

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STAFF RETENTION REPORT

MAINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON STAFF RETENTION

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STAFF RETENTION REPORT

The Advisory Committee on Staff Retention was established by the 112th Maine Legislature for the purpose of reviewing the stability of the work force in community-based facilities for persons with mental retardation, including issues of staff turnover, minimum orientation, training and educational requirements, wage parity with state run facilities and administrative cost of recruitment, training and retention.

The Staff Retention Committee was appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House. The Committee membership includes:

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON STAFF RETENTION:

Senator Beverly Bustin
6 Colony Road
Augusta, Maine 04330

Representative Donnell P. Carroll
P. O. Box 163
Gray, Maine 04039

William Heselton
Director of Human Resources
Central Maine Power Company
Edison Drive
Augusta, Maine 04336

Roland Caron
Powell Memorial Center
Eagle Lake, Maine 04739

Charlene Kinnelly
Uplift, Inc.
Hallowell, Maine

Leigh Wiley
Abbot Group Home
Abbot, Maine 04406

Betsy J. Davenport, Director
Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
Bureau of Mental Retardation
State House Station 40
Augusta, Maine 04333

The Staff Retention Committee was officially convened by Senator John Diamond on October 24, 1986. The Committee has met regularly over the past five months. Accomplishments to date are as follows:

- The Committee was briefed on Principles of Reimbursement for Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded, (ICF/MR) by James Getchell, Director, Division of Audits, Bureau of Medical Services and Trish Riley, Director, Bureau of Medical Services, in order to ascertain how the Principles of Reimbursement affect staff salaries and staff turn-over.
- The Committee held a public hearing specifically targeted to direct service care staff of ICFs/MR in order to receive testimony concerning staff training and retention.
- A survey instrument was developed to solicit information from each ICF/MR home in order to obtain current data on staff turnover, salaries and training. Surveys have been mailed, follow up has been completed and results have been received from 28 of the current 39 homes. Gross

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tabulations have been done.

- A survey instrument was also designed for individual employees of each ICF/MR home in order to obtain directly from staff those factors that contribute to staff retention. The survey has been sent and responses have been received from 303 employees representing 32 different facilities. Gross tabulations of these surveys have been completed.
- A survey instrument was designed for former employees of ICFs/MR in order to ascertain reasons for leaving employment. This survey has been mailed out.
- The Committee has kept abreast of the activities of the Committee established to review the recruitment, training and retention of Certified Nurses Aides (CNAs). While some similar trends in turnover exists, the nature of the job, the training requirements, and the clientele served would indicate that these groups each warrant the individual attention of the Maine Legislature in order to adequately address their unique needs.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

While it was a generally recognized fact prior to the creation of the Advisory Committee on Staff Retention that there was and still is a disparity between salaries paid to direct care staff in community-based programs and state operated facilities for people with mental retardation. Both types of programs, state and privately operated, are licensed as Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded. Both types of programs also serve a very similar group of people, those requiring very intensive intervention and supervision.

The Staff Retention Committee has been able to quantify the nature of the disparity in salaries between the public and private sector, as well as other issues that relate to the retention of staff. While the Committee believes the findings below to be factual, it is recognized that additional scrutiny and analysis is needed in order to fully address the charges given to the Committee by the Maine Legislature.

Finding # 1 Clients served in community residences require sophisticated habilitation programs which, in turn, requires trained staff who can consistently follow prescribed procedures.

Finding # 2 There is a fairly definitive profile of direct service staff in community residences - young female staff with high school education and less than three years' experience on the job.
50.8% are under the age of 32,
77.6% are female,
37.6% have high school as maximum education,
65.7% have worked in the field less than three years.

Finding # 3 Based on testimony at public hearings and on survey results, there is a definite correlation between staff retention and staff training. There is a need to develop career mechanism which will upgrade the quality of staff in community residences which will also allow increased wages to accompany increased training and skill acquisition.

Finding # 4 Turnover is a problem in community residences. Further, it is a greater problem in the southern part of the state than in the northern part of the state.

Turnover for north vs south
Dividing line is Belfast - Augusta - Bethel
Direct service staff - 39.91% north
58.54% south

Finding # 5 There is a significant wage disparity between the private and public sector. Further, the disparity grows as tenure increases:

DISPARITY	PRIVATE	PUBLIC
33.6%	Average minimum	Average minimum
	Weekly 179.81	Weekly 240.00
	Hourly 4.49	Hourly 6.00
44.14%	Average Maximum	Average Maximum
	Weekly 225.82	Weekly 322.33
	Hourly 5.64	Hourly 8.05

Finding # 6 The Principles of Reimbursement do not allow facilities to alter wage structures sufficiently to narrow the gap between public and private sector. Increased insurance costs have been a contributing factor, along with substantial delays in audits.

Finding # 7 There are additional disparities within private sector. More recently approved Certificates of Need allow newer homes to pay higher wages than homes approved several years ago. The older homes are only allowed percentage increases upon Certificate of Need specified costs as calculated in the early 1980s.

Finding # 8 Staff turnover is an expensive proposition. There are the obvious costs of overtime payments at time and a half to cover vacant positions, costs for advertising, wage costs during orientation, and costs of screening and interviewing. Less tangible, but more importantly, are the costs to the individual growth and development of the affected clients. The Committee estimates conservatively that each facility spends an average of \$23,700 per year on costs associated with turnover. This figure multiplied by 39 facilities indicates that the state is currently spending nearly one million dollars on staff turnover.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Staff Retention Committee should be extended for another year. Its charge should include the following:
 - A. Work with experts in the field to design a competency-based career ladder for the field.
 - B. Develop implementation strategies for the enhancement of professional growth and development, and strategies to close the gap in salaries between the public and private sector.
 - C. Report back to the second session with findings and further recommendations.

2. The Department of Human Services should be directed to review and implement, with input from providers, revisions in the present Principles of Reimbursement to permit facilities to increase wages to employees. Revision should include:
 - A. Moving all insurances from variable to fixed costs.
 - B. Devising a mechanism whereby facilities can apply for an increase in the wage portion of the variable rate in order to compete with other employers.
 - C. Principles of Reimbursement need to be modified to accommodate costs associated with professional growth and development of staff.
3. The Department should undertake a review of audit scheduling and procedures and devise methods to decrease the delay in completion of audits of community facilities.
4. Legislation should be enacted which assures that a percentage increase to the wage portion of the variable rate is comparable with the percentage increase negotiated in state employee contracts. Although this will not close the existing gap, it will help to assure that the gap does not increase while other efforts are made to address the problem.