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Barber National Institute

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Office of
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Independent Regulatory
Review Commission

Dear Julie,

I am writing not only as a professional, but also as an advocate for the individuals that mean so much to me personally. Families and individuals who choose to be a part of an Agency with Choice program are of the understanding that they have choice and control over the services they utilize as well as the support they choose to have. Many families show interest in an Agency with Choice because they are able to hire Support Service Workers of their choice who may be a relative or family friend, knowing they have the choice and control of staffing.

I firmly believe that families want to follow all of the directives set in place by ODP, however, when constraints like 24 hours of mandated training are required yearly it could affect families in negative ways. It would be a detriment to individuals to put a mandate on trainings when staff are required to complete mandatory training through the Agency with Choice provider and when families are already able to train their qualified support service workers themselves. By requiring 24 hours of mandated training for all staff, changes would need to be made to the unit rate in order to accommodate the increase in staff training requirements, decreasing the services for those individuals in PFDS funding streams. If staff does not obtain all of the required training within the scheduled time frame the family suffers, as the staff is no longer eligible for work. It should be noted that I firmly believe staff should be fully trained, however it should be a reasonable amount for those families who choose to self-direct. Certainly it should not be a burden nor should it hinder the services in which our individuals so desperately need in order to gain as much independence as possible.

Changes to the 6100.143 regulations have also posed questions for me personally. Why isn't Vendor Fiscal model not being held to the same standard as an Agency with Choice when they are both intended to be unlicensed self-directed options? Would there be different types of training needed based on the different services offered through and Agency with Choice? If so how would this affect a staff who works numerous different jobs through and Agency with Choice? Would 24 hours be required for each position the staff hold?

Please consider the effects of these changes on the individual's that we care so deeply about and the impact it may have on their families. As a Family Liaison of an Agency with Choice program at Barber National Institute, it is important to me to be able to provide the best services and support I can to the individuals I serve. I have worked hard to develop positive relationships with families, staff, and most importantly the individuals who could be negatively affected by the changes.

Thank you for your consideration!

Jennifer Markiewicz

