

## **Benefits Counseling: Outcomes Conference Call**

**December 4, 2007**

**Discussion Leader: Amy Porter**

**Participants:** Liz (MN), Carol Ruddell (UT), Brooke Lusk (SD), John Miller (PA), Karen Ward and Karen Heath (AK), Felicia Halford and Ernesto Rodriguez (NM), Barry Delin (WI), Marsha Ellison (MA), Rachel Stewart (CA), Greg (SD), Nellie Goron (NH), Steve Kozak (WA).

**MIGRATS staff:** Amy Porter, Anne Reither, Gilbert Gimm, Cindy Gruman, Krista Harrison

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This is the first Outcomes Workgroup meeting since the September 2007 NCHSD conference in Chicago, where participants discussed a draft logic model of the relationship between benefits counseling fidelity and outcomes research. MIGRATS developed a more detailed, non-linear analytical model in response to comments and feedback from states. Today's meeting discussed the new analytical model, made suggestions for future revisions as well as future directions for the workgroup.

### *Analytical Model*

This model attempts to represent the context of benefits planning for the purpose of performing outcomes research. The original logic model was too linear to sufficiently capture the interrelationships between benefits counseling and outcomes, as well as the variety of factors that can affect outcomes.

States provided suggestions for alternative structures and additional factors and relationships. In particular, it was suggested that benefits counseling should be thought of as a "mediator" rather than a "cause" of outcomes, and that factors affecting benefits counseling should be included in the model, including the context in which benefits counseling is performed.

States also debated how to develop the analytical model into a useful tool. Some found the model helpful and felt ready to use it to shape and answer specific research questions. Other states were interested in providing concrete examples of the model's elements.

### *Next Steps*

Anne and Amy will revise the analytical model based on comments provided during the workgroup as well as through follow-up calls and emails.

The next workgroup meeting will occur in January; Anne and Amy will send an email with potential dates soon.

The next call will review the model and discuss how one would measure various elements of the model when performing research.

Benefits Counseling Outcome Analytical Model (December 4, 2007)

