METRO-AREA BROKERAGE

Jan 2006

PROVIDER NEWS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Policy changes and updates described in this newsletter are effective January 1, 2006.

Effective March 1, 2006, Inclusion, DSI, and SDRI will be unable to process invoices from any providers who are not in compliance with the policies described here and in the guideline booklet.

Please review this document carefully.

You will be given specific written feedback on your billing, which should help you adjust your practices.

READY FOR 2006?

2005 has been a landmark year for increasing communication, cooperation, and consistency within the metro-area brokerages. Inclusion Inc, Developmental Systems Inc, and Self-Determination Resources, Inc, have been working together all year to clarify policies, communicate effectively, and make it easier for you to work with all of us to better serve all of our customers.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your continued dedication to working with our customers, and all the great strides that have been made in the four years of the brokerage system. We appreciate everything you do, and know that there are aspects of the system that are frustrating and confusing. Thanks for all of your patience as we continue to grow and evolve.

This newsletter has valuable information for all of our providers, and resources we think may be helpful for you. You will be getting a copy from each brokerage, but don't miss the center insert, with news specific to each brokerage.

GUIDELINE BOOKLET AVAILABLE

At long last, we have jointly developed guidelines for Independent Contractors and Agencies. All providers who attend a Meet & Greet (see pg 3) will be given a copy. Otherwise, it is available at the brokerages, or can be downloaded at www.inclusioninc.org.

The guidelines describe the contracting and billing processes, and clarify the expectations of the brokerages. Major clarifications and updates are also detailed in this newsletter. While we won't be expecting existing providers to complete the acknowledgement, we will expect you to familiarize yourself with the contents of the booklet and abide by the policies described therein.

We welcome your feedback on all these issues, and value your participation in the process. If you have thoughts to share, please send them to Rebekah@inclusioninc.org

Policy Clarification: Assessments

What if you're currently being paid an assessment rate?

Well, we would love for you to complete the assessment report that is the intended outcome of those 20 hours. However, we realize that this policy has not always been clear. We will, of course, honor any current contracts with their original intent. Please bear in mind, however, that the assessment rate will be used more judiciously in the future.

Note on Prorating:

There have historically been some questions about prorating.

For those providers who serve more than one customer at a time, the hourly prorated rate can never exceed the 1:1 rate specified in your contract.

What is a 100-Hour goal assessment?

An assessment is a written evaluation of the supports necessary to help a customer achieve their goal. Individual Independent Contractors will contract with a customer/legal guardian, via their Personal Agent, for the first written portion of the assessment. This first part of the assessment may take up to 20 support hours to complete, and should include the following:

- a detailed description of the chosen goal
- a detailed explanation of the obstacles standing between the individual and the goal
- a clearly defined plan for achieving the stated goal, including the steps to be taken and an estimated timeline for accomplishment

Please keep in mind that an assessment can take up to 20 support hours, but may be accomplished in far fewer. *The time taken to physically write the assessment is not billable time.*

Once the assessment is completed, submitted to the customer/legal guardian and Personal Agent, and approved by both parties, the provider will be paid for the initial assessment (up to 20 hours). *Providers will not be paid for this assessment until the document is completed.* At this time, a new contract will be written based on the timeline estimated in the assessment. This plan of support toward specific goal achievement may not exceed 80 support hours, and may take significantly less. Progress notes detailing how hours were spent and what progress has been made on goals must be submitted with bills for payment. If bills are not submitted monthly, progress notes must still be submitted to Personal Agent detailing activities or providing an explanation for the delay. Final progress notes should document the customer's success regarding the stated goal, or explain any failure to achieve.

When is an assessment used?

100-Hour assessments are only appropriate when the following conditions are present:

- The service is time-limited. (i.e. "I will learn to take the bus to work independently within the next three months.")
- The service has a specific and identifiable outcome.
- The goal can conceivably be accomplished in up to 80 support hours of training implementation.
- The assessment and training provider(s) are willing and able to provide the written documentation described above, at the quality level expected by the customer/legal guardian and Personal Agent.

What if the need is on-going?

Any support service goal that does not fit the criteria for the 100-Hour assessment should either:

- Be paid out at a rate that falls within Support Services Rate Ranges and Guidelines set forth by DHS/SPD.
- Be considered for a rate exception. Brokerage procedures vary for requesting a rate exception. At SDRI the Personal Agent is responsible for completing the form and submitting to SDRI's director, Dan Peccia. At DSI & Inclusion the provider is responsible for filling out a rate exception request form (inquire at brokerage) for submission to director Larry Deal at DSI or Martha Stracener at Inclusion. The directors will then be responsible for either approving or denying these rate requests. Exception requests should explain what specifically makes the support service challenging enough to earn the requested rate, and what qualifies the provider to meet the customer's need.

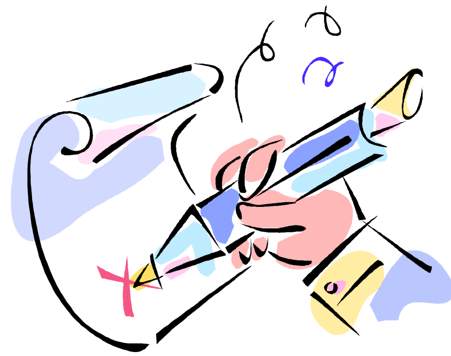
POLICY CHANGE: CUSTOMER SIGNATURE

You may have noticed a section in your contracts that refers to verification of services rendered. Based on ongoing discussions with the State, that verbiage has changed. We are now required to have (and therefore have to require you to have) the customer's authorizing signature on every invoice we process.

You can either submit your invoices directly to the customer, who will review and sign them and forward them to the brokerage, or you can review the invoice with the customer and obtain their signature and then submit the invoice to the brokerage.

We realize that this may present a challenge for some of you. We suggest that you keep a daily log of time spent with the customer and have them sign at the end of each date of service, which would satisfy the signature requirement. Alternatively, you can have the customer sign each page of your bill at the end of the month.

Inclusion, DSI, and SDRI will not be able to pay invoices after March 1 that are not signed by the customer.



Progress notes, progress notes, progress notes!

We've been talking about progress notes for a long time now, so this is nothing new. (If you need a review, check out the contractor or agency guidelines available at www.inclusioninc.org.)

Every invoice must include a written narrative that describes the activities performed on that date, and progress toward the goal(s) of the contract. The time it takes to write these notes is included in your hourly rate, and is a requirement.

As of March 1, 2006, Inclusion, DSI, and SDRI will not pay an invoice that does not include detailed, professional progress notes.

Resources

- The DHS website has a lot of information for providers about the brokerage system, including rate setting, administrative rules, and various guides and manuals. Go to http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/index.shtml, navigate to "Developmental Disabilities" and click on "tools for providers."
- http://www.sdri-pdx.org/index.html and www.inclusioninc.org both have sections addressed to providers, which have brokerage-specific forms and information.
- The IRS website at http://www.irs.gov has a lot of information about how to operate a small business and what the IRS requirements are. Start at http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/index.html.
- http://my.calendars.net/portlandprovider/ is a website by and for metro-area independent contractors. It has outings, trainings, and other resources.
- The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center sometimes has training opportunities for providers– visit www.healthwellness.org for more information