

IL-NET

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Establishing and Managing Fees-for-Service in Centers for Independent Living

Overview of Alpha One's FFS Programs

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1:30 p.m.–2:30 p.m.

Presenter:

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Powering Independent Living

MAINE'S CENTER FOR
INDEPENDENT LIVING

Overview Of Alpha One Programs

- Core IL Services
 - Information and Referral
 - Advocacy and Self-Advocacy
 - Peer Services
 - Skills Training
- Access and Housing
 - Access Design
 - Critical Access

Overview Of Alpha One Programs, cont'd.



- Supportive Services
 - Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Services (CD-PAS)
 - mPower
 - Return to Life
- Durable Medical Equipment
 - Alpha One Medical
 - Renegade
- Adapted Driver Training

Access Design and Critical Access

About Access Design

- Evaluation and design services to improve access and compliance with ADA architectural standards.
- Access Design grew directly from core I & R activities answering questions about access to residences, businesses, and public facilities.
- Five years before Alpha One was founded, Maine included access to public accommodations in its Human Rights Statute. Following passage of the ADA, Alpha One added its first staff architect in 1991.
- Access Design serves individuals, businesses, and public entities to meet the access needs of all people with a disability

Access Design Operations and Examples



- Fees charged based on per hour use of professional services – typically \$95 per hour. (Large scale projects often are done by bid and costs may be lower or higher depending on the project/scale.)
- Access Design is staffed by Certified Architect with expertise in access design issues
- Access Design has worked extensively throughout New England and across the country. Sample projects include:
 - Sunday River Ski Resort, Newry, Maine
 - Superior and District Courthouses throughout Maine
 - Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine
 - Red Roof Inns, East Coast of US
 - Penobscot Narrows Bridge, Bucksport, Maine
 - Recreational Sites, Noxon, Montana

Access Design Outreach and Outcomes



- Outreach / Marketing efforts include:
 - Referrals through CIL I&R efforts
 - Participation in seminars, business meetings and workshops
 - Response to RFPs for design services
 - Word of mouth / Professional network referrals
- Access Design is a natural fit with I & R activities, other housing related services, and management of mPower financing program.
- Access Design has impacted the traditional advocacy agenda by focusing attention on problem solving as opposed to litigation or filing complaints based on ADA compliance.

About Critical Access

- Construction and installation of ramps and entrance modifications to improve access for people who have experienced mobility limitations
- Critical Access grew directly from consumer and staff discussions in response to the need for a rapid response for individuals discharged from a hospital or rehabilitation setting and returning to an inaccessible home. Too many consumers were being forced to choose “independent living” or similar facility-based settings rather than returning to their own home / community
- Program planning began in 2005, pilot program in 2007, multiple funding streams secured in 2008.
- Critical Access serves individuals, primarily those low and moderate incomes, with access needs as a result of disability

Critical Access Operations and Examples



- Essential operational concept – ramps are made to a standard design with as many parts as possible prefabricated in a central location and then delivered to a site in order to be installed.
- Critical Access is staffed by the staff of IL Specialists, supervised by a Project Manager with responsibility for maintaining funding stream as well as overseeing activities.
- Fees charged based as percentage of individual project costs.
- Critical Access has worked statewide, primarily through the network of Community Development Block Grant programs in entitlement areas, and the state run Small Cities program. Set asides have been created in the city of Portland, Cumberland County and statewide.

Critical Access Outreach and Outcomes



- Outreach / Marketing efforts include:
 - Referrals through CIL I&R efforts
 - Referrals from medical facility discharge staff
 - CDBG network referrals
- Critical Access is a natural fit with work in housing, and is often a “front-end” for work with the CD-PAS Programs, as well as the mPower financing program.
- Critical Access has become another tool for Alpha One to be a full service organization that promotes home and community-based living.

Supportive Services

About Consumer-Directed Personal Assistant Services



- Skills training, care management, assessment, and financial services to enable individuals with a disability to live independently in the community.
- CD-PAS began as a pilot state funded program to enable individuals with a disability to work or attend school outside of the constraints of home-based care agency scheduling limitations.
- State funded pilot program launched in 1979, Medicaid waiver, and Medicaid state plan elements added.
- CD-PAS serves individuals with a disability who want to direct their own home-based supportive services.

