

Anticipating the “Big Change” With an Eye on Tomorrow



PI greeted the news of the “big change”, i.e. system reform, with mixed feelings. Initially, there was concern over how reform would affect the quality of services we deliver in Person County. Then there was also concern with how the divestiture of services from area programs would impact our programs financially. The 2004 fiscal year was an opportunity for us to give more than the usual scrutiny to all aspects of our service delivery and contract sales.

To determine the quality of services, PI looked at two key indicators—the annual Stakeholders Satisfaction Survey and Accessibility Plan.

2004 Stakeholders Satisfaction Survey

PI sent out 42 surveys for the 2004 fiscal year and had a 70% rate of return. The survey consisted of three to five questions about the quality of our services with a ranking of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The questions were then divided into categories—business contracts, employers, agencies and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Of particular interest in the survey, was the view expressed by some employers that PI was a key source for labor. One employer responded, “If my business continues to grow, I intend to hire more people from Person Industries.”

The Stakeholders Survey gave PI a glimpse into the future of

sales revenue with the rating on customer service from business customers. On the specific question of customer service and meeting business needs, PI received a rating of 4.6 from the possible 5 points.

The basic story of how PI delivers services was told in the rating from agencies with whom we work. Vocational Rehabilitation, for example, gave PI a ranking of 5 out of 5 all around. Counselors agreed that evaluations are timely and address the needs of counselor and client. Work Adjustment Training and Supported Employment are high quality, timely and have a positive impact on clients placed in employment in the community.

2004 Stakeholder’s Satisfaction Survey Overall Satisfaction Rating Results

	1 = Poor	5 = Excellent	
	% Returned		Rating
Business Contract Customers	70%		4.4
Employers	71%		4.1
Agencies	90%		4.3
Vocational Rehab Counselors	100%		5.0

2004 Accessibility Plan

One of PI’s mandates is to continually monitor the accessibility needs of the people we serve. Each fiscal year we review and develop an Accessibility Plan that looks at attitudinal, communication, transportation, employment, leisure, technological, and financial barriers that may affect the people in our programs of service. This is the second key indicator of service delivery—PI’s impact on making the workplace and the community we serve more accessible to people with disabilities.

With help from staff at Person High School, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Person County School System, PI advocated for a Computer Aided Testing System (CATS). CATS is located at certain DMV offices throughout the state and gives people with developmental disabilities and/or reading disorders a fair chance to obtain a driver’s license. Although the CATS system did not become a reality in 2004, PI will continue to let the DMV offices know of this accessibility need.

Realizing the direction of technology in our society, PI secured funding to purchase a Smart Board. Through the use of this board, program participants will have greater access to the Internet and more opportunities to learn practical financial management skills.

The review of the Accessibility Plan indicated that PI is indeed making small but gradual steps to make our workplace and the community more accessible.

Eyes on Tomorrow

Despite initial concerns over the “big change”, the next few pages are indications that PI is in a good position to successfully handle the transition to another governing structure. With solid service delivery and a positive revenue structure, necessary factors to survive system reform, PI is looking ahead to a bright future.

What is the Big Change?

Our theme for this year’s report refers to “The Big Change,” also known as the State Reform of the Mental Health System. The North Carolina Legislature mandated a comprehensive reform of the mental health system because they saw the system as costly and failing to serve the people most in need. System reform required OPC Area Program to discontinue providing services and, instead, to manage service dollars and to contract with providers of service. This means that all programs under the OPC Area Program must move to a different umbrella organization or become private providers.

What this means for Person Industries is a move to become part of Person County government, which is set to take place July 2005. It means we are keeping an eye on changing service definitions that will determine who receives services, how services are funded and the expected outcomes of services. Currently, service definitions, including ADVP, SE and Medicaid services, are under study or under revision by the State Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services.