



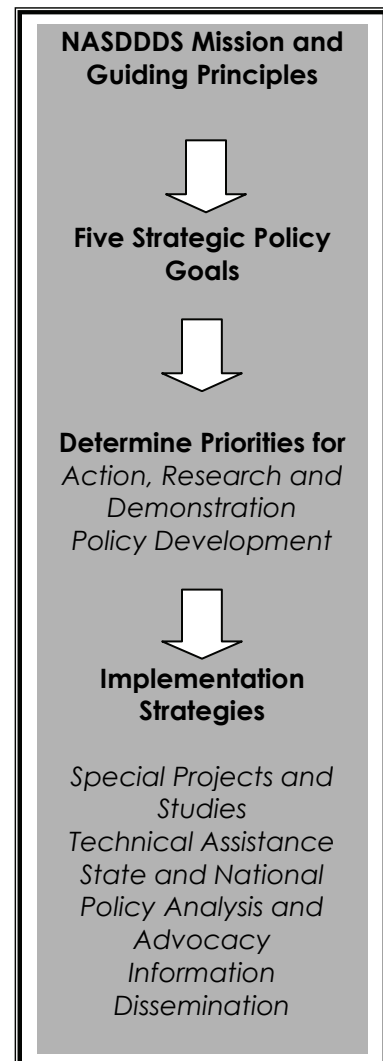
# ***NASDDDS STRATEGIC PLAN*** JUNE 2006

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## **Introduction**

The mission of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) is to assist member state agencies in building person-centered systems of support for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The Association's activities comport with its guiding principles which reflect the position of the membership that individuals with developmental disabilities have the right to: (a) be treated with respect and dignity, (b) be independent and make individual choices, (c) participate in family and community life, (d) have opportunities to maximize their full potential, and (e) receive outcome based services and supports. The Association's Strategic Plan connects the organization's mission and guiding principles to priorities for action, research, and policy development. The plan identifies strategic policy goals and implementation strategies addressing the challenges currently confronting public developmental disabilities systems in the areas of quality improvement, individual service design, community infrastructure and workforce development, as well as associated financing strategies to achieve these ends.

The NASDDDS Strategic Planning process began in the late 1990s as an initiative by the Association's Board to develop priorities to guide the selection of the special projects and studies to be undertaken by Association staff. The Board revisited the strategic planning process in 2001 and, based on the results of a membership survey, identified five key policy goals to guide Association activities during the next three to five years. In the spring of 2005, the NASDDDS Board of Directors approved a staff proposal to update the strategic plan. Five focus groups were formed to assist the Board in reviewing the existing plan and identifying revisions that might be needed to address recent and



emerging changes in the policy-making environment (see “Emerging Environmental Influences” below). Each group was composed of six or seven state directors and included one or two Board members. Participants were asked to complete a global review of the five strategic goals, and an in-depth assessment of one assigned goal area to determine its continued relevance to the plan. Each group was encouraged to propose new or modified goals as well as updated objectives and/or revised implementation strategies.

## Revised Organizational Framework

State directors participating in the five focus groups agreed that the priority goals specified by the Association’s 2002 Strategic Plan have proven to be an accurate reflection of the principal system management challenges faced by state DD agencies during the past four years, and remain as relevant today as they were in 2002. While the strategic goals continue to define the broad policy directions state DD service systems must pursue, the focus group participants suggested that the organizational framework of the plan be revised to more effectively address emerging policy initiatives and reflect the fluid political and economic context within which state developmental disabilities systems currently operate. Chief among the recommendations growing out of the focus group calls was that the strategic goals, which could be expected to remain fairly constant over time,

<b><i>NASDDDS CURRENT STRATEGIC GOALS AND ACTIVITIES</i></b>	<i>Strengthening Quality Assurance</i>	<i>Building Individual Support Infrastructure</i>	<i>Building Capacity to Support Complex Needs</i>	<i>Developing an Effective Workforce</i>	<i>Developing Responsive Financial Strategies</i>
<b>State and National Information Dissemination</b>					
Association Newsletters and Bulletins					
Monitoring and Reporting on National Policy Developments					
<b>Special Studies, Projects and Reports</b>					
National Core Indicator Project					
NCI Core Report Data Brief					
Study on Co-Occurring Conditions					
Paper on Co-Existing Conditions					
Monograph on Invitational Symposium					
Study on Case Management					
Self-advocacy Survey					
Emergency Response Planning					
Self-assessment for Self Advocacy					
Report on State Individual Budgeting					
Quality Mall					
<b>Meetings</b>					
NASDDDS Annual & Mid-Year Meetings					
Reinventing Quality Conference					
Meeting on Co-Existing Conditions					
<b>Technical Assistance</b>					
On and Off-Site Technical Assistance					
Membership Teleconferences					
Topical					
Affinity Groups					
<b>Tracking and Influencing Federal Policy</b>					
Collaborate w/ CMS on Quality Frame					
Collaborate w/ CMS on Medicaid Waiver					
Negotiate w/ CMS on ICF/MR Active Rx					
National Policy Work Group					
Alliance for Full Participation					
HIPAA Work Group					

be separated from the action oriented implementation strategies that are developed to address specific policy priorities and desired programmatic outcomes. The groups agreed that implementation strategies may appropriately be designed to cut across two or more strategic goal areas, but that they need to be limited in time or focus in order to produce discreet outcomes.

