



## ***ALLIANCE* – Code of Business Ethics:**

### **A Proposal for Enhancing Consumer Choice and the Open-Market Availability of Service Providers.**

*ALLIANCE* is fully committed to the promotion of processes, which offer informed choice to consumers and opportunities for open marketing and competition for Service Provider Organizations. We believe that open processes are good for our communities and encourage innovation and creativity. It is our desire that this approach can be embraced by not only all *ALLIANCE* members, but also by all CCBs and Program Approved Service Providers (PASAs) in the State, the Division for Developmental Disabilities, self-advocates, and advocacy organizations.

We encourage all members to implement these recommendations during this coming fiscal year such that all members have adopted the majority of the recommendations by January 1, 2007, and all recommendations by June 30, 2007.

#### **Key Components to the Proposal**

1. *ALLIANCE* members provide a wide range of excellent services and supports to the citizens of Colorado with a developmental disability. And as we all know, personal preference contributes greatly to one's satisfaction with the selection of the provider, and satisfaction with the outcomes. The consumer should make these choices on the basis of useful, current, and honest marketing and performance. We believe it is material which is current and consumer friendly.
2. This material should be available to the Case Managers of the CCB so they can make it available to all consumers and their families. Case Managers should share program descriptions, outcome data, Q/A survey results, marketing material and other publicly available resources with the consumer to assist them in making their decisions. The Case Manager should *NOT* recommend one provider over another, but provide all available material to the consumer so they may make an informed choice. CCBs should include in their training curriculum for Case Managers a review of the processes for informing consumers about providers, and annual reminders of the need to be fair in all processes.

**Alliance is dedicated to enhancing and strengthening community services and supports for people with developmental disabilities in the state of Colorado**

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3. CCBs enjoy a natural name advantage over most service providers by virtue of their history. This is simply a fact. Many CCBs operate direct services operations as well as function as the case management/single entry point entity for their communities. In those communities where multiple providers exist, this historical name “branding” may unintentionally direct consumers to the easy and obvious choice of the organization with which they are currently involved through case management activities. This unintentional marketing advantage for the CCB direct service program can be mitigated to some extent by separating the direct services operations from the CCB by giving the direct services department a distinct and separate name. Consumers should not be directed to the CCB service department by virtue of the corporate name of the CCB.
4. The Internet has been embraced by us all. We use it to contact staff and consumers, notify our communities about important events, market our organizations, and provide useful information to families and consumers. We use it to highlight our services and their success. Typically, the CCB identifies all of its departments by highlighting each department as a major component of the overall organization. Other service providers are frequently presented via a “link” to their website. Again, unintentionally, the CCB website “promotes” its internal service departments by their prominent placement on the website. To fairly market all service providers and avoid any unintentional directing of consumers to the CCB services, it is recommended that websites be so designed as to give equal import to all service providers, including those of the CCB. By having all direct services listed at the same location on the website without identifying ties to the CCB as a corporate department, we can promote more of an open market.
5. Similarly, CCB newsletters that are sent periodically to all consumers, including those on the waiting list may inadvertently only promote, or overly promote the CCB internal service department to the detriment of other service providers. This may obviously give an unintentional advantage to the CCB service departments when it comes to informing individuals on the waiting list (to whom external providers cannot market because of confidentiality statutes). As such, we recommend that the CCB “general” newsletter that is used to inform consumers and families about services in the community and events with which they should be informed include information about all service providers, not just those of the CCB. All service providers, including those of the CCB, are certainly encouraged to use promotional material with their customers, and make this material available to the CCB case managers. This of course does not apply to other newsletters or publications (such as annual corporate reports, or newsletters to an organization’s funders or foundation) that an organization creates, including the CCB, for purposes other than informing consumers so they can make an informed choice.
6. The RFP process can be a most valuable tool for the service provider to use in determining whether they can create a viable service option for a consumer. As such, we recommend an open, detailed process which provides enough information about consumer characteristics, support needs, approved service rate and relevant finances (government benefits and personal monies) to let the provider submit an informed and reasonable proposal to the consumer. It is recognized, as well, that sometimes families and individuals chose not to “shop”, and have their minds made up in advance regarding their choice of service provider.

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7. We recommend that *ALLIANCE* CCB members annually make available accountability information regarding such performance measures as the number of RFPs issued to a provider, the number of consumer directed choices of a provider without an RFP, the number of moves between providers, and other information that would be useful to consumers to make informed decisions about providers, and to providers so they can adjust their marketing or know to make service improvements.
8. Create a mechanism for an independent third party review on the operating and business practices related to the adherence to this Code of Business Ethics. The *ALLIANCE* members in each catchment area should develop a mutually agreed upon process.

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