Consumer-Directed Personal Assistant Services Operations



- Roles and activities have been reconfigured several times in the 35 years of program operations – originally as a one-stop provider (assessment, skills training, care management, fiscal agent), later in a reduced role as state segmented services.
- Fees-for-services are driven by state program rules, and contracts / rates have changed with different configurations.
- While many of the program functions are undertaken by IL specialists, state rules require that certain CD-PAS functions be performed by certified individuals – RN, OT, COTA.

Consumer-Directed Personal Assistant Services Outreach and Outcomes



- Outreach / Marketing efforts include:
 - Referrals through CIL I&R efforts
 - Word of mouth / Professional network referrals
 - Referrals from assessing agencies
 - Coordination with medical providers, esp. discharge planners
- CD-PAS has been a core activity for Alpha One and is a natural fit with I & R activities and other related services.
- CD-PAS has been a focus for the advocacy agenda emphasizing self-direction in long-term supportive services.
- CD-PAS management has raised conflict of interest concerns with some state agency staff.

About mPower

- mPower is a consumer-directed approach to affordable financing for assistive technology, offering low-interest, long-term loans of up to \$100,000 to consumers and enterprises.
- mPower grew directly from a 1985 blue ribbon commission on Independent Living, with Alpha One subsequently acting as the catalyst for passage of a state bond to capitalize the loan fund in 1988.
- Program planning began in 1988, with the first loans made in 1989.
- mPower serves individual consumers with all types of disabilities and their families, together with enterprises including businesses and non-profits.

mPower Operations and Examples

- mPower is operated jointly by Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), a quasi-state agency with bonding authority that runs business & higher education loan programs using state capital.
- Using the staff of IL Specialists, supervised by a Project Manager, Alpha One provides technical assistance to potential loan applicants and loan origination services, as well as marketing support.
- FAME provides administrative oversight, manages the bonds and loan portfolio, as well as operation of the loan committee / board that approves the loan requests.
- Fees are charged based on an hourly rate of \$75 for origination services as well as a contract for marketing support.

mPower Outreach and Outcomes



- Outreach / Marketing efforts include:
 - Referrals through CIL I&R efforts
 - Advertisements & sponsorships (including television & radio)
 - Participation in trade shows, business meetings and workshops
 - Contacts with network of bankers.
- mPower is a natural fit with work with encouraging use of Assistive Technology, housing programs, durable medical equipment sales, and adaptive driver training.
- mPower has become a vital tool, providing access to financial support for many aspects of independent living.

Private Sector

- Programs to encourage engagement – school, work, community – for people with a disability.
- Initial start – 1998 with request from UNUM looking for market differential.
- Maine is an administrative / program hub for several national disability insurance providers (UNUM, Prudential, Aetna) who have each expressed an interest in applying the IL philosophy and services for their clients / recipients.
- “Return to Life” has served long-term disability and short-term disability (LTD/STD) claimants who could be more broadly engaged in community life, including employment and education.

Return to Life Operations

- Roles and activities have been reconfigured several times based on the client / third party payer. Fundamentally, work has focused on assessment followed by collaborative development of an individualized strategy to promote greater independent living and engagement.
- Fees-for-services varied from hourly rates to per assessment payments. In addition, the agency has received consulting fees (both hourly and fixed) for consultation on program development. Sponsorship for RTL Concert series.
- The program functions are undertaken by IL specialists, under the supervision of a Project Manager

Return to Life Outreach and Outcomes

- Outreach / Marketing efforts have been driven by the pool of participants of private disability insurance.
- Return to Life has been a natural fit with Peer Services, Skills Training and Self-Advocacy agendas.
- Return to Life has sought to navigate the line between promoting independent living without becoming a part of the claims management process for private disability insurers. Motivation of private insurers is distinct from larger IL goals, and working this interface has been instructive for Alpha One, individual consumers, and the insurance providers.

Durable Medical Equipment

About Alpha One Medical



- Sales and service of durable medical equipment – wheelchairs, assistive technology, home adaptations, and medical supplies.
- This durable medical equipment company went through a number of iterations:
 - The Rolling Edge (a joint venture with another Maine company)
 - Wheelchairs Unlimited
 - Alpha One Medical
 - Adapted Home and Business
- Begun in the mid 1980's and closed in 2012, always privately funded as a stand alone business venture, frequently subsidized by other Alpha One profit centers.
- Alpha One Medical served individuals with a disability who need assistive technology and medical supplies for independent living.