By adopting this approach, the focus of annual or biannual strategic plan reviews shifts from an assessment of the continued relevancy of the plan goals to a review of progress on activities associated with discreet implementation strategies. The chart appearing above provides an overview current and past Association activities in pursuit of plan goals. Subsequent sections outline emerging issues that can be expected to influence NASDDDS activities during the upcoming years, and critical policy and practice challenges that need to be taken into consideration in developing the implementation strategies included in the succeeding sections.

## **Emerging Environmental Influences**

Looking forward, the Association's efforts to accomplish future strategic objectives will be influenced, sometimes significantly, by a number of emerging factors. These factors can be expected to have an impact on funding, service design and operation, program management, and the ability of states to meet the needs of the growing numbers of individuals and families requesting support. NASDDDS future activities, policy objectives and implementation strategies, therefore, must take into consideration the following new and emerging issues:

1. A Heightened Emphasis on Quality Oversight and Improvement. The recent roll-out of CMS' new Medicaid waiver application template, with its explicit expectations regarding the development, monitoring and improvement of service quality, will force member state agencies that have not already done so to revise and upgrade their quality monitoring activities and devote additional time and resources to this area. Moreover, several provisions of the "Deficit Reduction Act of 2005" (DRA; P.L. 109-171) suggest that additional changes in federal HCBS quality oversight policies are likely to occur within the coming years. NASDDDS will need to track developments in this area very closely and advise and assist member states agencies in their efforts to response pro-actively to new federal HCBS quality expectations.
2. The Growth in Self-directed Services. Both CMS' new HCBS waiver template and related DRA provisions suggest a continued emphasis on developing effective

approaches for funding, monitoring, and expanding access to self-directed services. NASDDDS must be prepared to assist states in creating mechanisms to sustain self-directed/self-determined support options, such as individualized resource allocation, methods and budgeting practices, fiscal intermediaries, flexible support brokerage systems and specially adapted quality oversight policies and practices.

3. Expanding Cost-Effective Community Support Options. Faced with a backlog in service demand, finite resources, and inequitable expenditure patterns, state DD agencies will need to continue an emphasis on developing and utilizing lower cost, flexible community support alternatives. NASDDDS must continue to assist states in designing and strengthening existing case management systems and fostering the development of new, non-traditional support options that offer individuals and families real choices among competing service modalities. Support also must be provided to state DD agencies transitioning services from facility-based programs to individually based community alternatives.
4. Restricted Rates of Growth in Medicaid Spending. Continuing pressures at the federal and state levels to restrain the rate of growth in Medicaid outlays will challenge the ability of state DD agencies to address unmet needs and increased service demands. NASDDDS leaders and staff must carefully track Medicaid “reform” efforts at both state and federal levels and assess the impact of proposed changes in health care and long-term service financing on publicly supported developmental disabilities services.
5. The Need to Strengthen Performance Measurement. Expanding federal oversight of Medicaid-funded services and growing restrictions on state/federal resources are placing increasing demands on state DD agencies to strengthen program and data management capabilities, to improve provider oversight and more effectively assess key performance indicators. The Association needs to expand its capacity to offer member state agencies information, critical analysis, and technical assistance on key issues related to provider performance, outcome measurement and quality assurance and improvement methods.
6. Expanding Needs of Special Populations. Growing service demands among persons with complex conditions and challenging needs (e.g., co-existing conditions, pervasive developmental disorders, autism spectrum disorders, Prader Willie, etc.) will pose significant challenges for states in the areas of resource allocation, eligibility determination, service design, oversight and system financing. NASDDDS staff will need to continue to assist member state

agencies to cope with these challenges through special projects and studies, technical assistance and information dissemination.

7. Requirements for Improved System-Wide Financial Management. State DD service are under increasing pressure to improve and strengthen existing financial management systems as a result of: (a) CMS's heightened scrutiny of state Medicaid claiming practices, (b) new Medicaid waiver requirements governing the management of HCBS waiver programs, including the use of more equitable, data-based resource allocation systems, and (c) internal state financial accountability demands. NASDDDS must continue to assist states in identifying, developing, and implementing evidence-based resource allocation models, rate-setting systems, and financial management techniques.
8. The Need to Stabilize and Improve the Direct Support Workforce. There is a pressing need for a competent and stable workforce of sufficient size to provide assistance, training, and supervision to the growing numbers of individuals with developmental disabilities in need of long-term support. NASDDDS must be able to assist states in the development of effective strategies for recruiting, hiring, training, and retaining direct support workers.

## **Strategic Goals**

The NASDDDS strategic plan identifies five priority policy goals that are designed to develop member state agencies' capacities to furnish the services and supports needed by individuals with developmental disabilities to live productive and meaningful lives with their friends and families in the community. The goals outlined below build upon current and past efforts of the Association to address key policy and practice priorities. Each goal statement is followed by a brief summary of the critical challenges that must be addressed to achieve the particular goal. A review of current and ongoing staff activities in pursuit of each plan goal can be found in Appendix A.

### **Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance and improvement capabilities.**

#### *Critical Challenges:*

- Developing more effective, non-intrusive methods of monitoring the effectiveness of self- and family-directed services;

- Developing better methods of evaluating the “natural” supports received from generic service providers and informally organized “communities of care;”
- The importance of forging functional partnerships between the federal government and the states to achieve sustainable improvements in the quality of community services; and
- The need for clearer CMS policies and guidelines on claiming enhanced FFP in the cost of designing and installing improved management information systems for Medicaid-funded DD services.

