

Tri-Counties Regional Center

Alternatives to Traditional Day Programs

May 3, 2005

I. Introduction

On February 7th and 8th, 2005, the Association of Regional Center Agencies sponsored a conference entitled “Alternative to Traditional Supports”. In a welcoming letter to participants Steven Perez, ARCA President and Phil Bonnet Conference Committee Chairperson wrote, “...this conference will create statewide momentum toward program and policy changes that will actively foster individual choice based on in-depth knowledge of alternatives. Our goal is to encourage opportunities for more meaningful and productive lives that are defined and engineered by adults with developmental disabilities.”

The conference included presentations such as, “Federal and State Initiatives to Develop Individualized Supports and Quality Outcomes,” “Organizational Change/Converting Structured Services to Individualized Supports,” “State Policy Initiatives to Facilitate Individualized Supports,” “School to Work Transition,” and “Preparing Individuals with Disabilities to Perform Meaningful Work in Integrated Environments.”

Tri-Counties Regional Center (TCRC) and many of our community partners were in attendance and have used this experience as a springboard for future change. An opportunity exists to more completely realize our mission of providing “person and family centered planning, services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities to maximize opportunities and choices for living, working, learning, and recreating in the community.”

It is our intent, in collaboration with our board of directors, consumers, families, service providers and Area Board IX to find more meaningful and effective ways of supporting consumers in exercising their choices about their everyday lives. We expect some of what we need to change will be within our control. In such situations we will act decisively to change what we do and how we do it in order to realize some immediate improvements. Other changes may need to occur at the State level. In these circumstances we will mobilize our advocacy efforts and provide leadership to facilitate such changes.

II. What We Want To Achieve

We are seeking to provide opportunities for consumers that support the principles of person centered thinking, planning, inclusion, individual choice and self-direction. We want to join forces with other stakeholders by having a common focus and direction in supporting the consumer in their pursuit toward the life they want to live. We want to move towards a flexible array of services and supports that is individualized around what is “important to” and “important for” the individual and away from the concept of programs, whereby a consumer needs to “fit in.” We want consumers to lead meaningful, active, productive, and inclusive lives as members of their community

The Human Services Research Institute and National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services have collaborated on the National Core Indicators project whose goal is to develop a systematic approach to performance and outcome measurements for services and supports to people with developmental disabilities. Below are a sampling of some of the core indicators and possible measurable outcomes we may want to pursue:

- Consumers are involved in employment and other integrated activities in the community that they determine are meaningful
- Consumers earn income at or above the state minimum wage
- The proportion of individuals age 18 and over who are supported in community integrated employment exceed the total number of adults who receive traditional day services
- Consumers have friends and caring relationships with people who are active participants in their lives other than support staff and family members
- There is an increase in the proportion of people who maintain healthy habits in such areas as not smoking, weight, alcohol use and exercise

Before finalizing our desired outcomes, we will seek input from consumers, family members, and other partners on what is important to and for those that would be utilizing the services and supports developed as part of this effort.

