Alaska DVR - Case Review Talking Points

Background

The case review system (CRS) is part of DVR’s long term commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. It is a critical component of the agency’s program evaluation system ensuring compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, providing technical assistance to VR managers and counselors, and identifying training issues and/or best practices. The CRS is the mechanism by which the division answers question about core rehabilitation issues such as eligibility decisions, plan development and service delivery which cannot be addressed other than by reviewing individual participant case records. It also generates programmatic and fiscal data that may drive changes in DVR’s policy or business practices and may be viewed as an internal compliance audit.

Another aspect of the CRS is that DVR falls under the requirements of Federal OMB Circular A-133. This is also known as a Single Audit; it provides assurance to the Federal government as to the management and use of program funds; and is performed by an independent entity. In Alaska, Legislative Audit is that independent auditor. The Single Audit review encompasses both fiscal and compliance components.

The CRS is primarily a compliance review with s strong emphasis on what constitutes quality VR work. This is why only VR professionals with either CRC credentialing or fiscal or CRP expertise review case files. The questions on our review address the compliance component required of leg audit. It is important for us to be cognizant of this audit requirement. If leg audit cannot answer its questions through the case review process, they will go to other data. Using the case review process ensures that leg audit will always be evaluating client centered vocational rehabilitation decisions made by rehabilitation professionals.

Very broadly, the CRS addresses three components of the VR service delivery system that may be viewed as separate programmatic functions, but in actuality are inter-related and are critical to the efficacy of the entire process.

These areas are:

* Direct client services
* Fiscal and
* CRPs

In 2012, DVR migrated from bi-annual regional reviews to a yearly statewide review in order to more quickly identify and react to systemic, statewide issues. This conversion to a statewide review is still a work in progress. For various reasons, the CRP and fiscal components of the review were not part of the statewide process in 2013, however it was determined that they would be reintegrated back into the statewide process for the 2014 review.

Sample:

The sample size will remain similar to last year’s sample of 200 cases, although a small number may need to be added to accommodate the CRP and fiscal sample. This is based upon the number of reviewers, days, and caseloads. The review will focus on cases in plan, closed rehabilitated and closed from plan status, like in previous years. The average number of cases to be reviewed per caseload is approximately 6 cases = 3 plan, 1 closed rehab, 2 closed from plan.

Remove Eligible > 180 days as Criteria: There appears to a significant decline in cases that are in eligible status beyond 180 days, from last year. This decrease is likely due to the increased awareness of timeliness to plan and the implementation of the Plan Development Extension datapage. Because of this drastic reduction in the number of cases in eligible status beyond 180 days, performance on this issue should increase (M&M is 85 % of plans written in 180 days). Therefore it is felt that there is no need to specifically target the sample to look at plans over 180 days.

Remove Trial Work as a Criteria: Results from last year’s review determined that the division is doing good work in regard to Trial Work plans (of those 6 cases targeted during the review). The bigger concern may be that there should be greater use of Trial Work, which was identified by looking at cases in plan or closure status. The question will remain on the case review instrument as some cases in plan or closure status have used Trial Work.

Increase Sample of Closed from Plan by One Case Each Caseload: In the previous reviews only 1 case per caseload was reviewed for each caseload. It may be beneficial to review more cases closed from plan status to help discover or evaluate if there are common reasons why we close cases from plan status. If there are possible “themes” that surface, could there be solutions or training to help reduce these case closures and help the client reach employment? The investment, both staff time and financial resources, in these cases can sometimes be huge.

Case Review Instrument:

Changes to the case review instrument are minor.

* Questions 21-23: Three CRP related questions have been added to the CRS form which previously were on the CRP CRS instrument. It was felt that these questions were most related to field staff work and/or addressing if the CRP work was helpful to case movement.
* Question 8: Added the option of using the Plan Development Extension datapage along with a casenote to get to “yes.”
* Question 16: Added what type of documentation is used for verification of SSI/DI benefits. This will give us better information on what type of documentation is used for verification. This information does not affect answer.