## **Goal 2 Building the community infrastructure needed to under-gird a system of individualized supports**

### *Critical Challenges:*

- Fostering the expanded use of assistive and applied technologies in to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of publicly funded DD services.
- The need to emphasize the use of “evidence-based” intervention strategies of proven effectiveness.
- Improving state and local management information capabilities.
- Improving access to integrated community housing options and alternatives.
- Strengthening community infrastructures to support individuals (and their families) who are self-directing their services and support (e.g., more and better instruction on how to recruit, train, evaluate, and, when necessary, fire support workers/agencies).
- Developing more streamlined and effective approaches to managing community services and overseeing the effectiveness of such services through the use of modern information technology.
- Improving access to a full range of medical, dental and health related services that are required by individuals with chronic or intensive medical conditions.

- Improving the quality and responsiveness of case management services.
- The need for increased emphasis on achieving employment outcomes and making well-paid jobs a realistic option for a broader range of adolescents and adults with developmental disabilities.
- The need to expand opportunities for self-advocates and family members to participate in the formulation and execution of policy.

### **Goal 3 Building community capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.**

#### *Critical Challenges:*

- Improving service capacity and evidence-based intervention strategies for emerging populations (e.g., adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorders) and low incidence populations (e.g. persons who are deaf and cognitively impaired).
- The need to improve services to persons whose needs span two or more human service delivery systems (e.g., persons with cognitive disabilities and mental illnesses).
- Improving access to non-aversive methods of responding to the needs of individuals with challenging behaviors.
- The need to strengthen staff training and technical assistance to improve services and supports to individuals with co-existing conditions and chronic medical needs.

### **Goal 4 Developing an Effective Workforce**

#### *Critical Challenges:*

- The need to improve “cultural sensitivity” by teaching frontline workers to respect the cultural, religious, and social view of others (i.e., both fellow staff members and persons receiving support).

- Assisting states in employing effective approaches to managing and supporting the development of an increasingly diverse workforce.
- Developing and supporting “highly respectful organizations” that emphasize the need for productive and respectful personal relationships at all levels.
- The need to recruit direct contact workers that possess not only technical skills but who also understand how to relate to people with disabilities as people.
- The need to address key employment issues in self-directed services, including the support and supervision of direct contact workers, avoiding conflicts of interest, the role of families, guardians and surrogates, and dispute resolution techniques.
- Strengthening staff training and technical assistance to improve services and supports to individuals with challenging and complex conditions and chronic medical care needs.

## **Goal 5 Developing Responsive Financial Strategies**

### *Critical Challenges:*

- Promoting creative public-private partnerships.
- The need for more sophisticated and accurate methods of benchmarking the effective and efficient use of public dollars.
- The need to monitor the effects of state/local restructuring initiatives on the availability and individualization of DD services.
- The need to develop defensible resource allocation strategies that can serve as the basis for individual budgets.

## **Implementation Strategies**

The NASDDDS Strategic Plan establishes five priority policy goals addressing key challenges currently facing state developmental disabilities service systems. At a practical level, these strategic goals are accomplished through implementation

strategies that focus on more narrowly defined operational objectives reflecting the overlap of policy and practice. Implementation strategies are aimed at accomplishing specific outcomes and in many cases can be expected to cut across two or more strategic goals. Implementation strategies must be consistent with the Association's mission, goals and guiding principles and designed to accomplish valued outcomes that: (a) have a positive impact on the lives of individuals and families receiving support, (b) increase the capacity of individuals with developmental disabilities to live satisfying and productive lives in the community, and (c) affirm each individual's right to be treated with respect and receive high quality supports.

**Principles and Parameters.** Implementation strategies need to be designed within parameters that align the Association's activities with its mission and principles, guiding staff toward the accomplishment of key objectives that:

- Demonstrate Respect for People Receiving Support. All implementation strategies must show respect for the privacy, individuality, and self-determination of the people receiving support.
- Emphasize Relevant Activities. Implementation strategies must be designed to provide information on topics that have meaning to the people who are the subjects of the investigation and relevant to their daily lives.
- Provide Evidence of the Effectiveness of Intervention/Support Methods. Implementation strategies should be designed to produce qualitative and quantitative evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of support models and approaches, funding methodologies, system designs, quality assurance/improvement techniques, evaluation methods, and data management procedures. The emphasis should be on the development of proven or evidence-based practices that result in measurable performance outcomes at both the individual and systems levels.
- Reflect Financial Reality. All implementation strategies adopted by the Association should reflect the day-to-day financial realities of service provision, and demonstrate an understanding of cost and expenditure data that are related to the current and future affordability of long-term systems of support.
- Demonstrate Practical Use and Functionality. All implementation strategies should focus on the development of practical solutions to day-to-day problems faced by member state agencies, community service providers, consumers, and family members. Emphasis must be placed on developing tools state agencies can use to

improve the quality and capacity of DD service systems, reduce costs, document change, and replicate effective models of service provision.

