

# SVRI Summer Newsletter 2009

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## A Note From the SVRI Executive Director...

*Executive Director: John Lui, PhD, CDMS, CRC*

Another summer has come and passed here at SVRI. We are excited to inform you of our 2009 CARF certification in benefits planning. This accreditation in the new area of benefits planning provides SVRI with a unique opportunity to provide quality services to a wider array of consumers.

Paths to Employment Resource Center (PERC) is finally launched. This Training and Technical Assistance (T & TA)

project involves SVRI, and two other partners - the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Employment Resources, Inc. (ERI) in Madison. We are currently in the needs assessment and orientation phase of a three-phase project.

The Transition Partnership School (TPS) continues to be a successful program offered through SVRI. We have obtained positive feedback from

both parents and students from the past graduating class. We are looking forward to another great year for our TPS students.

SVRI continues to offer excellent online training opportunities to accommodate individual practitioner's learning style, as well as their busy lifestyle. Please feel free to view our future course offerings.

Your contribution, feedback, and support are always welcome. Thank you.

## Online Training

SVRI's online training program provides additional training that will accommodate your busy lifestyle as well as your individual learning style. Our online courses are more frequently including video, audio, and interactive tutorials to engage learners on a different level. Written discussions facilitated by qualified professionals provide opportunities for practitioners to share their valuable work experiences with each other. Activities are

relevant to practitioners who want to advance their skills. Upcoming courses include: Rehabilitation Ethics, Vocational Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Physical Disabilities, and Psychiatric Disabilities.

We anticipate offering a Vocational Evaluation course starting later in 2009. We will post as much information as possible about new courses as they are developed. Log onto the SVRI website for more

information: <http://www.uwstout.edu/svri>.

If you would like to be notified of future offerings, please email the online training coordinator, April Pierson ([piersona@uwstout.edu](mailto:piersona@uwstout.edu)), to be added to our list.

If you are looking for courses on specific topics, please notify us as this information will be very valuable in determining future offerings.

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Online Training*
- *SVRI 2009 CARF Certification in Benefits Planning*
- *Paths to Employment Resource Center (PERC) update*
- *Transition Partnership School (TPS)*
- *Did you Know...*

## SVRI 2009 CARF Certification in Benefits Planning

CARF accreditation in the new area of benefits planning provides SVRI with a unique opportunity to further enhance and monitor quality and build credibility. The benefits planning program has been developing at SVRI over the past several years. Between 2004 and 2008, SVRI experienced an 82% increase in benefits planning referrals, jumping from 13 individuals served in 2004 to 76 individuals served in 2008.

Work incentives benefits analysis is a consumer-driven service where consumers are served in the order in which referral information is received.

SVRI standards require an initial contact with the consumer to be made within two business days following receipt of referral information. The intake meeting is scheduled and conducted in person or via the telephone, depending on consumer choice, and includes discussion of the questions to be answered by the analysis or report and a work/earning scenario on which to build the analysis. The consumer's benefits are researched and verified with each agency responsible for the benefit program.

The analysis/report provides only the information pertinent to the individual's situation.

SVRI benefits specialists adhere to the standard of a 60-day turnaround period from the time of referral to a completed analysis. Follow-up services are provided as needed to enable the consumer to make an informed choice about pursuing or returning to work.

A quality assurance survey is presented to the consumer at the final staffing. Returned surveys are reviewed when received and overall performance rating is reviewed bi-annually.

The Wisconsin Disability Benefits Network (WDBN) is proactive in identifying quality assurance guidelines for benefits analyses completed by trained benefits specialists. SVRI staff members are active participants of a WDBN/DVR workgroup reviewing and recommending quality standards to ensure consumers receive accurate information.

As the benefits analysis profession continues to grow and gain momentum in Wisconsin, Employment Resources, Inc (ERI)

and the WDBN have created the Work Incentives Benefits Specialists (WIBS) registry. The registry began in the spring of 2009 and currently has 42 members, including all of the SVRI benefits specialists. WIBS members are committed to continuing education in benefits-related topics, as well as rehabilitation and professional topics such as ethics and cultural diversity.

The WDBN, in collaboration with DVR, is developing a quality assurance process for Benefits Specialists in Wisconsin. The Department of Human Services (DHS) is planning to build language requiring "qualified" or "certified" benefits specialists into future contracts once the process is developed and implemented. A credentialing and continuing education process will be available by the end of 2009. A registry with an accompanying Code of Conduct is currently in place.

For more information, please contact Cheryl Fine, Employment Services & Benefits Analysis Manager  
finec@uwstout.edu

## Paths to Employment Resource Center (PERC)

The Paths to Employment Resource Center (PERC), located within the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, promotes innovative policies and practices specific to integrated community-based employment for individuals with disabilities. PERC actively works to promote a system that encourages and enhances employment and earning opportunities. DHS, as well as key partners, designed PERC intending to increase the knowledge, skills, and service

capacity across the state in offering community-based employment supports for people with disabilities.

The Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) at UW-Stout, the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Employment Resources, Inc. (ERI) in Madison, Wisconsin, have formed a partnership to administer the center. This partnership is designed to capitalize on the strengths and

resources of three highly reputable organizations with a long history of conducting cutting-edge applied healthcare and employment research; providing training and technical assistance for healthcare, disability, and employment professionals; and providing effective disability and employment services for people with chronic illnesses and disabilities. This partnership will also address the need for technical assistance and training in the area of integrated employment (continued on pg 3)

## PERC (continued)

for care managers at the managed care organizations (MCO), members and their families, community-based disability and employment service organizations, and affiliated partners.

The funding for this project is being provided by Wisconsin DHS through a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) which is provided by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) of the Department of Health and Human

Services. SVRI is the recipient of the grant and the University of Wisconsin-Madison and ERI will be key partners in the project development.

PERC is currently undergoing the needs assessment in order to provide high quality training with proven universally-designed adult-learner methods of media platforms, and technical assistance consultation and services. This is the first phase of the three-year

project. The grant is providing \$380,000 + for this phase alone. The next phase will include the implementation and evaluation of PERC during 2010 and 2011 where they will provide minimally four times this amount for each of the two years.

If you would like more information on this project, please contact John Lui at [luij@uwstout.edu](mailto:luij@uwstout.edu)

## Transition Partnership School (TPS)

Another successful year has ended for our TPS students. A total of 12 participants graduated from the program this year. An outcome survey was distributed to parents of the graduating TPS students. Positive feedback was obtained from this survey. In particular, one parent wrote, "This was a great program for (student) to help her mature. (Student) needed a year to grow before being ready for the next step in life and this program really helped with the transition. Again, thank you to all. You make a difference in these young adult lives." The students were also given a survey and provided more positive feedback. In particular, one student wrote, "The lessons are fun. I am more confident about myself and I know what other jobs I want."

A challenge for TPS has become managing enrollment. With the increased interest in enrollment, a more elaborate effort has been placed on the selection of the next year's class and alternates. While we appreciate the interest and do not wish to turn any away, we also realize there is a limit on how many students can be served and housed.

One of the important features of the partnership is the students enrolled in the Vocational Rehabilitation major here at UW-Stout. Last school year these students received approximately 2,000 hours of supervised experience working with the TPS students. This is a win-win-win as the TPS students have an age appropriate model/mentor, the Stout students gets hands-on

experience, and TPS is able to provide more one-on-one assistance to their students. This is a great example of the poly-technical approach to education emphasized at Stout.

It has been brought to our attention that TPS may be the first residential transition program housed on a public university in the country. It appears that we were in the game for more than a year before programs were initiated at the University of Iowa and the University of California-Los Angeles.

If you would like more information on the TPS program, please contact Al Noll at [nolla@uwstout.edu](mailto:nolla@uwstout.edu).

## New Arrival!

Casey Lubinsky, Vocational Evaluation Services Manager with SVRI, delivered a healthy baby girl, Stella Marie Lubinsky, on June 2, 2009. Stella weighed 6 lbs. 12 oz. and measured 19 and 3/4 in. long. Congratulations to Casey and husband, Brad!





# STOUT

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*Finding Answers,  
Providing Solutions,  
Ensuring Futures*

*-SVRI Motto*

## Did You Know...

- SVRI staff had a total of 8,981 student contact hours in the Spring of 2009 (January through May)
- The return on investment (ROI) ratio for SVRI is 1:15 meaning that for every dollar received from the University of Wisconsin-Stout, SVRI is able to generate fifteen dollars in revenue to provide services including WorkSource Wisconsin, student hours, research, training, direct client services, the AT Resource center, and PERC.
- 26 students have graduated from the Transition Partnership School here at SVRI in the past 5 years.
- Since January of 2009, 210 individuals have completed online training courses through SVRI.
- WorkSource Wisconsin is a not-for-profit organization with the goal of providing Wisconsin employers with accessible and complete information regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities. Please visit [www.worksourcewi.com](http://www.worksourcewi.com) for more information.
- WorkSource Wisconsin has had 229 participants in WorkSource training sessions to date in year 2009.
- WorkSource Wisconsin has provided 3 technical assistance training sessions to date in 2009.
- [Worksourcewi.com](http://Worksourcewi.com) had 179,109 website request hits on Tuesdays from January 1, 2008 through July 11, 2009. Tuesday is the most popular day for employers to contact the Worksource website to obtain information.
- In July 2009 alone, there have been 10,305 total WorkSource Website hits.