

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Employment First Overview\_FY17**

There cannot be a genuine conversation about personal recovery for individuals with disabilities without including meaningful employment. William L. Gorman, in a discussion paper for the Center for Disabilities and Development University of Iowa, summarizes the critical financial situation for individuals with disabilities:

*Individuals with disabilities are poor (63% are unemployed) and even when employed, individuals with disabilities earn substantially less than their non-disabled peers (roughly 72% to the dollar). Public assistance represents 59% of the total income of individuals with significant disabilities vs. only 8% of the total income of people who have no disability. One of every three adults with disabilities lives in very low-income households as opposed to one of every eight non-disabled adults.*

*Public assistance is tied to remaining poor. Asset limits generally force individuals with disabilities on government assistance to choose between maintaining health insurance and being employed. People with disabilities have fewer bank accounts, lower graduation rates and are less likely to own their own home or other financial assets than persons without disabilities. Those with disabilities who have been on government assistance relative to their disability have been conditioned to be cautious of overstepping their income limits or asset limits, because if they do, they will most likely be cut off from health care, housing, employment or supportive living assistance. The reality is a child with significant disabilities born in the United States today has little chance of gaining access to assets and escaping poverty, despite advances in health care and technology. (July 2009)*

The first document in this section is an exposé about treatment of a group of men working in a “Sheltered Workshop” and drives home the need for protection and advocacy for the individuals we serve. National and state publications outlining our current need for progress and outlining specific methods for achieving the move away from segregated setting are provided. The state executive order and MDHHS have placed a priority on focusing on employment where choice and integrated work settings are to be the standard. NorthCare has a regional employment team focused on improving the outcomes in this area and will focus in FY17 on the implementation of the CMS Home and Community Based Services Final Rule on choice in terms of employment opportunities and employment settings. A workplan is being developed with the various providers of vocational services and the CMHSPs to assure opportunities for an array of employment opportunities.

**Supporting documents on the NorthCare website, [www.northcare-up.org](http://www.northcare-up.org) under the Practice Guidelines Manual**

- ⊕ The Boys in the Bunkhouse
- ⊕ National Core Indicators Update on Employment 2014-2015 data
- ⊕ Guidance for Directors of Rehab Programs\_2-17
- ⊕ Employment First in Michigan\_DDI Report
- ⊕ Employment First\_Executive Order\_2015-15
- ⊕ Employment Works
- ⊕ FAQ\_Employment Services--MI Agencies
- ⊕ Transition Youth\_Analysis of Federal Regs
- ⊕ Transition Youth\_Super MOU Michigan Employment
- ⊕ NC Employment Services