- Produce Replicable Results. Implementation strategies must be intended to produce accurate descriptive information and data that can be used to replicate innovative service models in other states and programs.
- Discover New Approaches. Implementation strategies should lead, where possible and appropriate, to the development of new service designs that demonstrate improvements in support outcomes.

**Strategies.** Implementation strategies provide a framework for focusing the activities of Association leaders and staff on high priority operational objectives that may cut across two or more of the five strategic plan goals. Focusing on specific practical outcomes, the implementation strategies highlight the interdependent nature of the five plan goals and the importance of their separate roles in key Association objectives. Implementation strategies are designed to accomplish specific results and can be expected to change over time to address emerging needs and issues. Although most of the projects will be able to be completed with existing staff and financial resources, some activities will require that the Association work in collaboration with other groups and individuals and/or additional funding. To distinguish between these two types of activities, the implementation strategies outlined below are separated into “active” initiatives that the Association can undertake with existing resources and expertise, and “developmental” projects that will require additional financing or collaboration with others

## *ACTIVE*

1. **Influencing National Policy. Represent the interests of state DD agencies in the development, formulation and administration of national policy affecting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families,**
  - a. Focus
    - i. Track emerging national policy developments and initiatives coming from the U.S. Congress and the administration that have an impact on publicly financed services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
    - ii. Analyze new and existing federal policies that may influence state’s capacities to furnish services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities.

- iii. Collaborate with the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) on the development of federal policies and practices that reflect the perspectives of state DD directors and facilitate service delivery to individuals with developmental disabilities.
- iv. On behalf of the NASDDDS membership, negotiate with CMS to resolve differences between state and federal policy interpretation and practice.

b. Implementation

- i. Perform contact analysis of new and proposed national legislation, regulation, and administrative guidelines to assess their impact on state-financed services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- ii. Track and comment on federal policy developments with implications for member state agencies under the direction of the Association's National Policy Work Group;
- iii. Lead efforts to inform state officials of the implications of new and emerging federal policies through the establishment of topic-specific work groups addressing topics of interest to member state agency officials;
- iv. Conduct national policy forums that offer member state agency officials the opportunity to engage in face-to-face dialog with federal policymakers on key topics of the day;
- v. Provide timely, accurate information to member state agency staff on new federal policy developments through the weekly issues of *Beltway Briefs* and monthly issues of *Perspectives*;
- vi. Provide in-depth analyses of important federal policy developments through bulletins in the *Directors' Alert* and the *Policy Advisory* series; and
- vii. Conduct Association teleconferences that provide member state agency officials with information and insights into key policy and practice topics.

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.

- ☑ Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- ☑ Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**2. Providing Technical Assistance. Support member state agencies in improving and expanding publicly financed services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.**

a. Focus

- i. Respond to requests from member state agencies for technical assistance and guidance on the development, financing, and oversight of developmental disabilities services.
- ii. Prepare special studies, analyses and reports to assist states identify and overcome barriers to improving systems of financing and resource allocation, strengthening quality oversight and addressing other issues (see below).

b. Implementation

- i. Provide direct on-site technical assistance, support, and training to assist member state agencies in improving publicly financed services and supports, resolving Medicaid issues, expanding services, or addressing other areas of interest.
- ii. Prepare and disseminate special reports on key areas of interest to the membership, consistent with the Association's strategic goals and objectives.
- iii. Provide information to state officials on key areas of interest through Association sponsored Affinity Group teleconferences addressing facility closure strategies, the provision of self-directed service alternatives, improving access to integrated community housing, and other topics.

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- ☑ Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- ☑ Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- ☑ Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- ☑ Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- ☑ Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**3. Disseminating Policy Information. Preparation and dissemination of information concerning state and federal policy and program developments related to the five strategic goals.**

a. Focus

- i. Provide relevant and up-to-date information to member state agencies on federal, state, and local issues of interest through regularly scheduled and periodic newsletters and bulletins.

b. Implementation

- i. Regularly disseminate information on state and local policy through *Beyond the Beltway*, *Community Services Reporter*, and *In the News: State*.
- ii. Regularly disseminate information on national policy through *Beltway Briefs*, *Perspectives*, *In the News: Federal*, *Directors' Alert Bulletins*, and the *Policy Advisory*.
- iii. Hold regularly scheduled Annual and Mid-Year Association meetings where key issues impacting on the activities and plans of members state agencies are explored in-depth;
- iv. Co-sponsor with other national recognized disability centers an annual conference to explore new and improved methods of overseeing and improving the quality of DD services; and
- v. Inform the membership of emerging state and federal policy issues through Directors Forums and the National Policy Forums held in conjunction with the Association Mid-Year and Annual meetings.

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

4. **Supporting People with Complex and Challenging Conditions.** Complete the description and analysis of state strategies for supporting individuals with co-existing developmental disabilities and mental illnesses or behavioral disturbances.

a. Focus

- i. Analyze state strategies for supporting individuals with co-existing developmental disabilities and mental illness.

b. Implementation

- i. Complete and distribute final study report.

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

5. **Self-Advocacy.** Complete field testing and final development of the NASDDDS self-assessment instrument for evaluating state's support for self-advocacy activities.

a. Focus

- i. Complete self-assessment instrument field testing process.
- ii. Develop and disseminate the final self-assessment instrument.

b. Implementation

- i. Assist field test states in administering, scoring, and analyzing their respective self-assessments.
- ii. Analyze and disseminate results of the field-testing process.
- iii. Make final revisions to the self assessment instrument
- iv. Distribute final instrument and instructions to all member state agencies.

