HELPING PEOPLE FACING OBSTACLES TO WORK OBTAIN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

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Addressing Economic Well Being

- In 1935 the Federation of the Handicapped (Fedcap) was launched with the goal of improving the economic well-being for those with disabilities and barriers to work.
- In 1971 Fedcap helped to establish a national set aside program for those with disabilities.
- In 2014 Fedcap dismantled a statewide supported employment program and put 60 individuals with developmental disabilities into competitive employment.
- In 2018 Fedcap begins its sixth year running New York City’s Wellness, Comprehensive, Assessment, Rehabilitation, and Employment (WeCARE) program for public assistance recipients that believe they cannot work.
Wellness, Comprehensive Assessment, Rehabilitation and Employment (WeCARE) in New York

- Provides benefit recipients with barriers with equal opportunity to work
- Participation is mandatory and consistent with TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) participation requirements
- 100 percent of program participants do not believe they can work and should be on federal disability
Who Is Claiming Incapacity?

What is the profile of the WeCARE customer group?

- Male: 43%  Female: 57%
- Average Age: 43 years
- Single Parent: 41%  Single Only: 59%
- Average Reading and Numeracy Grade Level: < 7th grade
- Disclosure of Incarceration: 24%+
- Mental Health Diagnosis: 53%
- History or Current Substance Use Disorder: 26%
Without WeCARE
Facing Obstacles to Employment = Exemption

Welfare Office → Apply for Benefits → Health Claim → Work Exemption

- No Activity + No SSI
- OR
  - SSI Application Assistance
The WeCARE Model:
How Facing Obstacles to Employment = Work

- Health Claim
- Independent Medical Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fully Employable</th>
<th>Immediate Employment and Retention Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employable with Accommodations</td>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation Services w/Case Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporarily Unemployable</td>
<td>“Wellness” Case Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Federal Disability</td>
<td>Case Managed Application for SSI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facing Obstacles to Employment=

- Work
Biopsychosocial Assessment (BPS)

Comprehensive clinical exam to determine functional capacity outcome (FCO)

- 35-page psychosocial designed to elicit what individual *can* do
- Assessments include x-rays, labs, and referrals to specialist if necessary
- Previous medical information included and essential to the process
Findings After Independent Medical Assessment

- Fully Employable: 44%
- Employable with Accommodations: 34%
- Temporarily Unemployable: 16%
- Possible Federal Disability: 6%
Participant has conditions but no functional limitations and is able to successfully engage with agency employment providers.
Possible Federal Disability

Case managed application filed or supplemented at WeCARE with goal of 45 percent SSI award rate
Wellness /Condition Management

- Offered three options for primary care, leave that day with scheduled appointment
- Case management follow-up no less than every two weeks either in person or by phone
- Follow up appointments address the primary care treatment plan compliance
- Plans range from 30-90 days based on condition
What are some of the clinical conditions?

- Musculoskeletal (back, joint and soft tissue)
- Metabolic (hypertension, diabetes, obesity)
- Mental Health (depression, anxiety, mood/personality disorders)
- Drug Dependency (CASAC screening and self-report)
Wellness Plan Completion

68 percent can work following wellness plan completion
Employable with Accommodations

- Work-focused initial case management interview
- Vocational evaluation same day or next morning
- Employment plan and work activities assigned within days of initial appointment
- Access to work readiness, community service/work experience, job matching, job developers, hiring events, and retention upon achieving “employer ready competencies”
Employment with Accommodations

• What are some of the key findings?
  ○ 54 percent of employed had Work Experience/Community Service in their path
  ○ 70 percent of employed had Work Readiness in their path
  ○ 54 percent of those working obtained employment by day 91

• How many got and kept their jobs?
  ○ 34 percent (or 15,074) of those referred to employment got jobs
  ○ 80 percent were still employed at 90 days and 72 percent at 180 days
Who Are Getting and Keeping Jobs?

Age Profile of Job Entrants  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-31</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>14.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32-38</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>16.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39-45</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>18.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-52</td>
<td>1342</td>
<td>24.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53-60</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>20.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 5556 100.00%

15% 16% 19% 24% 21%
Are More Working?

Job Placement: Yearly Totals and Rates,
February 2005 - January 2018

[Bar chart showing yearly totals and rates for job placement over 13 years from February 2005 to January 2018.]
What Have We Learned?

- Can people facing obstacles work?
  - 24 percent of those with mental health conditions find employment
  - 32 percent with treatment in their path found employment
  - 68 percent of those with clinical conditions can work after wellness
  - 64 percent entering work do so between the ages of 39-60

- What might we do to improve outcomes?
  - Establish pathways to eliminate idleness and worklessness
  - Focus on what people can do
  - Make sure work completes treatment and wellness
  - Treat work like it is an entitlement for everyone
Helping Those Facing Obstacles Obtain Employment

- Is the model replicable?
  - Currently in place at 16 locations in Maine
  - Per person cost between $1,200 to $1,500 annually
  - All or some components can be put in place

- What other groups might be served?
  - Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants
  - Medicaid Work Requirement (1115 waivers)
  - Justice Involved, those repeatedly denied SSI
  - Any disengaged group needing a pathway to work
Helping Those Facing Obstacles Obtain Employment

- Important Considerations for Effective Delivery
  - Holistic assessment to understand full range of issues
  - Informed engagement with pace
  - Measured activation for those recovering from illness
  - Help with activation, linkages, and ensuring progress
  - Incentivize delivery of outcomes
Questions?
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