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Providing Services to Persons
With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

**COMMUNITY OPTIONS, INC.
FORTY-NINTH ANNUAL REPORT
2021**

Empowering Abilities

**49th Annual Meeting
Montrose Ute Museum
17253 Chipeta Rd.
October 12, 2021 7:00 PM**

CASE MANAGEMENT/CHILDREN'S SERVICES/FAMILY SUPPORT

The Case Management, Children's Services and Family Support programs are made up of professionals who take their jobs and responsibilities seriously. Fortunately, all who work in these departments understand the importance of their roles in making sure that the many individuals, children, and family's needs are being met, that they are satisfied with their services and that planning is person/family centered focused.

Here are our teams as of this report:

Elaine Wood (**Director of Case Management/Children's Services**)

Assistant Case Management Director:

Michelle Rice

Assistant Director/EI Coordinator:

Margaret Davey

Family Support Case Manager:

Debra Anderson

Service Coordinators:

Shirley Diaz

Debbie Fischer

Case Managers:

Sarah Crawford

Abigail Fleming

Genevieve Ingersoll

Heather Langford

Early Intervention/DI:

Chelsie DeHorta

There are many changes coming within the children and adult services. As we navigate all these changes, we try to have this makes sense for the individuals, children and families and those entities who provide the direct services. We are tasked with making sure that needs are being identified and met in a person-centered manner, that people are satisfied with services, and that there is fiscal responsibility in all that we do.

I want to thank all of those on our teams. These folks display the highest level of knowledge and professionalism. They are committed to provide the best to those we support. These are qualities that those we support deserve to have from those helping in their lives.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine Wood, CM and Children's Services Director

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND BUSINESS OPERATIONS

FY2021 was a year of acting on Covid-related items, programs, financial and health and safety. Zoom meetings, emails, bulletins, and a lot of discussion with peers and officials to try and determine the best course of action to keep everyone safe and to be compliant. There was a lot of “hunkering down” over the first part of the year followed by roller coaster highs and lows of outbreaks, vaccinations, loosening of restrictions one week and then back to quarantines. As we leave FY2021 behind us, the path forward is still unclear in many ways, with new issues like staffing challenges, fiscal viability, and State changes to the I/DD system to grapple with.

Our Medicaid Comprehensive Waiver program saw a total gain of 3 net placements over the year, however most of them were receiving Case Management only from COI. The number of residents in COI’s program dropped from 84 to 80 due to deaths and transfers. Our Supported Living Services was dramatically impacted over the year with the restrictions placed on transportation and day program services. We managed to serve 65 individuals, down from 71 the previous year, but revenue from that program decreased by 36%. Both the State and Federal government provided funding to help offset such impacts to our system such as a Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan that was successfully pardoned during the year. Alternative programming coupled with temporary rate increases in impacted programs, helped to mitigate the financial impacts to our fee-for-service model. We are still conducting our financial audit for FY21, but at this time it appears that Covid mitigation funding, including the forgiven PPP loan, will provide us with a net income of around \$1 million. The results of last year’s financial audit removed the “Going Concern” footnote as our bottom-line condition improved, as well as removing the issue of the two maturing notes—one through refinancing and the other was paid off. FY21 saw another note repaid in the spring of 2021 and in August of 2021 (Fiscal Year 2022) we paid off another loan balance leaving us with just the Park Place acquisition and remodeling loans on our books. We also successfully applied for two new vehicles through the Colorado Department of Transportation and with additional grants and fundraising for those vehicles, brought in \$163,000 of revenue.

Other items of note during the fiscal year saw us closing another Group Home in October 2020 (Glencoe in Olathe) and beginning a facility maintenance program to reduce the backlog of items requiring attention in several facilities. This program will continue into FY2022. The State also determined more components of the Case Management Redesign, slated for completion in 2024, by designating the new catchment areas for all of the Medicaid Waiver programs in Colorado. Our current six-county Case Management catchment area will be divided between Delta County and Montrose County with each of them to provide all Case Management for three counties each. Another big aspect of FY2021 was the change in our senior management team, with three Program Directors and the Executive Director seeing new faces over the year. In continuing fashion, I plan on stepping down from my position at the end of 2021 after nearly 34 years at COI.