- v. Assist states in administering, scoring, and analyzing the results of the self-assessment instrument.
- vi. Disseminate information to the membership on new and innovative state policy and practice initiatives that increase or improve statewide self-advocacy outcomes.

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**6. Emergency Response Planning. Complete field testing and final development of the NASDDDS self-assessment instrument for evaluating state DD agency emergency response plans and documents.**

a. Focus

- i. Complete the development of the instrument
- ii. Complete field testing process
- iii. Develop and disseminate final emergency response planning tool.
- iv. In collaboration with the Association's ad-hoc committee on emergency preparedness and the NASDDDS Board of Directors, investigate the level of interest among the membership in sponsoring a meeting or symposium to discuss emergency response planning for persons with developmental disabilities.

b. Implementation

- i. Assist contractor in developing the self-assessment instrument.
- ii. Assist field test states in administering, scoring, and analyzing the results of the field-testing process.
- iii. Analyze and disseminate the results of the field-testing process.
- iv. Make final revisions to the self assessment instrument
- v. Distribute final version of the instrument and instructions to all member state agencies.

- vi. Assist states in administering, scoring and analyzing the results of the self-assessment instrument

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**7. Integrated Employment. Implement, in collaboration with the Institute on Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts/Boston, the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) in states electing to participate in the project. Work with state officials to improve employment outcomes among individuals with developmental disabilities receiving publicly financed services and supports.**

a. Focus

- i. Disseminate, in collaboration with ICI UMass/Boston and member state agencies, information on promising employment practices with particular reference to new and innovative policies, programs and systems of support that:
  - Make effective use of scarce service dollars
  - Result in high rates of employment for individuals with developmental disabilities
  - Furnish services and supports with high rates of consumer satisfaction and involvement.
  - Produce valid and reliable data on performance outcomes.
  - Address the employment and training needs of individuals with complex and challenging conditions.

b. Implementation

- i. Implement, in collaboration with the ICI UMass/Boston, an operational plan for the SELN.
- ii. Hire employment specialist and research assistant to assist in implementing the project.

- iii. Provide services and supports as described in the SELN proposal distributed to states via email on March 7, 2006.

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**8. Family Support. Assist states in improving supports to families of individuals with developmental disabilities.**

a. Focus

- i. Work in collaboration with Advocates for Family Support, (AFS) a national group of family support policy leaders to identifying common policy goals and objectives aimed at improving support to families of individuals with developmental disabilities and the expansion of family directed services
- ii. Collaborate with AFS on the development of recommendations for state DD agencies concerning the collection and analysis of data on publicly financed supports and services furnished to the families of individuals with developmental disabilities.

b. Implementation

- i. Collaborate with Advocates for Family Support on the development of an agenda and program focusing on a discussion of state family support strategies as the theme of the NASDDDS Annual Meeting being held in Crystal City Virginia in November 2006.
- ii. Participation in ongoing meeting of the AFS Data Group
- iii. Reconvene the Association's Research Committee to advise the National Policy Work Group, the Board of Directors and staff on: (a) the identification, collection and analysis of data on regarding services and supports furnished to individuals and families, (b) improvements in the relevancy, reliability and validity of data on the costs and

utilization of individual and family support services, and (c) system-wide trends and issues,.

iv. Conduct a mini-survey of state DD officials on data issues.

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**9. Improving Quality in Self-directed Services. Evaluate the impact of self-directed services on the quality of individuals' health, safety, and welfare.**

a. Focus

- i. Describe existing state strategies assuring and improving quality in self-directed services for people with developmental disabilities.
- ii. Evaluate the extent to which state quality assurance/quality improvement systems for self-directed services cede decision-making authority and power to individuals receiving support.
- iii. Compare the health and safety of people who direct their own supports with that of individuals who receive support through traditional systems of care.
- iv. Compare rates of abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and injury among people who receive traditional services with those among individuals who direct their own supports.

b. Implementation

- i. Work in collaboration with the Association's Self-Directed Services affinity group to identify key regulatory and operational indicators of support quality and appropriateness.
- ii. Perform a mini-survey of state quality assurance and improvement methodologies for self directed services that employ assessment and monitoring techniques that differ from the approach used to review traditional programs.

- iii. Identify and describe innovative approaches for assessing self-directed services.
- iv. Provide information to member state agency staff through Affinity Group teleconferences on promising quality improvement practices.

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**10. Allocating Resources. Describe state strategies for assessing individual service needs and resource allocation practices.**

a. Focus

- i. Describe state strategies for evaluating individual service needs through the AAMR Support Intensity Scale, the Developmental Disabilities Profile, the Inventory for Client and Agency Planning, state-designed assessment tools and other instruments.
- ii. Identify and describe methodologies states employ to allocate resources to individuals in a fair, equitable, and reliable manner.

b. Implementation

- i. Conduct a survey of member state agencies to determine the methods being used to assess individual resource needs and determine funding allocations;
- ii. Identify promising practices in self-determined/self-directed services.
- iii. Complete a report to the membership outlining promising resource allocation methodologies and practices.

c. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.

- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

## *DEVELOPMENTAL*

### **1. Self-Directed Services. Strengthen the capacity of member state agencies to assure and improve the quality of self and family-directed (self-determined) services and supports.**

- a. Develop an evidence base in support of self-directed services.
  - i. Identify service designs, funding mechanisms and program structures that are related to the achievement of positive individual and system outcomes regarding self and family directed services.
  - ii. Identify key support strategies, policies, and operational methods that are positively correlated with high levels of health, safety, and welfare.
- b. Describe workforce characteristics and supervisory patterns that are associated with the development of positive and productive long-term support relationships over time.
  - i. Identify key training and support needs of individuals and families supervising direct support staff covering, for example, staff recruitment, training, evaluation, and termination.
- d. Establish productive working relationships with CMS leading to the development of more effective approaches for assessing and improving the quality of self-directed services and supports.
- e. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals
  - Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
  - Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
  - Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
  - Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
  - Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**2. Supporting People with Complex and Challenging Conditions. Describe state approaches for serving individuals with intensive needs and reputations.**

- a. Report documenting state strategies for meeting the needs of individuals with autism and related disorders.
- b. Report documenting state strategies for meeting the needs of persons with developmental disabilities who commit sex offenses and other serious crimes.
- c. Study of state strategies for determining individual competence, informed consent, and the need for custody, guardianship, and representation.
- d. Conduct a mini-survey of member state agencies requesting information on specific programs, services, or treatment approaches used to support the two groups identified above.
- e. Document innovative program and service models. Distribute results to the membership.
- f. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals
  - Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
  - Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
  - Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
  - Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
  - Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**3. Workforce Development. Document state's strategies for developing and nurturing a culturally sensitive and responsive workforce.**

- a. Identify and describe the strategies member state agencies use to recruit, train and supervise frontline professionals and direct support workers to ensure that the community workforce is cognizant of and sensitive to the needs and perspectives of not only workers from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, but also consumers and families from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- b. Identify and describe the approaches used by state DD agencies to emphasize the importance of establishing personal relationships between support staff

and individuals receiving services based on effective and caring human interaction rather than simply the application of learned skills.

- c. Survey NASDDDS member state agencies on the current use of culturally sensitive employment recruitment and retention practices.
- d. Identify and describe promising practice workforce development examples.
- e. Hold an Association teleconference showcasing promising practices.
- f. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals
  - Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
  - Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
  - Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
  - Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
  - Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**4. Workforce Development. Describe state strategies for addressing key employment issues in self-directed services with respect to: (a) the support and supervision of direct support workers, (b) resolving conflict of interest, (c) the role of families, guardians and surrogates as supervisors and direct support workers, and (d) dispute resolution policies and practices.**

- a. Develop a compendium of state policies and practices in each of the areas identified in strategy number three above.
- b. Identify key issues addressed, barriers, and policy strategies for each identified issue.
- c. Contact member state agencies with a request for copies of their policies and practice guidelines regarding each of the four points listed in strategy number three.
- d. Perform a content analysis of the documents received.
- e. Publish a summary of state strategies for addressing the four issues with links to state examples and contacts.

f. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

5. **Workforce Development. Build the capacity of state developmental disabilities agencies to recruit and retain an effective workforce.**

- a. Establish an evidence base of policies and proven practices to assist member state agencies in developing a committed, qualified, and responsive workforce.
- b. Identify workforce development strategies that appear to be correlated with increases in direct support staff recruitment and retention rates.
- c. Identify staff development and training strategies that measure the impact of the training received by tracking performance outcomes, such as, increased numbers of direct support staff receiving training, improvements in staff expertise and performance, increased longevity on the job, increased staff satisfaction rates, etc.
- d. Describe approaches used by state DD agencies to identify and respond to key workforce issues such as rates of pay, turnover, and the need for staff with specific expertise.
- e. Describe approaches used by state DD agencies to increase the capacity of the workforce to respond to the needs of individuals with complex and challenging behavioral and medical needs in community residential and employment settings.
- f. Identify effective workforce development approaches for non-traditional support options that rely upon family members, friends, neighbors, and co-workers as paid caregivers and support workers.

g. Document state strategies for developing and supporting “highly reliable organizations” that emphasize the need for productive and respectful relationships at all levels of the organization.

h. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals

- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
- Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
- Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
- Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
- Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

6. **Effective Financial and Data Management. Build the capacity of state developmental disabilities agencies to administer services and supports through responsive financial, data and information management systems.**

a. Through the National Core Indicators program, identify and recommend sophisticated and accurate measures of system-wide performance, and recommend benchmarks for measuring the effective and efficient use of public dollars.

b. Analyze the potential impact of key Medicaid and other federal initiatives such as the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 on existing publicly financed programs and services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

i. Describe the implications for states furnishing services to individuals with developmental disabilities through (a) integrated human service management systems utilizing single state or regional operating units serving multiple populations or (b) state agencies operating individually or as functional units within broader broad state departments.

ii. Describe the implications of such integrated management systems for states committed to expanding or maintaining the focus on individualization, choice and self or family-directed services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

c. Describe and analyze state strategies for using data and information technology to improve the quality services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities, particularly with respect to Medicaid HCBS waiver and self-directed services.