Fiscal Review Questions:

The fiscal component will review the following:

* CRP AFPs – CRP report dates match CRP invoice dates and CRP report accompanies invoice
* AFP’s on IPE or Plan Revision – pull a predetermined number of cases 10-20% to determine if all AFP’s are on IPE or Revision (for past two years)
* Field Warrants – have a case note justifying the need
* AFP’s over $5,000 that require bids have fiscal backup, excluding:
	+ hearing aids
	+ training related services
	+ Medical Procedures
	+ Prosthetic Devises
	+ AFPs for (AK Ctr for Blind & Outside Bind Services Center)

CRP Review Question Changes:

Information and results from the Southeast Review in November 2013 helped determine changes for future case reviews. The review results were disseminated to the FSMC in January 2014. Suggestions were made and as a result three questions were moved to the main CRS form and two questions were eliminated from the CRP form.

The total number of questions are:

1. Did the CRP’s report address the reason for the referral?
2. Did the CRP’s report identify the services that were provided?
3. Did the CRP’s report address the results of the services that were provided?
4. Did the CRP’s report include recommendations?
5. Did the CRP provide a monthly report, at a minimum?

Note: The goal is to pull use maximize the sample for all three components of the review as much as possible to reduce the total number of cases.

Case Review Kick off Discussion

Opening Comments:

* Welcome & thank everyone for coming – especially the two very busy VRC’s – Barb & Liz

Purpose of Case Review:

The CRS is primarily a compliance review with s strong emphasis on what constitutes quality VR work. This is why only VR professionals with either CRC credentialing or fiscal or CRP expertise review case files.

The CRS is the mechanism by which the division answers question about core rehabilitation issues such as eligibility decisions, plan development and service delivery which cannot be addressed other than by reviewing individual participant case records.

The CRS results are used to:

* provide technical assistance to VR managers and counselors, and
* may identify training issues and/or best practices,
* generate data that may drive changes in DVR’s policy or business practices.
* provide direction and guidance for the rehabilitation manager that will have a positive effect on the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services;
* identify systemic concerns and/or practices that are producing positive results;
* reinforce consistency across state;
* provide information on issues of interest to the agency, i.e., comparable benefits, use of eligibility extensions, use of trial work, severity of disability, etc.
* ensure that services are provided within the scope of the legal parameters provided by the federal funding source; and
* ensure the division is in compliance with Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the applicable amendments and regulations.

*Another aspect of the CRS is that DVR falls under the requirements of Federal OMB Circular A-133. This is also known as a Single Audit; it provides assurance to the Federal government as to the management and use of program funds; and is performed by an independent entity. In Alaska, Legislative Audit is that independent auditor. The Single Audit review encompasses both fiscal and compliance components. – Mark can speak more to this if you decide to mention it.*

* This is an opportunity to see how we are doing, provide some guidance to those who need it and to identify exemplary work where we see it. What can we learn from this work and replicate across the state.

Ground Rules:

* Let’s keep the dialogue and tone respectful and professional, no matter how hard we try to make the process open, it continues to be an intimidating process for staff.
* Results: will be shared with staff. Individual review sheets will go back with the managers. A statewide teleconference debrief will review the high level results of the review.
* Confidentiality - Remember to keep the discussions that take place here confidential – please do not go back and discuss counselor’s work with others in the office or region.
* Please remember to answer the questions – remember to respect that “prudent professional judgment” differs from counselor to counselor. As long as they are within the limits of policy, withhold your personal opinions, keep comments professional.
* Provide comments – positive as well as those that are constructive. When answering with a “No” please provide comments to help the manager and VRC understand the WHY it’s a no. You can do this with “Yes” as well.
* Transfer cases. Please review the entire case, regardless of when it was transferred or to whom. We want to get a sense of compliance/quality of the entire case. Make a note in the comments section recording the date the case was transferred to the current counselor.
* Counselors should not review their own region
* Regarding CRP questions. Information gathered from the 3 CRP questions will be analyzed to determine if policy should be reviewed, strengthened or revised. It was felt that having a solid referral process would eliminate confusion by all involved and would help focus needed services for the client. Results from this review, may help determine if further training or policy revision is necessary. We will score the results, but will not consider these part of the compliance review.
* Start/End Times:8:30-4:30
* Structure: ½ day per region, debrief of region before we begin new region
* Debrief at the completion of a region and then a statewide debrief at the end