

12/17/13

Members of the Fiscal Viability Study,

Thank you for your time and consideration and the work you are doing to improve and enhance Iowa's Mental Health and Disability system. I am Marcy Davis, the CEO for Candeo a Medicaid provider of services to individuals diagnosed with an intellectual disability, brain injury and/or mental illness. I am honored to be allowed to serve on the Iowa Coalition of Community Employment (ICIE) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) Policy and Funding workgroup and am passionate about supporting individuals to find integrated competitive employment in the community.

During my time serving on the ICIE and DHS Policy and Funding workgroup, our focus has been how to fund and enhance opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities to become competitively employed in integrated community settings. Other states (such as Oregon, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington and NY) have been sued in class action lawsuits brought on by the Department of Justice (under Olmstead) by people who felt that they were stuck in segregated "sheltered employment services" or denied the opportunity of competitive employment.

Iowa has signed on to be an Employment First state in the hopes of avoiding the same type of suit and honoring competitive employment as the first option for employment services. Iowa currently spends 80% of employment support funds on facility based work services and only 20% on competitive employment supports and services. This fact truly limits the choices of Iowans to these segregated settings and severely limits the availability of community based employment services. The Employment first effort along with ICIE and DHS are working to rebalance the funding to increase support of integrated community based employment.

The focus of these groups has not been to "close down sheltered work services," but to expand the service array available to include supported community based employment. These groups are aware that Iowa is at risk of the DOJ action suit as long as segregated, facility based employment is the norm. Having strong, successful supported employment services and supports is critical in

demonstrating that we are supporting integrated community services in employment as well as residential.

Adding or renaming segregated employment services, such as work activity, will not achieve the goal of increasing the availability of integrated employment service. I realize that there are some who fear that services are being eliminated and they will lose out. In fact the workgroup is taking pains to focus on **the addition** and improvement of integrated employment service. It is critical to have a full array of appropriate supports available but continuing to emphasize segregated work services is not the only answer. The currently approved menu of core services included the pre-vocation service, which comports to the Medicaid waiver service name and the former “sheltered workshop” and the “work activity” services from the county system.

In summary the plan is to change how people come into the system and how they move through, not eliminate what we are providing now.

Thank you again for your time and consideration on this important work.

Marcy Davis, MBA
Chief Executive Officer – Candeo
Marcy.davis@candeoioowa.org