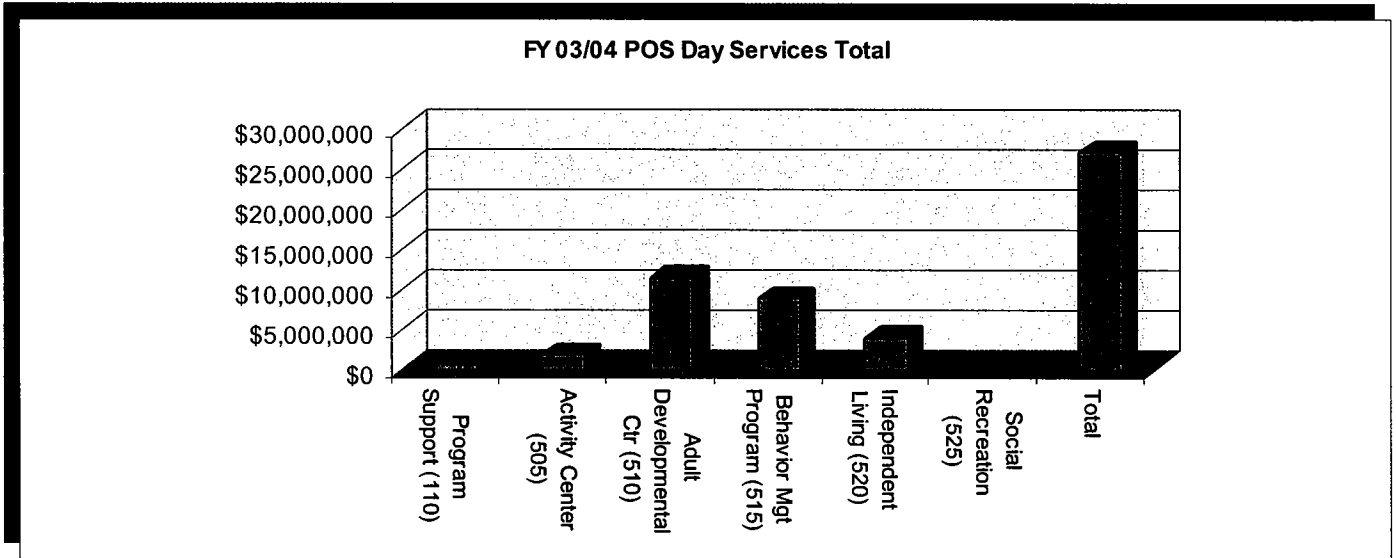
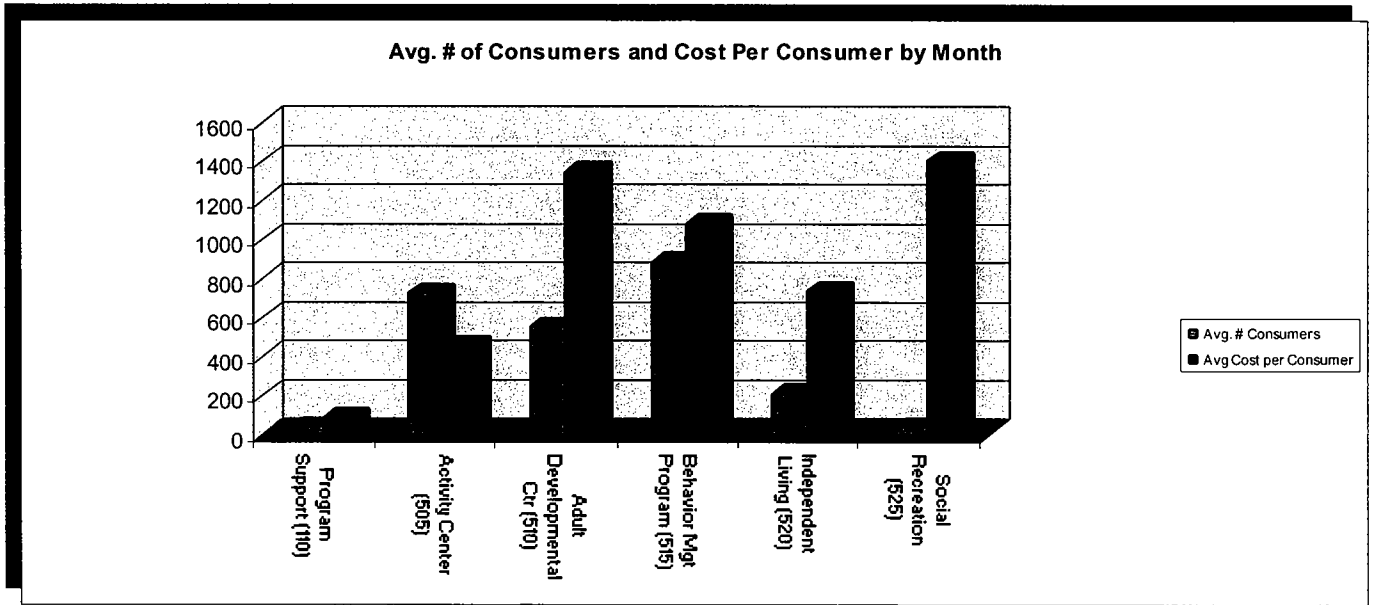
III. Our Present Situation

In fiscal year 2003-2004 a total of \$27,108,430 was spent by TCRC on day services consisting of the following service codes: Program Support (110), Activity Center (505), Adult Developmental Center (510), Behavior Management Program (515), Independent Living (520), and Social Recreation (525). For fiscal year 03-04, an average of 2,461 consumers were in one or more of the above services. The total per month average cost was \$2,259,037 or approximately \$918 per consumer per month.

Currently there are 1,152 consumers engaged in some form of employment including work activity centers, group supported employment, and individual

supported employment. Over 300 consumers participate in individual supported employment.

The charts below show the average number and cost per consumer by service code and the total POS costs per service code for fiscal year 03-04.



