



COMMISSIONER
Chris Traylor

June 21, 2010

To: Home and Community-based Services (HCS) Providers
Texas Home Living (TxHmL) Providers
Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) Providers
Deaf-Blind Multiple Disabilities (DB/MD) Providers
Consolidated Waiver Program (CWP) Providers
Mental Retardation Authorities (MRA)
State Supported Living Centers
Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Mental Retardation (ICF/MR)

Subject: Endorsement of DADS Supported Employment Initiative

I am pleased to provide my support for the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) Supported Employment Training and Technical Assistance (Initiative) which was launched in the summer of 2009 for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The Initiative's elements include:

- an employment webpage for providers and consumers that includes resources on best practices, educational materials and training opportunities;
- an Employment First pilot; and
- regional forums with state and national experts.

The Initiative is consistent with the mission of DADS to work in partnership with consumers, caregivers, service providers and other stakeholders; develop and improve service options that are responsive to individual needs and preferences; and ensure and protect self-determination, consumer rights and safety.

In state and national surveys of individuals with IDD the majority of respondents indicated that they would like to work competitively. In 2008, DADS provided day services to almost 35,000 individuals with IDD; yet of those, only eight percent had received employment services (compared to the national average of 24 percent). Although more individuals may be working than who receive employment services, we still have a long way to go in assisting our consumers to realize their employment goals.

Please make it a point to talk to consumers about their interest in employment and develop relationships with other agencies involved in employment for people with disabilities, including the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Texas Workforce Commission, Social Security Administration and local school districts.

With your help, I know we can assist many more individuals to achieve employment and full community integration.

Sincerely,

[signature on file]

Chris Traylor, Commissioner