In June of 2022 COI will celebrate 50 years as an agency providing needed community services. Best wishes to all at COI in continuing to provide those quality services to those in need of them.

Steve K. Dahlman

Director of Finance & Business Operations

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Our world of Programs and Services is finding our new normal - much like the world at large, 2021 has brought change and unprecedented challenges to our microcosm.

Here, of course, we like to look at change with a positive spin and be thankful for the opportunities it creates. In March we said goodbye to our long-term fearless and much-loved leader, Jim Womeldorf, who had dedicated many years of his career to Community Options. I, in turn, was given the opportunity to serve the clients and staff of Community Options in the new capacity of Director of Program Services and navigate our ever-changing world with the support of new program structure.

With the combining of administration of all our current programs under one director for our service area and specialized Assistant Directors for residential and day services the agency is striving for continuity, consistency, and excellence in service provision and care. We are lucky to have such a dedicated, creative, and fun core team of managers, supervisors, coordinators, and med support who have come together to work towards a positive and reimagined provision of services.

None of what we do would be possible without the direct support staff who have weathered every storm with us and continued to meet the daily needs of the folks we serve with compassion and dedication. There are not enough words to convey how thankful we are to each and every one of them.

As the pandemic has continued there has been a continuing avalanche of administrative and programmatic expectations revolving around health and safety. Much time has been spent over the months keeping up with and implementing health directives pertaining to implementation of strict guidelines in the licensed GRSS facilities, sanitary practices and virus control, human resource issues, testing, isolation and quarantine, masks, and reporting. Additionally, the implementation of the vaccine mandate for licensed facilities has necessitated new policies, procedures, and reporting.

The pandemic has created new challenges within our already fragile workforce and the agency will continue to seek ways to recruit new and energized staff to support the people we serve.

The State of Colorado has continued to move forward with implementation of the Medicaid Final Rule, and we continue to report on our compliance status in regard to person centered services and increased community integration. Having both day services sites reopened at full capacity is facilitating a return to community activities that the people we serve have sincerely missed.

We have implemented a ‘Parent - Family Council’ that meets the second Wednesday of the month and allows for productive discussions, education, and collaboration about what our community needs from us and how to focus our energy for the future. I am excited about the direction of this group and the focus we have as partners for win-win outcomes.

In July of 2021 Community Options implemented a program option called ‘Family Care Giver’ that facilitates people who enroll in the I/DD Waiver to stay in their home and receive residential supports from a family member. We have enrolled four new people in the program and look forward to it growing further. Our SLS services are also again operating close to pre-pandemic levels. Assisting people with community access, mentorship, and transportation. Family Care Provides receive support from the SLS department as well.

Supported Employment has also faced challenges in the new world in which we live. The focus is now on rebuilding the ground we had lost over the last two years by creating new relationships in our community and recruiting to rebuild the SE team.

It goes without saying that 2021 has been another year of unforeseen challenges. The pandemic has considerably exacerbated funding issues and will have a long-term effect that will have to take much creativity and engagement at the state level to address. As always, despite challenges and barriers we will continue to be keeping the people we serve safe and happy with a focus on person centered services.

We are thankful for all of the support we receive and look forward with a new vision of service provision and supports for the people we serve. We are reminded daily that they are the ones in charge and if it were not for them, none of us would be here.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Pelligra