IV. Impetus for Change

There are a number of key milestones, events, and trends that provide the impetus for examining our philosophy and approach to day services and supports. These include but are not limited to:

- DDS Independence Plus Self Directed Waiver. In the course of the next several years increasing numbers of consumers and their families will have direct control over their budgets to purchase “non-traditional” services and supports. During this period of time it is anticipated that between 5% and 10% of TCRC consumers may be participating in this waiver.
- Person-Centered Planning Pilot Project. During April, 2005, many TCRC staff and providers received a two day training from internationally recognized expert Michael Smull on Person-Centered Thinking and Planning. TCRC will be initiating two pilot projects in San Luis Obispo and Ventura Counties that integrate Person-Centered Thinking and Planning into the day work of the TCRC teams and its providers. The long term goal is to thoroughly integrate and expand Person-Centered Thinking and Planning throughout the organization.
- Micro-Enterprises. Consumer owned and operated businesses are a growing trend across the country. At the ARCA conference presenters discussed such developments in Oregon and Connecticut. TCRC, as part of its Community Placement Plan for next fiscal year will initiate a micro-enterprise venture supporting consumers in formulating, planning, developing and implementing their own businesses.
- Center for Medicare and Medi-Caid Services (CMS) Quality Management Framework. Changes are being developed in CMS’s expectations regarding quality assurance and improvement. CMS will be focusing increasing attention on participant (consumer/family) access; participant-centered service planning and delivery; provider capacity and capabilities; participant safeguards; participant rights and responsibilities; participant outcomes and satisfaction; and system performance.
- Olmstead decision by the United States Supreme Court. The Olmstead v. Zimring, 1999 prompted California (and other States) to initiate action in order to reduce the numbers of consumers living in institutional settings. In the California Olmstead Plan (May 2003) “the state commits to providing services to people with disabilities in the most integrated

settings...to remain in their communities and avoid unnecessary institutionalization.”

- Community Placement Plan. Since January, 2002 there has been a 35% reduction in the number of TCRC consumers residing in a State Developmental Center. A key factor for moving the remaining 77 consumers into the community will be the availability of individualized day services and supports.
- Continuation of rate freezes. For the third consecutive fiscal year, the state is proposing to freeze rates for numerous service codes including traditional day programs. As rates are frozen provider costs grow including workers compensation, health insurance, salaries etc. A new “business model” is required to ensure providers can offer ongoing quality services and supports to consumers.
- National trends. National trends are increasingly in support of inclusion, access, choice and meaningful work. In January, 2005 the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services issued a briefing paper entitled “A Framework for Addressing Federal Entitlement Reform Legislation: An Exploration of Issues Vital to Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Their Advocates.” Among the desired policy outcomes are:
 - Promotes self-direction, community presence, participation and full citizenship for ...adults with developmental disabilities who have ongoing service and support needs;
 - Tailors long-term supports to the unique needs, preferences and life goals of each individual with a developmental disability
 - Promotes the economic self-sufficiency and personal security of people with developmental disabilities

V. Challenges to Change

In the DDS draft “Service Delivery Reform,” May 15, 2001, it states, “Title 17 regulations focus primarily on process not outcomes, in other words, what providers are expected to do to comply with regulations, not the desired goals of consumers and families.” The challenge to move from a regulatory/process driven system to one that focuses on what is important to and for consumers/families is what we seek to address. There are potential impediments to significantly changing day services and supports including rates, regulations, service codes, and a consensus philosophy. There are factors that may necessitate policy, regulatory, and funding changes at the state level. These changes may require a longer timeframe to implement. However, there are changes that are within our control at the local level that can be acted on to meet our desired outcomes in the short term.

VI. Process for Change

There are 5 steps we will take to accomplish what we seek to achieve:

1. Stakeholder Input. We will conduct focus groups with consumers, families, staff and providers to seek input on the ideas contained in this position paper and on the development of specific outcomes.
2. Amend the TCRC Strategic and Performance Plan. We will add Day Services and Supports as an additional strategic and performance plan focus area for TCRC to plan for and address.
3. Establish an Advisory Committee. We will establish an advisory committee to review prospective service designs, assist in the process and outcome evaluation, develop recommendations for improvement and potential expansion, and advocate for the necessary changes in day services and supports.
4. Initiate Local Demonstration Projects. We will initiate local demonstration projects by:
 - Issuing a request for concept papers from prospective providers to implement an alternative to current day programs that meet our philosophical intent and desired outcomes.
 - Selecting providers to implement demonstration projects
 - Implementing the demonstration projects
 - Evaluating the demonstration projects and determine whether an expansion is feasible
5. State level advocacy. As we move forward with implementing our demonstration projects we will identify areas that will require policy, regulatory, and funding changes at the state level and will develop advocacy strategies to bring about desired change at a systemic level locally and statewide.