

Lifesharing Coalition Meeting Minutes February 15, 2013

- On 2/14 Ron Melusky answered Licensing questions, and Angela Fortney answered Waiver questions.
- On morning of 2/15, the annual Lifesharing Coalition PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) was held to develop objectives and guide the Coalition for the coming year. An outline of the PATH will be distributed at the next Coalition meeting on April 18.
- Self-Inspection Tool has been used successfully, particularly in the Central region (Keystone Human Services). The tool was emailed to BHSL with a follow up of a hard copy that was mailed. A response was received within 2 days; however, the agency does not yet have a Promise letter.**
- Uses for AIS Approval (other than retirement): Skills of Central PA was able to secure AIS for a Lifesharing situation in which the wife passed away, and the husband and Lifesharing individual wanted to continue living together. However, in order for that to happen, the husband needed staff coverage for a period of time until the husband returned from work. Fortunately, AIS services were approved in this situation. **
- Other situation: One of the Lifesharing family members, *excluding the individual*, could no longer utilize steps and needed a chairglide to continue providing Lifesharing services. Although payment for the chairglide was originally denied, the agency used the fair hearing process, and the judge approved payment of the chairglide as a *secondary* need of the individual. When denied approval for AIS or other services, it was suggested that providers continue with a fair hearing process.**
- Food Stamps (SNAP benefits): For Skills of Central PA, food stamps were approved in all of their counties with the exception of one. That particular county indicated that the lifesharing family was not considered a “group living arrangement,” and as such cannot be approved for Food Stamps. Jeanne Parisi said that ODP will look at Office of Income and Maintenance to obtain clarification.**
- Licensing issues: Keystone Human Services Central region reported a very easy licensing process with BHSL. Licensing contacted them 1 week prior to coming out and stayed for 2 days. Although providers were told that licensing would notify them in advance as to who was being seen, Keystone was not informed in advance. However, Keystone asked and received an answer. They received a wonderful inspection and went from receiving numerous citations from last year to 0. Keystone also received compliments on their Assessment.
- Investigations regarding unexpected deaths, abuse or neglect are being looked at by BHSL. In the Southeast region, BHSL has reviewed procedures involving an incident of unexpected death. In the Northeast region there was an incident involving abuse or neglect and they went straight to the Lifesharing home.
- SSI information: Please see the ODP announcement referring to Room and Board changes. It is no longer simply 72% of an individual’s benefits.**

- PA Lifesharing DVD update: ODP Consulting will be commencing videotaping. On 2/25 a LS family with Catholic Social is being videotaped in the SE region, and Patti McCool from ODP will be videotaped giving an introduction to Lifesharing. Stephanie Brown will discuss home studies and the matching process. ODP is asking for photos of families and individuals who wish to be a part of Lifesharing DVD. It's very important to show diversity in individuals who Lifesharing can successfully support (i.e. physical disability), as well as, diversity in locations. If you send photos, there is a consent form that the individual and family must sign. Please see attachment. Forward all photos with consent forms to Stephanie Brown at sbrown@kencrest.org.
- Building Bridges Conference: The annual conference will be held 9/17 and 9/18. Becky Kreischer and Jim Malesky of Keystone will present on Lifesharing. They received positive feedback from last year's presentation which included a support coordinator and an individual's grandmother.
- ODP Newsletter: Jeanne is working on getting approval regarding a Lifesharing Newsletter that would keep Lifesharing in the forefront of people's minds. If approved, you would send recruitment tips and suggestions to Carmen Donegan. Jamie Boehme from Westmoreland County has a wonderful Lifesharing newsletter that was shared.
- Update from Jeanne Parisi: February 15 was Gary Alexander's last day. Beth Mackereth will start immediately as Acting Deputy. She comes from an OCYF background and was a youth services director. Jeanne has already discussed the difficulty of working with DHS and CYS to find Lifesharing services for children who are aging out. Jeanne is still working on securing a \$5,000 placement fee for agencies for opening new Lifesharing homes. Agencies could then reinvest this money. This would be in addition to the proposed \$5,000 for start up costs. We may know more about this by the end of this fiscal year.
- There were a few new agencies who want to start Lifesharing. There is a need to schedule some Lifesharing "How To" trainings in each region.**
- Lifesharing Reunion : Mary Rhodes, Kathy McCall, & Michelle Thompson from Skills is organizing the reunion. It will be held at the end of September in Somerset. Three townhouses will be booked. In a few weeks, emails will be sent out to everyone and people will have to sign up. Once people have signed up, they will have to pay. Cost will be \$150 for the weekend depending on the amount of people that sign up and committ (Fri., Sat., and Sun.)**
- Coalition Schedule and Locations:

April 18	Center County AE Office – Bellefonte*
June 20	Camp Hill Community Center, Giant
August 15	Center County AE Office – Bellefonte*
Oct. 16 & 17	Warm Springs
December 13	Camp Hill Community Center, Giant

*Address is 3500 East College Avenue, Bellefonte, PA

Keep in mind that for the most part we are changing from a two day to a one day format as a direct result of the Lifesharing survey that was sent out.

- Regional updates:

Southeast– BHSL representative, Sandy Wooters, reviewed licensing concerns. Next meeting will be held on 3/12 at KenCrest.

Central – discussed regulations. Next meeting will be held on 3/9.

Northeast – Held a semi-Path and discussed licensing, trainings, and annual picnic. Next meeting will be held on 3/12 at Spectrum.

Western – February meeting was canceled. Next meeting will be held on 3/19. Looking for a new lead.

- Upcoming trainings in which Lifesharing will be presented:

Transition Conference in July at State College- Sarah Shaw and Paul Zimmerman

Building Bridges in Sept. – Becky & Jim (aforementioned)

- Committees formed as a result of the PATH:**

Outreach – (contacting ARC and other self-advocacy groups, writing a letter supporting LS, media blitz, etc.) Stephanie Brown, Mel Knowlton, John Shankweiler, and Nicole Buckley

Training – (development of standardized SC and Lifesharing presentations for use in presentations across the state) Jamie Boehme (Chairperson) Stephen Caughie, Jena Cavanagh, Marilyn Shiowski, and Donald Smale

Lifesharing Conference or Symposium – (one day conference or symposium in LS this spring) Mel Knowlton, Stephanie Brown, Jim Malesky, Carrie Kontis, Becky Kreischer, Sarah Shaw, Christina Diehl, Jeanne Parisi, Nathan Gerhard, Maggie Rothenberger, Dana Olsen, and John Shankweiler, with the possibility of new members. Jamie Boehme is interested.

Resource Book (2+ year commitment)—(a link for all of ODP memos, correspondence, regulations, etc., so that information could be obtained in a one stop shopping method for Lifesharing) Sarah Shaw, Dana Olsen?, Jeanne Parisi?, Preston Ringo?, Cody Kreischer?John Shankweiler, ODP Consulting for documents

Leadership group encourages **EVERYONE** to participate in various groups and committees so that we have more participation across the state.

**INDICATES ITEMS FOR REGIONAL AGENDAS.