

Date : June 14, 2018
Subject : Plan Document to Address Sexual Health, Personal Relationships, and Sexuality
To : Nancy Thaler, Deputy Secretary, and ISAC Members
From : Patrick DeMico, Executive Director, The Provider Alliance

The Provider Alliance proposes a call to action initiative among its membership, community partners, and stakeholders to elevate awareness on the issues addressed in the recent bulletin and accompanying guidelines Sexual Health, Personal Relationships, and Sexuality. As a provider association supporting organizations with missions that focus on serving people with intellectual disability and autism, the perspective and priorities in our plan will attempt to improve competencies among our members. These will emphasize education, training, and policy development as the primary means of supporting the principles of the bulletin and its guidelines.

To complement these elements, we will also strive to raise awareness of the alarmingly high rates of abuse, neglect, and exploitation that afflict people with disabilities. Community outreach to local businesses, schools, and law enforcement will comprise foundational elements of our awareness campaign. Our website will be used to accomplish this.

Working from the bulletin and its guidelines, The Provider Alliance will incorporate the stated objectives and incorporate this messaging into its materials and communications on the subject. We will also align directly with the Everyday Lives Values in Action Recommendations, so that we can measure progress and performance in direct relationship with the plan document and annual reports that are generated by the Office of Developmental Programs. Of the current recommendations we have nominated the following as potential Everyday Lives Recommendations with which to align our program reporting:

1. Assure Effective Communication
2. Promote Self-Direction, Choice, & Control
3. Promote Health, Wellness, and Safety
4. Develop and Support Qualified Staff
5. Increase Community Participation

To translate this plan into a strategic template, we will also define the vision of our plan through strategic themes, objectives, and initiatives that can be defined and measured. The proposed strategic themes are broad areas under which we must progress and develop for our plan to succeed. The proposed themes are:

1. Awareness
2. Engagement
3. Competency
4. Capacity
5. Satisfaction

Measurable objectives under each theme will be developed and evaluated through periodic performance measures. Prerequisites such as surveys and assessments will be developed as initiatives. It is critical that we examine the current state of confidence and satisfaction among our members, and the people and families that rely upon the service of our members. Baseline data will assist us in determining priorities in resource, education, training, and policy development. Self-assessments and satisfaction surveys will comprise a key element of our ongoing performance measurement.

Partnership with others on the ISAC and within the service system have been initiated to obtain education and resource materials for our members. Outreach or communication thus far has included Healthcare Quality Units, Temple University Institute on Disabilities, Safer Options Committee, Allegheny County Administrative Entity, ASERT, Self-Advocates, and Family Members.

The Provider Alliance will also deploy its website to prominently display a call to action and post resource materials related to this topic and our stated goals. A communication plan and possible use and expansion of social media will be explored. Workforce development and employee engagement will likely be the areas through which most of our efforts channel, and we will attempt to use our website to support these endeavors as well.

We recognize that there will be challenges and opportunities as we develop our plan and pursue its objectives. The concepts of empowerment and risk will be thoroughly explored, and resources will be sought to assist our members in navigating through these areas effectively. Potential conflicts may arise regarding the efficacy of a common platform for policy development and plan execution; however, we will use this as a potential means of introducing diversity into our plan.

The following are the immediate prerequisites to establish our program and establish appropriate metrics to set milestones, track progress, and measure performance:

1. Website Messaging & Social Media Presence
2. Development of Survey Tools to Determine Baseline Data & Information
3. Self-Assessment of Provider Policies & Practices for Efficacy
4. Collaboration with ISAC Partners for Available Resources

At the end of the day our program is intended to enhance resource development for providers, and satisfaction levels reported by caregivers, family members, self-advocates, and providers. We believe that community outreach will help to accomplish those goals more effectively, and create greater awareness, responsiveness, and capacity in our local communities.

Your feedback, input, and redirection are welcome. We would like to collaborate with all interested partners among the ISAC membership. If you have questions or would like to discuss further, feel free to call me at (724) 757-7157 or write to PatrickDeMico@ProviderAlliance.org. You can also visit our website at www.provideralliance.org for more information about The Provider Alliance. Your time and consideration are most appreciated, and please feel free to contact me directly with any questions.