

*July 13, 2007 – Revised*

Dear Private Provider Executive Director,

## NOW AVAILABLE – NEW CT COLLEGE OF DIRECT SUPPORT WEB-BASED TRAINING PROGRAM!

We are pleased to announce that CT DMR is working with MC Strategies Inc. (MCS) to provide a comprehensive web-based learning system for direct support and other professionals who deliver services to individuals receiving support from the department. This web-based curriculum will supplement and in some cases replace classroom-based training, and will be accessible from any computer with an Internet connection. Some of the benefits of web-based learning include consistency of instruction, competency-based learning, around-the-clock availability, reduced travel costs, and more efficient use of resources.

### *About MC Strategies and the College of Direct Support (CDS)*

- MCS is a company that provides consulting and training services to healthcare, educational, and governmental entities. MCS has been providing the College of Direct Support on-line curriculum to state-level departments, private agencies, community service boards, micro-boards, and individuals providing services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities since June of 2003. Currently, twelve states have purchased the CDS system.
- The CDS curriculum is developed and updated by the University of Minnesota Research and Training Center on Community Living, the U.S. Center for Excellence on Community Integration. It currently includes 19 on-line training courses, each with multiple lessons and competency assessments, on topics such as Developmental Disabilities, Services and Policies, Supporting Safe and Healthy Lives, Individual Empowerment and Self-Direction, Cultural Competency, Community Inclusion, Positive Behavioral Supports & Crisis Intervention, Documentation and Record Keeping, Building and Maintaining Friendships, Direct Support Professionalism, Employment Supports, Person-centered Planning, and Frontline Supervision and Management. Additional training courses are in development. The CDS System also includes a learning management system to assign and track completion of courses and produce management reports.
- More information is available on the CDS Website at <http://info.collegeofdirectsupport.com/>

## About the CT CDS Program

- DMR will customize the CDS curriculum to CT law and DMR policy and procedure where applicable. Providers may further customize the modules to agency specific practices. Please note that any annotations made to the curriculum will add completion time to the lesson or course. For this reason, the CDS has advised DMR to limit annotations with lengthy review requirements.
- Currently there are 14 core CDS courses consisting of 73 lessons available for use. The estimated completion time for the full set of 14 courses (based on a maximum of 45 minutes per lesson) is approximately 55 hours of on-line training. Additional courses on employment and supervision are also available for use. *The CDS course descriptions and lesson objectives are attached for your review.*
- DMR is recommending that all new direct support employees complete the 14 core CDS courses within the first 30 – 120 days of employment. To meet regulatory and contract compliance requirements, additional training in First Aid and Safety, HIPAA , DMR Mission, DMR Policies and Procedures, and the Commissioner's Safety Message is required. Employees may also be required to complete CPR, Medication Administration Training and Certification, Dysphagia, and Psychological and Physical Management Techniques based on their work assignment. *A crosswalk of DMR specific training mandates as they relate to the CDS course content is attached for your review.*
- All direct support employees must also be provided with training specific to the individuals they support. In addition, the department strongly recommends that providers offer training on their Agency Mission and Services, Affirmative action, Sexual harassment, and Diversity.
- ***We anticipate making the customized CDS curriculum available to providers by August 17, 2007.***

## How Your Agency Can Access the CT CDS Courses

- The CDS licensing fee is based on the number of people receiving services from an organization. The per individual fee is higher for small organizations and is significantly reduced for larger organizations. DMR has purchased a license based on the number of individuals receiving services, allowing unlimited use of the CDS curriculum for anyone associated with the DMR system. The annual licensing fee is approximately \$250,000. This represents a significant savings compared to the cost of every provider agency purchasing individual licenses from CDS.
- Private provider agencies will be able to make the entire catalog of CDS courses available to their employees, and also have access to the CDS learning management

system, by sending a request to DMR using the DMR-CDS Provider Access Agreement form. Once approved, a provider agency will contract directly with CDS to establish an administrator account for an annual fee of \$2800. The provider administrator will then be able to set up learner accounts for any employee, consumer, family member, board member, or volunteer associated with the agency, allowing them unlimited use of the CDS system. The provider administrator will also be able to establish sub-administrators (at no additional cost) to assist with managing learner accounts, course assignments, and generating reports and learner transcripts. The provider administrator will receive training and ongoing technical support directly from the CDS, but will be responsible for providing training and technical support to agency sub-administrators. *Information on the CDS system administrator role is attached for your review.*

- Two or more agencies may work together to share the administration fee and responsibilities. In this case, one agency would have to assume the role of primary administrator and set up sub-administrator accounts for its partner agencies. The primary administrator would have access to all records within the system, but sub-administrators would only have access to records for their individual agencies.
- Trade associations and larger provider agencies may provide CDS administrative services for smaller agencies. We will work with interested parties to establish standard rates that will ensure recovery of all associated costs incurred by the administrator agency, and re-evaluate the rates periodically as needed. There are no other restrictions on how organizations choose to provide this service. *If you are interested in providing this service, please contact John Tierney at [john.tierney@po.state.ct.us](mailto:john.tierney@po.state.ct.us).*
- All agency records are permanently stored on the CDS system servers. If an agency wishes to have its records transferred from one administrator account to another (for example, to dissolve a partnership and establish their own administrator account), CDS database administrators will provide this service.

### *Who to Contact to Enroll as a System Administrator*

- Any private provider agency (or group of agencies) interested in becoming a CDS system administrator must complete the **attached DMR-CDS Provider Access Agreement form** and return it to John Tierney, DMR Curriculum Manager by email at [john.tierney@po.state.ct.us](mailto:john.tierney@po.state.ct.us) or by FAX to 860.418.6003.
- If you will be partnering with other agencies to administer the CDS courses, the lead agency should submit the registration form as the primary contact.

- Upon receipt of your registration form, we will contact you with information regarding next steps.
- Should payment of the administration fee present a hardship for a provider agency, you may contact DMR to request assistance.
- Questions regarding the CDS program and the administrator role may be directed to **John Tierney by email or telephone at 860.418.6137.**

*We hope you will take advantage of this exciting new opportunity!*

Best Regards,

Charlan Corlies  
DMR Director of Educational Support

John Tierney  
DMR Curriculum Manager/CDS Administrator

**Attachments:**

- CDS System Administrator Role
- CDS Course Descriptions and Lesson Objectives
- Estimated Course Completion Times
- Crosswalk of DMR Training Requirements and CDS Courses
- CT CDS Registration Form