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ARIZONA LEADS THE WAY IN TRANSFORMING THE FACE OF HUMAN SERVICES

Cooperation Increases Options for Self-direction and Self-determination

PHOENIX — October 1, 2005 —It is a situation millions of people across the country find themselves in: individuals with disabilities, their loved ones or people who have become frail in their later years are in need of professional care. For years people in these types of circumstances have been forced to follow state mandates in choosing human service providers—whether or not they are the best available for their specific needs. These people find themselves working in isolation to get their needs met.

With the rise of self-determination in the human services industry, the transition towards cooperatives is anticipated to spread throughout the country. The state of Arizona is one of the first to be a part of this cooperative movement.

A new concept called the Human Service Cooperative (HSC®) is transforming the traditional model for human services by bringing together individuals who use human services. Human Service Cooperatives are simultaneously revolutionizing the traditional structure of cooperatives. The HSC initiative imparts that each Member is an owner/director who works alongside other Members to collectively direct their human service needs. The co-op works to become incorporated and then applies through the state, in which the Members live, to become a certified human service provider. As certified providers, cooperatives are able to partner with their choices of traditional service providers to best fit the needs of each co-op Member. In order for a cooperative to be recognized as an HSC certified provider, they must meet the standards of quality set by the Federated Human Service Co-opSM.

The Federated Human Service Co-opSM supports and networks between all of the individual HSC co-ops throughout the country. The Federated Human Service Co-op assists in the development of new HSC co-ops, develops and offers resources to HSC co-ops and provides mediation, consultation and assistance for co-ops as problems and issues arise. In addition, the Federated Human Service Co-op establishes quality assurance guidelines that HSC certified co-ops are required to follow.

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The Human Service Cooperative of Northern Arizona (HSCONA) is the first certified HSC. HSCONA, *HSC* consists of a network of individuals using human services who work together with equality to meet the specific needs of each Member. In the fall of 2003, HSCONA, *HSC* incorporated and has since filed with the state of Arizona to become a state-contracted provider of human services.

“I am honored to be a Member of the first human service cooperative,” said Amelia Phillips, vice president of the board of directors for HSCONA, *HSC*. “Raising multiple children with special needs is exhausting on the best of days and the quagmire of agencies we have to deal with is cumbersome at best. As an owner/director I hope to be part of facilitating cooperation and partnering with agencies to streamline the process and be able to spend more time and energy doing my passion—raising my kids.”

Created by Gale and Holly Bohling of Bohling Inc., an Arizona-based advisement firm, the HSC concept is unique in that it provides a structure that was previously absent in human services.

“For many years we have been immersed in the human services industry. Throughout that time we have found that barriers in improving the quality of human services are often found in communication and the lack of equality in planning and direction,” said Gale Bohling, president of Bohling Inc. “The idea of teaming individuals together through co-ops seems to be a natural, effective solution to many of the issues that can arise.”

Not only are individuals who use human services benefiting from the HSC movement, states such as Arizona are noticing the benefits cooperatives can provide. In addition to reducing the need for significant change in federal and state rules and regulations, the HSC initiative helps states progress in their shared quest to promote self-direction in human services.

“Cooperatives will be effective and successful because families and individuals will increase their ability to directly control, manage and direct supports and services—families and individuals will be accountable,” said Dianne Wagemann, director of Planning and Policy for the Division of Developmental Disabilities for the state of Arizona. “The state of Arizona is a leader in the design of many of its home and community home-based services and is moving forward with the human service cooperative initiative to provide more opportunities for individuals and families to increase their independence.”

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Support of the HSC movement is continually evident in the developing partnerships with the public and private sector. ResCare, a leading private provider to people with disabilities and was founded in 1974. Today, ResCare offers services to some 32,000 people in 33 states across the world. As a strong supporter of Self-directed cooperatives, ResCare, looks forward to the opportunity to partner with HSCs across the country. Another is David Braddock PhD. and his research team from the University of Colorado's Health Sciences Center. With their backing, the state of Arizona's Department of Developmental Disabilities and Bohling Inc. were awarded the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) grant called C-PASS in October of 2003.

The primary effort of the \$600,000 C-PASS grant is to study and learn from the development of cooperatives and their effectiveness in self-determination*.

As more HSC certified co-ops develop, self-direction and self-determination in human services is becoming a reality for states and users of human services.

*Grant funds total 18 percent of project funds, additional contributions include 27 percent nongovernmental funds and up to 55 percent state waiver funds designated for service delivery.

ABOUT HUMAN SERVICE COOPERATIVES

A Human Service Cooperative (HSC®) is a group of individuals in need of human services that join together to create an organized network of support. HSC co-ops direct and control their human service needs for the benefit of the Membership. Created and developed by Bohling Inc., an Arizona-based advisement firm, the HSC initiative is based upon the seven principles of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and promotes self-determination and self-direction in the field of human services. For more information on HSC co-ops please log on to www.federatedhsc.coop or email info@federatedhsc.coop or call Sara Wilson at (602) 404-7334.

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