- d. Document approaches used by states to track services provided and outcomes achieved by individuals with complex and challenging conditions such as those with co-existing developmental disabilities and mental illness, behavioral disorders, intensive medical needs, and autism.
- e. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals
  - Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
  - Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
  - Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
  - Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
  - Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**7. Serving Multi-Needs Populations. Assist states in developing the capacity to support individuals with multiple and complex needs.**

- a. Work with NASDDDS member state agencies in developing a research agenda to guide the analysis and description of promising state strategies for supporting individuals with particularly complex and challenging service needs, including:
  - i. Individuals with intellectual impairments who have histories of antisocial behaviors and/or criminal offenses (e.g., sex offenses, arson, child molestation, assault, etc.)
  - ii. Individuals with intellectual impairments who are deaf.
  - iii. Persons with autism spectrum disorders or pervasive developmental delay
  - iv. Children and adults with intensive medical needs
  - v. Individuals with low incidence genetic and other disorders and conditions.
- b. Complete special projects or studies examining state strategies for supporting individuals with complex and challenging service needs identified in “b” above addressing key support provision issues such as:
  - i. Eligibility determination
  - ii. Service design and provision
  - iii. Resource allocation and funding

- iv. Quality assessment
  - v. Self-direction
  - vi. Workforce development and training
- c. Develop an inventory of proven support strategies and service approaches with evidence demonstrating their effectiveness.
- d. Provide technical assistance to states on improving existing supports or developing new service options for individuals with complex and challenging conditions.
- i. Assist state DD agencies in developing effective crisis and emergency response services, economical service models and cost-effective funding strategies.
- e. Relationship to Strategic Plan Goals
- Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance.
  - Goal 2. Building an individualized community support infrastructure.
  - Goal 3. Building capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.
  - Goal 4. Developing an effective workforce.
  - Goal 5. Developing responsive financial systems and strategies.

**8. Expanding Support for Self-advocacy. Assist states in developing effective and manageable strategies for supporting self-advocacy and “consumer” empowerment.**

- a. In collaboration with the NASDDDS Board of Directors, assess the feasibility of establishing a self-advocate advisory committee to meet with the Board on a regular basis to: (a) provide input on Association activities, (b) comment on strategic goals, and (c) collaborate on key national policy initiatives.
- b. Provide technical assistance to states on improving support for self-advocacy activities.

## Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, the Strategic Plan is designed to bridge the Association's mission and guiding principles with membership-based priorities for action, research, and policy development. The plan identifies strategic policy goals as well as "active" and "developmental" implementation strategies to address the challenges currently confronting public developmental disabilities systems in the areas of self-directed services, resource allocation, quality improvement, community infrastructure development, workforce, and finance. Many of the identified objectives can be accomplished through existing Association resources. Others, however, will require effective collaboration with federal and state entities, University Centers for Excellence, other research organizations, as well as national associations, and individuals with expertise.

The NASDDDS Strategic Plan is intended to function as a dynamic, working document that is revised and updated periodically to account for new realities presented by the shifting social, political, and regulatory environments. As noted in the "Revised Organizational Framework" section above, the new plan is organized around a relatively stable core of five key strategic policy goals. In contrast to the approach employed in previous years, the new format supports the development of a series of flexible implementation strategies that cut across goal areas, are time limited, and enable Association leaders and staff to focus on policy and practice questions that better reflect the operational realities faced by member state agencies. Implementation strategies will be reviewed on a regular basis and, where necessary, revised to more effectively address emerging policy barriers or to take advantage of new opportunities.

The Association's Board of Directors intends to continually monitor progress toward achieving the Strategic Plan's goals and implementation objectives. Member state agencies will be kept abreast of the status of plan-related activities, the progress achieved, the barriers that have been encountered, and the steps that have been taken to circumvent such barriers during periodic Association meetings and events.

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**NASDDDS Strategic Plan  
Current Activities**

**Goal 1. Strengthening system-wide quality assurance and improvement capabilities.**

- Collaboration with CMS on the national inventory of Medicaid HCB waiver programs, the Quality Framework, and the new Medicaid waiver application template.
- Negotiation with CMS on waiver template development, ICF/MR active treatment disputes, waiver quality assessment.
- Sponsorship of the National Core Indicators Program in collaboration with the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) and participating state agencies.
- Sponsorship of the annual Reinventing Quality Conference in collaboration with the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration and HSRI.
- Support for the Quality Mall operated by the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration.
- Sponsorship of Topical Membership Teleconferences on key issues related to quality assurance and improvement including: the provision of health and dental services, risk and liability, and case management.
- Influencing National Policy through the National Policy Workgroup, HIPAA workgroups and other initiatives.
- Organized NASDDDS Annual and Mid-Year Meetings with sessions focusing on quality assurance and improvement.
- NASDDDS bulletins highlighting quality assurance and improvement strategies in *Beltway Briefs* and *Beyond the Beltway, Perspectives, and Community Services Reporter*.

**Goal 2 Building the community infrastructure needed to under-gird a system of individualized supports**

- Collaboration with CMS on the Quality Framework and the new Medicaid waiver application template, emphasizing individualized, self-directed service options.
- Sponsorship of the National Core Indicators Program in collaboration with HSRI and participating state agencies using a national set of performance indicators.
- Distribution of the Core Reports in collaboration with HSRI, summarizing NCI data on interstate outcome and performance trends.
- Support for the Quality Mall operated by the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration.
- Organized NASDDDS Annual and Mid-Year Meetings with sessions focusing on the development of individualized person-centered systems of support.