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES & SAFETY

- ◆ The first big task of 2021 was to find a replacement for Executive Director, Tom Turner who announced he would be retiring after 25 years of dedicated leadership at COI. Chris McDonald, Director of Special Projects, worked closely with the Board of Directors' Search Committee to find Tom's replacement.
- ◆ The new Healthy Families and Workplaces Act that went into effect on January 1, 2021, required us to make some changes to our current sick leave policy. Several of the biggest changes were that relief and part-time staff are now eligible to accrue sick leave time. Also, sick leave now starts accruing on the first day of employment.
- ◆ The payroll committee worked with Chris McDonald in updating our employee handbook. The new employee handbooks were distributed in February. With much help from IT Manager, Holly Tea, we were able to successfully distribute most of the handbooks via email. A few hard copies were made for staff that didn't have email.
- ◆ The CPR Committee implemented an incentive of 8 additional hours of leave time for all staff who received a COVID-19 vaccine.
- ◆ In February, Jim Womeldorf, Program Director, announced his plans to retire in March, after 19 years of dedicated service to clients and staff at COI.
- ◆ In March, Jennifer Pelligra filled Jim's vacated Program Director position. Jennifer hit the ground running and hasn't stopped since!
- ◆ With COVID-19 lingering on, the State of Colorado, along with most other states across the country, saw a very high rate of Unemployment fraud. We had several current and past employees that have had fraudulent claims filed in their name. HR did our part in reporting the fraudulent claims and advising current staff on the process to report the fraud on their end.
- ◆ The Payroll Committee revamped our Broadband Salary System and added back into our salary determination process experience and education credit for positions that fall into the 600, 700 and 800 levels of our broadband system. Kevin Sowder, Assistant Director of Finance, created an awesome spreadsheet that makes the calculation of experience and education credit very simple.
- ◆ On June 1, 2021, we welcomed our new Executive Director, John Vastag. John has also hit the ground running by continuing to push forward with COI's mission as well as leading us into a future of sustainability. He is leaving no rocks unturned!
- ◆ In collaboration with the Administrative Team, we implemented a program re-organization to consolidate our residential, day programs and supported living services to fall under a single program director with the expectations that this type of structure would provide better consistency, continuity, and communication across all programs. Throughout this consolidation process we have phased out several positions and implemented multiple new positions which opened 10 promotional opportunities for our staff, 8 of which have been filled with the internal staff.
- ◆ The Summer months brought on a very sluggish labor market and receipt of employment applications were minimal. To stay competitive in our local labor market we doubled our

employee referral bonuses from \$100 to \$200 and lowered the required employment time frame from 6 months down to 90 days. We also increased our entry level DSP positions to a starting rate of \$13.00/hour and bumped all internal DSP positions up \$.68. Lastly, we added a \$2.00/hour shift differential to staff who work the graveyard shifts covering 10:00 PM – 6:00 AM.

- ◆ Being the year of retirements, Steve Dahlman, Director of Finance announced his plans to join the ranks of the retired in December of 2021. Steve has devoted 33 years of service to COI. He has not only been the financial leader of the agency but has been an integral part of leading the entire agency through the successes and challenges that COI faced over the years.

HR Goals for 2022

- ◆ In collaboration with the business office and program leaders implementing an electronic time keeping system with systems specific to HR, such as an Applicant Tracking system and onboarding functions.
- ◆ Implement a mentor program among the program areas. A mentor would be the “go-to” person for training new hires, which will help move us forward with our objective of gaining consistency, continuity, and communication across all programs.
- ◆ Revamp our Inservice training program to include on-line training options.
- ◆ Complete personnel file audits to ensure all personnel files are compliant per any state and federal requirements.
- ◆ In collaboration with program leaders, implement an official training program for new and seasoned managers/supervisors. This will also help us gain more consistency, continuity, and communication across all programs.

2021 Safety Updates & Accomplishments

- ◆ Workers’ Comp premiums have dropped again, (about 7.5%: \$115,916 vs \$1124,494) and we received a dividend of \$10,173. Our Emod dropped from 1.43 to 1.25.
- ◆ The total number of Work Comp claims decreased from 11 to 8 this past year, but our cost per claim increased slightly due to 2 of the cases being high-cost claims. Our total claim costs also rose by about 45%, \$47824 to 67,724.
- ◆ Worked with CPR team to keep our facilities open and our positivity rates as low as possible.
- ◆ Received good feedback on the Risky Business newsletter from all levels of the employee tree.
- ◆ Completed the Business Continuation Plan as mandated by the State.

2022 Safety Goals

- ◆ Continue to work with Pinnacol to quickly resolve cases and provide Return-to-Work options as often as possible if work restrictions are present.
- ◆ Continue to update safety-related policies and procedures and related documents.
- ◆ Update the Safety Advisor's Desktop Procedures.
- ◆ Work with Nursing on presenting the "Safe Lifting" training we developed to all facilities.
- ◆ Work with facility Managers and staff on what constitutes a genuine safety concern within their environment.
- ◆ Discover proper Fit Testing techniques for the N95 Masks that we use and ensure that appropriate staff are trained.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy Clifford