Alpha One Medical Operations

- Roles and focus were reconfigured several times in its 30+ years of operation – primary focus was originally mobility devices and service. At one point, Alpha One Medical had three locations.
- Always operated as a for-profit enterprise, it increasingly became the “provider of last resort” serving primarily Medicaid consumers and operating at very tight margins.
- Alpha One Medical always maintained a dedicated staff including a Manager, sales staff with expertise in assistive technology (PTs and OTs)
- Showplace for building capacity

Alpha One Medical Outreach and Outcomes



- Outreach / Marketing efforts include:
 - Referrals through CIL I&R and outreach efforts
 - Coordination with medical providers, especially rehabilitation specialists
 - Word of mouth / professional network referrals
- Assistive Technology products and service essential to independent living
- Providing 24 / 7 service for durable medical equipment (especially power wheelchairs) transformed the marketplace in Maine. Other DME providers had to match this standard or lose business. Result: consumers saw real benefits
- DME is a tough business, especially at a small scale. Margins are tight and having Medicaid as your primary customer means price allowances are low and payments are slow. Ultimately, it was not a sustainable business for Alpha One.

About Renegade

- Development and sales of a specialized manually operated all-terrain wheelchair.
- The original Renegade design was developed by a Maine consumer who wanted to continue hunting and fishing in the Maine woods after a spinal cord injury.
- In 2009, Alpha One partnered with the developer to commercialize the prototypes, develop markets and sell products on a profit-sharing basis. LLC established.
- Renegade is a specialized product to serve individuals with mobility disability who want to enjoy a rugged / demanding outdoor experience in a manually powered device.

Renegade Operations

- The original venture was formed around a concept and prototype. Alpha One invested to commercialize what had basically been a “garage” operation by securing patents, refining design and developing necessary jigs and parts to standardize construction and launched an intense marketing effort.
- Revenues were driven by market penetration, unit costs, and targeted sales efforts.
- Renegade sales were driven by a project manager and a lead sales person and the inventor who coordinated both product development, marketing and direct sales /service.

Renegade Outreach and Outcomes

- Outreach / Marketing efforts include:
 - Targeted marketing especially aimed at the Veteran's Administration and adapted recreation programs
 - Participation in trade shows
 - Paid advertising and earned (free) cable TV media.
 - We were able to have well known Maine TV programs coverage because the story line of the inventor is compelling.
- Renegade was seen as a complement to the durable medical equipment business and possible market differentiator, i.e. it gave us an edge over other DMEs that didn't have an all-terrain manual wheelchair that could go almost anywhere.

Renegade Outreach and Outcomes, cont'd.



- Renegade is a highly specialized product that required greater market analysis prior to its launch. The effort was too dependent for success on a single market access point – the Veteran’s Administration which proved to be too difficult to penetrate.
- Participation in Renegade has been suspended, but assets have been retained should market conditions change or another partner emerge.

Adapted Driver Evaluation

Adapted Driver Evaluation

- Adapted Driver Evaluation was designed to help people resume driving following a disability or to help young adults with disabilities start driving.
- Adapted Driver Evaluation was developed because the only driver evaluation services in northern New England were not located in Maine and were part of a rehabilitation setting that typically required an overnight stay in a facility.
- Adapted Driver Evaluation was launched in 1982, initially to provide evaluation and specialized driver education.
- Adapted Driver Evaluation serves individuals to meet the driving access needs of all people with a disability

Adapted Driver Evaluation Operations and Examples

- Fees charged based on a per evaluation basis – \$500.
- Adapted Driver Evaluation is staffed by IL staff trained and certified to provide the necessary evaluations. In addition, Alpha One maintains testing equipment as well as specially equipped vehicles that can be used for evaluations.
- Adapted Driver Evaluation was originally designed as a one-stop for both evaluations as well as driver training. Later, Alpha One dropped the training and advocated for all driver training businesses to offer the service.

Adapted Driver Evaluation Outreach and Outcomes



- Outreach / Marketing efforts include:
 - Referrals through CIL I&R efforts
 - Participation in seminars, business meetings and workshops
 - Word of mouth / Professional driver education network referrals
- Adapted Driver Training is a natural fit with I & R activities and other IL core activities.
- Adapted Driver Training poses potential liability challenges, and as a result was the subject of intense discussion by the Board. Alpha One finally made a “leap of faith” to implement the program over the concerns expressed by legal staff. 32 years later, the program continues to serve Maine citizens with a disability in meeting their transportation needs.

For more information

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