As of this writing, the U.S. Senate is still attempting to pass a health care bill that I truly believe will devastate Medicaid-funded services including those that fund people with disabilities, mental health issues, addictions, and the elderly for current and future enrollees.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has indicated, the Senate health care bill will cut more than $772 billion from Medicaid over the next decade. Our elected officials promised to fix a broken health care system. One must wonder what cutting Medicaid for over 22 million citizens has to do with making our insurance plans more affordable, or better.

Many of the aforementioned individuals rely the Medicaid program for community-based services, and vital medical services. Medicaid funding is often the only source many have to support the network of services and providers who make it possible for people with disabilities to be in their communities, attend school, church, and have jobs. We must never forget that before these programs were in place, individuals with disabilities lived in the shadows, were warehoused in state-run institutions, and in many cases treated inhumanely. We as a community and a country have come so far because of these successful programs.

The entire funding structure of Medicaid is at risk. The Senate bill caps the funding for disability Medicaid programs and puts the responsibility on states to pick up the tab. States are still recovering from the recession and cannot handle the shift. Ohio will have a combination of three choices:

1) Raise taxes
2) Reduce payments to hospitals and providers
3) Reduce eligibility. Currently, there is a workforce crisis related to adequate numbers of direct care staff to provide crucial services for people with disabilities and putting greater strain on states will inevitably mean fewer services for people who need them the most. The average wage of a direct support staff is $10.42. Our current reimbursement system cannot sustain any more cuts in funding.

Those who support the Senate health care bill say that they do not intend to hurt people with disabilities. But there's evidence already that the reimbursement rates for care of disabled populations are insufficient – and there is no guarantee in the law that the rate set this year won’t change next year (the President’s budget indicates even further cuts). Most importantly, there is no guarantee the funding going to states will be used for the disabled population when they have so many priorities to address.

The Senate bill, like its predecessor in the House, fails people with disabilities, mental illness, addictions and the elderly who are among our most vulnerable in society. The services they rely on to live are being used to pay for tax cuts and that is just wrong. I know our Representatives can do better. Please contact Senator Portman’s office at 202-224-3353 and encourage him to not change Medicaid.

Garry B. Mosier, CEO
Mercer Residential Services, Inc
Now that summer has arrived, Mercer Supported Living Clients are out and about seeing the local sights and enjoying themselves outdoors! Rosella had a great visit to Butterfly Park in Van Wert and at the Ft. Recovery Museum! Miles is also on the move, he loves to bowl and hike, he had a fun day doing both those activities! Bill went on a special day to the LM&M Railroad, riding through Monroe and Mason, Ohio! As you can see from the pictures, they’re all having a blast this summer!

Tick and Tick-borne Disease Season is Here

Experts are warning that this year’s tick season could be worse and more widespread than ever due to milder winters, booming mice and deer populations, and the 2015 abundant acorn crop. Unfortunately, with the projected increase of ticks, the threat of tick-borne disease, including the most common, Lyme disease, also increases.

The best way to avoid contracting a tick-borne disease is to practice proper preventive measures, which include the following:

- Wear light-colored clothing, including long-sleeved shirts and pants when in wooded areas, and tuck pant legs into socks or boots. Keep long hair tied back.
- Wash your body and clothing after all outdoor activities.
- Look periodically for ticks if you have been outdoors, especially if you have been in wooded areas or gardens.
- Remove ticks within 24 hours to greatly reduce the risk of contracting disease.
- Talk with your veterinarian about tick repellent for your pet.
- Check your pet’s coat if it has been in a possible tick-infested area.

Live Well Work Well Newsletter
Zyware, Inc. June 2017
WOW!!!! So much has been going on since the last newsletter, I am not sure where to begin!! First, there are not enough words to explain my gratitude to all of my staff. I am honored to work with each and every one of you. We have been incredibly lucky in finding great employees at our ADS Programs. They all bring so much enthusiasm, and so many strengths to not only the program, but to our clients. Thank you, Kristy, Miranda, Angel, Michelle, Dan, Jennifer, Gene, Francie, Missy, Alexis, Mike, Caleb and Jake.

Because of the staff we have, we have the opportunity to keep our clients as active as they are. Over the last couple months the clients have participated in so many things!!

- Vera Bradley sale
- Brukner Nature Center
- Gentlemen’s lunch
- Cooking projects
- Kite flying at the lake
- Museums, Museums and more Museums
- Disc Golf
- Starbucks
- Parks
- Nature Walks
- Petting Zoos
- Volunteering
- Walking goals
- TinCaps game

AND MORE!!!!!!

How can you not love that!!!!!!

Mercer ADS is now up to 20 clients, along with some transportation clients. Van Wert is now up 21 ADS clients and some transportation clients. We are actively looking for additional clients for both counties. If you or someone you know is interested in joining our program please contact Monica McKinney at 419-217-3484

mmckinney@mrsinc.org

We would like to SINCERELY THANK everyone who took the time to stop by the Open Houses at both facilities. Your support with this is what keeps our programs going to all the places listed above. The clients in both counties work very hard on a variety of craft projects from canvas paintings, vases, chicken wire boards, gift baskets and more. The money they raise from these items GOES DIRECTLY TO THE CLIENTS. Some of the activities we have used this for have been the TinCaps game, Ohio Caverns, Neil Armstrong Museum, and to purchase items the clients want for in the buildings.

MRSI will again be participating in the Grand Lake Marathon this year!!! This was an incredible experience for everyone there last year. Not only to watch the clients pushing themselves to be included in such an event, but also to watch the community and competitive runners cheering them on. Definitely something to be remembered. I will be sending out more information as it gets closer for anyone who would like to help or participate.

