attend the training since many people utilize that service system also when they have been a victim of abuse. We will continue to look at ways we can continue our work to learn more how to better identify, report, and help persons who have been a victim including making more connections with the criminal justice program.

**Communication-** We recognize the importance of having SC's well informed on the resources, funding, and supports available to assist person who have the need

for assistance in the area of communication. SC's have been utilizing OVR, resources and expertise with the state office for Deaf and Hearing Impaired, ODP, and worked with the Center for Independent living to locate and use persons as best communication partners, interpreters, and others to allow those with deafness and other communication disorders a functional way to communicate. We recognize the need to continue our learning in this area especially in the area of assistive technology. We also have plans to reach out to universities that offer programs and students in this area to find out what they could offer our system.

**Complex Needs Coordinators-** We have just created positions for two SC supervisors to better address the needs for persons with complex needs and be a support to the SC's and their teams who are supporting people with behavioral health challenges. I have listed some key responsibilities below. NSS, Inc. is very active in collaborating with key stakeholders from the behavioral health system and we serve on many committees that help to improve the services in Blair County.

- Provide support to SC's and their supervisors to assist them in their work with persons with complex care needs
- Coordinator will be knowledgeable of local resources including ID system and generic social services for this target group
  - Coordinator will educate NSS, Inc. staff on resources including best practices for supporting those with complex needs
    - Act as a liaison between NSS, Inc. and other key stakeholders
- Provide support to SC and their supervisors with challenging cases to assist with problem solving and helping to remove barriers
- Identify trends, barriers, needs to working with this target group and report to Executive Director
- Attend meetings related to this target group and provide information and advocacy, ie. Dual Diagnosis group, Health Home, Human Rights Committee, ID provider meetings and others as assigned by Executive Director.

**Dental Services workgroup-**We have recently agreed to join a workgroup led by our county administrator to work with another non-profit provider to create a new mobile dental service and more in depth dental service for persons who need sedation for their care.

**Person Centered Planning and Lifecourse Framework-** NSS, Inc. has been involved with learning and implementing the practice of Person Centered Thinking/Planning for over 20 years. We were part of the Robert Wood Johnson

Pilot for PCP and worked closely with Michael Smull and Mary Lou Bourne to increase our expertise in this area. We have been an active part of the Community of Practice for PCP and attend monthly meetings with other stakeholders to continue our learning and practicing new skills. We will be participating in a pilot to practice new skills related to the Charting the Lifecourse /Framework targeting early intervention age children and people who are entering transition age. We have a pilot workgroup that include stakeholder from AE, ARC, county administrator and staff, EI coordinator, and NSS, Inc. to begin our work.

**Longevity of Leadership and Staff-** We are very proud of the fact that our Executive Director and SC Supervisors have a combined total of 149 years of experience working for NSS, Inc. between the six staff. We also have several SC's that have 10-25 years of experience. “

### **QA&I Summary**

NSS completed a self-assessment. The self-assessment was finalized and submitted to ODP by the established deadline of August 31, 2017. The onsite review began October 26, 2017 Sandy Arnold Executive Director, Jodie Feath, Erik Flaig, Brenda Brown Jennings, Michael Ringler, and Jennifer Conrad were present for the entrance and exit meeting. The Office of Developmental Programs pulled a core sample of 19 individual records, and a review of data and policy. The Core sample was shared with NSS on October 11, 2017. All participants in the Core sample was offered an opportunity to participate in face to face interviews with ODP staff. Individual interviews concluded on October 26, 2017.

### **Data Analysis**

NSS completed a self-assessment that included individual records and a review of data and policy. Results were reviewed and evaluated. The onsite review was completed on October 25, 2017. NSS was well prepared and organized. All records were labeled. NSS SC director and SC supervisors were available to assist as needed throughout the day and present for both entrance and exit meetings. During the exit meeting results of the QA&I process was reviewed and shared with NSS staff. Highlights of this SCO was also discussed as listed above in this report.

Individuals from the Core Sample participated in face to face interviews. All interviews concluded that they are satisfied with the current support they receive from NSS.

### **Results and Performance Evaluation**

The self-assessment results and onsite review results are similar to show that NSS has good performance in the areas of Employment, Communication, Dual diagnosis, and ISP development. As discussed earlier in this report NSS continues to work with individual/families, and other resources in the community to ensure everyone has an Everyday live and is align with the ISAC recommendations.

Remediation is required and available in attachment A. The compliance score report highlights areas that require systematic improvement and are identified on the CAP. The data collected during the self-assessment, desk review, onsite review, and individual interviews shows the quality of work North Star Support Services provides to individual and families, and their commitment to ensure everyone has an Everyday Life.