

RESEARCH SUMMARY SHEET 1/7/07

Title Providing homecare services at work: PAS Workforce issues in the provision of Workplace PAS

Research Partners: PAS Center - InfoUse, Job Accommodation Network. - Susan Stoddard, Lewis Kraus, Lita Jans (InfoUse), DJ Hendricks, Sita Misra, Lou Orslene (JAN)

Objective(s): Conduct formative research on the use of Personal Assistance Services in the Workplace. Identify barriers and solutions to the expansion of the provision of PAS, including personal care, at work.

Research Methods: Telephone interviews with 59 workplace PAS users, 35 employers, and 19 employment service providers, including organizations that employ personal assistants, were conducted along with telephone focus groups with 75 employers, 27 rehabilitation service providers, and surveys of 316 respondents (200 employers and 116 employees with disabilities). Promising practice case studies using telephone interviews have been completed with 5 organizations with 6 in process.

Key Findings:

Workplace personal assistance is a type of job accommodation, along with assistive technology and reduction or elimination of workplace barriers. While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA), and the New Freedom Initiative (NFI) encourage development of work accommodation in general and workplace personal assistance services in particular, Federal policy is inconsistent regarding support for providing personal care tasks at work as well as help with work tasks. For instance, the ADA mentions task-related care but excludes personal care. Medicaid/IHSS addresses personal care and does not cover work tasks that may be the responsibility of the employer. Currently, PAS workers may be arranged by either employers (on staff or outsourced) or by employees (at home providers, family or friends). In California, IHSS hours now can be used at work as well as at home, but the total hours are not increased.

Workplace PAS is an emerging service, and agencies or other worker supply services are not uniformly available to employers. Barriers to PAS workers in providing assistance in the workplace include: employer concerns about liability and space limits; costs and funding; coordination of schedules for workers and consumers; lack of preparation of PAS users to manage workplace PAS, possible negative attitudes of co-workers or supervisors, and lack of training for users and workers in how to arrange for and provide PAS at work.

Promising practices related to the workforce include:

- establish PAS as a job category within the organization with benefits;
- encourage PAs to be shared by more than one employee.

Recommendations/Policy Implications:

- *Need to include both work tasks and personal care tasks within policy on workplace PAS
- *Need to include workplace PAS within the broader policies related to funding for and use of personal assistance service benefits for individuals in the workforce.
- *Need for incentives for employers to provide and pay for personal care.
- *Need to develop supply of workers trained in workplace assistance.
- *Need to train people with disabilities and PAS workers on individual rights and responsibilities for arranging for and managing PAS at work.
- *Disseminate information about successful examples and promising practices in PAS to provide models for PAS users, PAS workers, employers, and employment service providers.

Resources Available (reports, surveys, articles, tables, maps, videos, popular education materials, etc.)

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Your Contact Information (name, address, e.mail, telephone, fax)

Susan Stoddard, Lewis Kraus, Lita Jans
InfoUse: PAS Center
2560 9th Street #320
Berkeley CA 94710
510-593-8803 (?) 510-549-6520
Fax: 510-549-6512
sustoddard@aol.com
lkraus@infouse.com
ljans@infouse.com