- Sponsorship of the Annual Reinventing Quality Conference in collaboration with the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration and HSRI focusing on individualized, person-centered services.
- Conduct Topical Membership Teleconferences on key issues related to individualized services in the areas of self-determination, case management, and housing.
- Conduct NASDDDS Affinity Group on self-directed services to address systems change, support brokerage, and the use of HCBS 1915(c) Medicaid waivers to support individualized, self-directed supports.
- Conduct a study of state strategies for providing case management services within an individualized services framework.
- Preparation of NASDDDS bulletins highlighting quality assurance and improvement strategies in *Beltway Briefs* and *Beyond the Beltway, Perspectives, and Community Services Reporter*.
- Provision of ongoing technical assistance to states on key areas related to individualized services, case management, individual budgeting, service design, self-advocacy, and other areas.

**Goal 3 Building community capacity to support people with multiple and complex needs.**

- Participation in a Seminar on serving individuals with dual diagnoses sponsored by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (April 2003).
- Preparation of a Monograph on state systems of support for individuals with co-occurring behavioral and developmental disabilities (“Picking Up the Pieces of our Past Mistakes: Supporting People with Co-Occurring Conditions,” Chas Moseley, February 2004).
- Sponsored an Invitational Symposium on “State Strategies for Supporting Individuals with Co-Occurring Conditions” for state directors and national experts.
- Preparation and Distribution of a Report summarizing the key symposium findings and recommendations to all NASDDDS member state agencies (“Getting a Life: Findings and Recommendations, NASDDDS’ Invitational Symposium on Supporting Individuals with Co-Existing Conditions,” November 2004).
- Conducted a Membership Survey on state strategies for supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and mental health needs (see NASDDDS Technical Report October 2004).
- Organization of the NASDDDS’ 2004 Mid-Year Membership Meeting in Portland Maine focusing on “Building Supportive Communities for Individuals Facing Behavioral Challenges.”
- Completion of an In-Depth Analysis of the approaches used in 13, selected states to provide services and supports to persons with co-occurring developmental and behavioral disabilities. Final report in progress.
- Sponsorship of the National Core Indicators Program in collaboration with HSRI and twenty-five participating state agencies. The project tracks performance indicators

- assessing treatment characteristics and medication usage among individuals with dual diagnoses.
- Conducted Association Teleconferences addressing the needs of persons with multiple and complex support requirements: “Meeting the Needs of Individuals with Co-Occurring Developmental Disabilities and Mental Illness,” “Supporting Criminal Offenders with Lifelong Disabilities,” “Rising Rates of Autism: How Will States Identify Individuals with Autism and Respond to Their Service Need?” and “State Crisis Response Strategies.”
  - Facilitation of Dispute Resolution Efforts between CMS and state ICF/MR programs regarding active treatment.
  - Preparation of NASDDDS Bulletins highlighting state strategies for supporting individuals with complex and challenging needs in *Beltway Briefs* and *Beyond the Beltway, Perspectives, and Community Services Reporter*.

#### **Goal 4    Developing an Effective Workforce**

- Organization of Annual and Mid-Year Association meetings with sessions addressed workforce development issues.
- Sponsorship of the Annual Reinventing Quality Conference in collaboration with the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration and HSRI. The conference hosts the annual Moving Mountains Award presented by the College of Direct Support to individuals and organizations that demonstrate national leadership in workforce development and career support.
- Support for the Quality Mall operated by the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration. The Quality Mall includes information on workforce development and cultural competence.
- NASDDDS staff serve on the National Advisory Board of the College of Direct Support (CDS), an internet based college for direct support professionals organized and supported by the University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration (UMN/ICI) in collaboration with Atlanta-based MC Strategies and the Sertoma Center.
- Preparation of NASDDDS Bulletins highlighting state and community program efforts to address workforce issues, staff training, recruitment and retention and career development through “Beyond the Beltway,” “Policy Analysis” bulletins and the *Community Services Reporter*.
- Conducted Association Teleconferences focusing on workforce development strategies related to: (a) compensation & benefits, (b) recruitment, (c) retention, (d) training, and (e) role of federal policy. Workforce issues have additionally been discussed in teleconferences related to facility closure, self-determination, serving individuals with challenging needs, risk and liability and other topics.
- Sponsorship of the National Core Indicators Program in collaboration with HSRI and twenty-five participating state agencies. The project tracks performance indicators assessing provider stability and the perceived competence of direct support staff.

## Goal 5 Developing Responsive Financial Strategies

- Complete a Special Study on Individual Budgeting. Published a report on state individual budgeting strategies entitled *Having It Your Way: Understanding State Individual Budgeting Strategies*, (October 2003).
- Conduct Topical Membership Teleconferences focusing on financing and managing the delivery of individualized services, the Bush Administration's Money-Follows-the-Person initiative, state individualized budgeting strategies, and setting up financial management services in 2004.
- Conduct the NASDDDS Affinity Group on self-directed addressing systems change, individual budgeting, support brokerage, and training individuals to effectively manage their personal support workers.
- Organize Mid-Year Association Meetings with sessions addressing financial strategies and issues including the financing and managing of individualized networks of community supports.
- Preparation of NASDDDS bulletins highlighting Medicaid initiatives and state strategies for financing community DD services in *Beltway Briefs* and *Beyond the Beltway, Perspectives, and Community Services Reporter*.