We would like to remind everyone that we are still collecting cans! Feel free to drop some off, or call Monica to make arrangements to pick them up.

Clients in both counties are busy with volunteering!! A sincere thank you to the Van Wert ADS whose volunteering efforts resulted in a donation being made in their name to a local business. This is exactly what we are hoping to achieve with our clients. Watching them work hard to help someone else is a very inspirational experience. If you know of places that we may be able to assist in some way please let us know.

As always,
Thank you for your support
Monica McKinney
Part-Time Attendance Drawing
Winners!

April
Alexandra Weiss (VW)
Breanna Stegaman (VW)
Gene Goodwin (Mercer)
Bobbie Conkling (Mercer)

May
Felicia Feazell (Mercer)
Beth Beyke (VW)
Carole Johnston (VW)

June
Bobbie Conkling (Mercer)
Felicia Feazell (Mercer)

Congrats!!

Inexpensive Ways to Get and Stay Healthy

Developing and maintaining a healthy lifestyle does not need to involve tightening your budget. Here are some ways to get and stay healthy without breaking the bank:

- Purchase fresh fruits and vegetables that are currently in season. You will get the best tasting food for your money and the widest selection. Opt for products that are the most bountiful at your local farmer’s market or grocery store. Also, look to see what in-season fruits and veggies are on sale. Incorporate those into your weekly meal plans.

- Exercise with a friend instead of joining a fitness club. Your friend will make you accountable for working out, will cheer you on to succeed and will be with you as you make strides towards your fitness goals. If you do not have a human companion to work out with, walk or run with your dog on a regular basis.

- Look for healthy bargains in your grocery store. This may be as simple as choosing oatmeal instead of sugary, expensive cereals for breakfast; buying beans or portabella mushrooms instead of red meat; or drinking orange juice instead of soda with sugar added.

- Do not smoke. A pack of cigarettes is expensive (and can be much more in major metropolitan cities). If you quit, you will save on the cost of cigarettes and even more in medical bills, as you will be healthier without engaging in this habit.

- Plan your meals before you shop. Knowing what meals you plan to prepare for the week will prevent you from buying unnecessary food items.

- Spring for a pedometer. Walking a specific number of steps per day can help motivate you to reach your fitness goals. Though you will have to invest in the pedometer, your health will improve and you will reduce your health costs in the end.

While purchasing something off the fast food menu may seem inexpensive and enticing, the costs to you will be far greater, as grease-filled foods may contribute to health problems that will cost you in medical bills and time away from work, family and friends.

Live Well Work Well Newsletter
Zyware, Inc. June 2017
MRSI would like to introduce Janelle Wehrman as the Director of Quality and Staff Development! Janelle has been with MRSI for 17 years and has worn many hats during her career here. We are pleased to have her in this new position and wanted to share with you about her!

MRSI: Tell us how you first started with MRSI?

Janelle: I previously worked with some developmentally disabled clients while developing an Independent Living Program as well as from working in foster care. So in 2000 when a former co-worker told me more about MRSI, I interviewed and got the job! I had a 3 year plan and after years 4/5 I decided this would be a longer stay.

MRSI: What was your timeline as you worked your way up to your position now?

Janelle: I began my career with MRSI in 2000 as the Van Wert Area Coordinator, I was called to start the job early due to the State Department arriving for their annual audit for the 8 bed group home and 2 supported living settings. It was there where my knowledge and skills developed and grew (College education truly cannot prepare you with everything that you need to know in this field of work. You have to be able to search for answers, think outside of the box, develop relationships with people, be able to make quick sound decisions sometimes in a moments notice and be able to understand we are here for the individuals). During my time in Van Wert. The program grew to a point that new supervisory positions were created. In 2012-2013, the Area Coordinator position in Mercer County came open and Garry asked me if I would consider being over Mercer/Auglaize Counties. This meant being able to take on another whole set of regulations as the WSGH is an ICF (Intermediate Care Facility). Not only did I need to keep up on DODD (Department of Developmental Disabilities) regulations but I also had to refresh myself on Medicaid Regulations. In the fall of 2016, MRSI created a new position for Quality Assurance/Staff Development. And here I am.

MRSI: As Director of Quality and Staff Development what were your first priorities as you began?

Janelle: Training Emily Hoelscher, as my replacement as Mercer/Auglaize Area Coordinator. As well as stepping in as acting Van Wert Area Coordinator until Tim Dull was hired, then training Tim in his position. Next was finding a new crisis intervention program for the phased out TEAM program. Then training all staff on the new program: Do The R.I.G.H.T. Thing. Ensuring staff were up to date on their required training, learning more about all the regulations that continue to change (seems like everyday they are making changes), and helping Van Wert coordinate a fundraising event.

MRSI: What future plans to you have for staff development?

Janelle: Training so staff understand regulations better and so they can perform their duties certifying the residents receive the highest quality of care possible. Performing internal audits on all departments to ensure MRSI is in compliance with State regulations, and the list goes on and on, as long as things change and evolve with regulations/training there's never a dull moment!

MRSI: What/How do you feel MRSI will gain from your new position?

Janelle: I think things will be more organized agency wide, there will be more staff stability and residents quality of life improving as well. This will all lead to MRSI’s growth as a company.

MRSI: What do you enjoy most about your position?

Janelle: Being able to educate on rules and regulations. And analyzing data (I am a numbers person). Along with interacting with residents in both counties.

Thank you Janelle for your time to answer these questions and for stepping into the Director of Quality and Staff Development position!