# Charter for the MnCHOICES Mentors Alliance

**Background**

During the implementation and launching of MnCHOICES, Mentors played a key role. They received orientation to help them support users within their lead agency. Because Mentors are considered to be the MnCHOICES expert within each lead agency and the communication liaison between their agency and DHS, Mentors need a vehicle that allows them to continue to grow in their knowledge about MnCHOICES and share information with DHS. We propose to establish the MnCHOICES Mentors Alliance as an ongoing method to accomplish this.

**Purpose**

Through regular contact with Mentors we plan to:

- Share current updates and future plans
- Provide ongoing training and support to Mentors to increase their skills and knowledge related to MnCHOICES
- Develop strong working relationships between MnCHOICES Mentors and DHS
- Offer a direct line of communication between Mentors and DHS
- Identify best practices and practical strategies to support Mentors with the implementation and ongoing use of MnCHOICES
- Promote a train the trainer approach to nurture successful users

**Structure**

The Alliance consists of:

- All Mentors identified within lead agencies and their delegates
- Assigned DHS staff
- Invited subject matter experts (SMEs) from DHS as needed
- Invited external SMEs as needed

The Alliance will meet in a designated location on a scheduled basis as decided by the Alliance but no less than once per year. We anticipate the Alliance will meet approximately two weeks prior to each version release of MnCHOICES which occurs quarterly.

**Scope**

Representing themselves and their agency, Mentors will identify how DHS can best support them in their role as a MnCHOICES Mentor with the following functions:

- Communication
- Training
- Supporting MnCHOICES users in their agency
- Troubleshooting MnCHOICES policy, technology and training issues

**Boundaries**

There are certain parameters that influence DHS’s ability to revise elements about or related to MnCHOICES. Some of them are:

- Federal regulation and state statute regarding assessment and support planning for people who need or perceive a need for long-term services and supports
- Available resources within DHS
- Competing priorities of the legislature and DHS administration
| Membership                                      | • All MnCHOICES Mentors as identified by lead agencies  
|                                                | • DHS MnCHOICES key staff                           |
| Roles                                           | • **Mentors**: Prepare for and participate in scheduled meetings. Collect, analyze and share information within their agency’s operation. Share strategies with other members that will improve efficiency and skill of users. Contribute to promoting consistency across agencies statewide. Provide feedback to DHS on training and technical assistance needs and drafted tools. Recommend agenda items for meetings. Communicate between their agency and DHS. (Identified by each lead agency)  
|                                                | • **DHS Lead Staff**: Schedule, prepare for, facilitate and participate in scheduled meetings. Develop agendas based on fixes and enhancements in new versions of MnCHOICES and identified needs of Mentors including training, strategies, communications, tools and resources. Assist to locate subject matter experts as needed. Document key outcomes from meetings and post to web. (Must attend: Facilitator, at least one consistent representative from Aging, CS and SSIS/MnCHOICES)  
|                                                | • **Facilitator**: Sets agenda, makes arrangements for space and equipment, sends notifications, solicits SMEs based on agenda, guides Mentor meetings according to agenda. (Training Lead)  
|                                                | • **Subject matter experts**: Provide adequate information on designated topics to empower Mentors to successfully support users in their agency. (TBD based on agenda)  
|                                                | • **Sponsors**: Provide authority and advice as needed (Alex Bartolic, Katherine Finlayson and Jean Wood) |
| Authority                                       | The Mentors Alliance is a recommending body. Division directors at DHS make final decisions. |
| Timeline                                        | • The MnCHOICES Mentors Alliance is an ongoing group.  
|                                                | • The group will decide the frequency, location and types of meetings.  
|                                                | • The group will begin to meet in February of 2015 on a scheduled basis  
|                                                | • The Charter will be reviewed and revised annually. |
| Expected Outcomes                               | We recognize it will take time to establish a Mentors Alliance that will accomplish its purpose. There is much work to do when an initiative is new. However, we anticipate that members will:  
|                                                | • Build strong working relationships with their colleagues, the MnCHOICES Team and other DHS staff  
|                                                | • Expand their knowledge about the purpose and use of MnCHOICES  
|                                                | • Mature in their role as a MnCHOICES Mentor  
|                                                | • Become proficient with common technical issues and troubleshooting techniques  
|                                                | • Confidently access and use MnCHOICES  
|                                                | • Understand how to train and orient users in their agencies  
|                                                | • Locate resources when they need them  
|                                                | • Promote the vision and values of MnCHOICES |