Rethinking the Quality Conundrum

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Current Policy Environment

- States face the worst budget crisis since World War II ... and the situation won’t improve soon.
- The federal budget is in no better shape, with record deficits expected over the next few years.
- Demand for services is growing beyond government’s capacity to keep pace.
Current Policy Environment *cont*...

- The workforce crisis is growing worst due to inadequate wages & benefits plus a shrinking manpower pool.
- Fewer opportunities exist in most states to leverage federal Medicaid dollars.
- The current budget crisis accentuates dysfunctional aspects of the existing state/local service delivery architecture.
Key Quality Improvement Challenges

• The need to expand access and improve quality simultaneously in a severely constrained fiscal environment.

• Antiquated rate-setting models that are poorly aligned with contemporary support expectations.

• The absence of a resilient infrastructure to undergird the delivery of individualized supports.
Key Quality Improvement Challenges cont...

• The inequitable distribution of resources across programs and within geographic areas of a state.
• The mal-alignment of per capita spending patterns and individual needs & aspirations.
• The dynamics of the present DD service marketplace in which market forces offer weak inducements to improve quality.
The quality implications of relying on an unstable, inadequately trained workforce, especially given the limitations imposed by tight budgets.

• The inefficiencies built into the existing system architecture.

• The absence of a coordinated federal-state agenda for improving the quality & appropriateness of specialized DD services.
An Agenda that Fits the Times

• Forge federal-state partnerships aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of community supports.
  – Delineate complementary federal and state roles in overseeing the quality of Medicaid-funded services.
  – Examine alternative federal/state oversight models and adapt the findings to monitoring Medicaid-funded services.
  – Develop state specific agendas for improving the quality and accessibility of community supports.
  – Use the results of the Resource Inventory Project to update CMS’ infrastructure improvement priorities.
An Agenda that Fits the Times cont...

- Search for ways of minimizing reliance on labor-intensive service delivery models and tap under-utilized labor markets.
  - Recruit family members & friends as paid caregivers;
  - Compensate parents for care-giving;
  - Implement system-wide recruitment & retention strategies;
  - Use competency-based training to upgrade the skills of direct support and supervisory staff.
An Agenda that Fits the Times \textit{cont...}

• Modify existing rate-setting methodologies to achieve system wide equity plus an improved alignment between individual needs & payment levels.

• Expand and improve the use of individual budgeting approaches that afford participants’ enhanced choice and control.
An Agenda that Fits the Times cont...

- Streamline the service delivery process by eliminating outmoded service categories and regulatory requirements that add to the cost of delivering services without contributing appreciably to service quality or accessibility.
- Introduce quality incentives into state payment methodologies.
Closing Observations

• Plan for tight budget scenarios.
• Don’t tread water ... you’ll drown.
• Be prepared to challenge sacred cows in the pursuit of improved value for the dollar invested.
• Base performance assessments increasingly on outcomes valued by individuals and families.
• Remember, quality is the product of effective design and execution ... not external quality control & oversight.

• Take advantage of the experiences of colleagues who have preceded you down the same path.

• Build quality improvement coalitions that afford all system stakeholders a seat at a table.