

DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES  
December 23, 1996

AMIDST RE-STRUCTURING, QUALITY CONTINUES

While many Division and provider agency staff are focusing their efforts and energies on working out the details of a re-structured service system, the need to maintain the quality of current services has not been forgotten. A team of six staff, including two nurses, performs an annual review of each of the fifteen agencies providing developmental disability services in Vermont to assure quality and compliance with regulations.

Reviews are based on a random sample of individuals who receive services in each agency. Quality of services is assessed in relation to goal and outcome standards published in the DDS "Guidelines for Quality Services." Outcomes are reviewed to determine whether people are being treated with respect and dignity and if services foster the development of practical life skills, effective decision making and community participation. The team also assesses the person's satisfaction with the services provided, and whether families and guardians are involved and informed of events and changes concerning people and services.

Through observations of service provision and interviews with people who receive services, their families, contracted staff, and guardians, information and data is collected to determine the extent to which an agency meets, exceeds, or falls short of set quality standards. A report is generated that details examples agency strengths, weaknesses, practices requiring improvement, and changes that must be made in services or documentation. This information is shared with each provider agency at the end of the review. Each agency develops a plan of correction to address issues needing resolution.

The review team additionally provides technical assistance to provider agencies, ranging from consulting around the needs of an individual being served, training staff in funding, health/safety and service issues, to more in-depth problem solving and management.

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