



# MnCHOICES™ Matters

**October 2014**

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*Focusing on people not programs*

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## Welcome Katherine

On July 21, Katherine Finlayson joined the Disability Services Division as manager of the Home Care, Case Management and Reform Projects Unit. She has been at DHS since 1992 when she was hired to oversee screening of nursing home admissions for people with developmental disabilities. Other areas for which she had responsibility at DHS include:

- Public Guardianship Program administrator
- Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator
- Planning director writing Federal Systems Change Grant proposals
- Unit manager in the Office of the Inspector General with regulatory oversight of statewide programs and services for people with disabilities and older adults

Katherine looks forward to working with lead agencies in her new capacity to develop and support a shared vision to implement and manage MnCHOICES.

## November is National Family Caregivers Month

Take some time to recognize the contributions of all informal caregivers who are such an essential part of the long-term services and supports system. If you are a caregiver, make sure to take care of yourself first. You will not be an effective caregiver if you do not.

MnCHOICES has a [Caregiver Domain \(PDF\)](#) that may help you assess the needs of informal caregivers and identify resources to help in the caregiving role.

Sometimes it is hard to assess caregiver needs during the assessment. You can mail ahead or leave behind a [Caregiver Questionnaire \(PDF\)](#) and enter the information into MnCHOICES at a later time.

## Help Desk eDocs form DHS-6979

Help for the Help Desk has finally arrived! To provide better service and make reporting problems easier for MnCHOICES mentors, you may now complete the MnCHOICES [Help Desk Contact Form \(PDF\)](#) to submit technical, policy or training issues about MnCHOICES and MnCAT to the SSIS/MnCHOICES Help Desk. The form:

1. Offers directions to complete the form.
2. Provides a link to [Tips for contacting the Help Desk.](#)
3. Accepts attachments.
4. Submits to the help desk directly with the click of a button.
5. Is triaged by the help desk to the appropriate policy or training resource desk.

The document will be posted to CountyLink in the future. Until then, it is available in [DHS eDocs.](#)

## Curbing Your Enthusiasm

We know there have been challenges ordering the Community Support Plan Worksheet (DHS-6791A). Currently, there are documents available to order. Orders are limited to 1,000. Most agencies do not need that many and it is likely the document will be revised periodically as we continue to learn about and launch MnCHOICES.

By ordering only the number you need for the next three months, you help to ensure that all lead agencies have access to the form. When ordering:

1. Consider how many assessments your agency conducts in a three month period and
2. Increase that number by 10 to 25 percent.

## Check It Out!

If you want to use MnCHOICES like a Rock Star, put the [MnCHOICES CountyLink](#) page in your favorites. The link is in every issue of MnCHOICES Matters, at the very bottom. Some things you can find are:

- [Checklist \(PDF\)](#) to navigate the MnCHOICES application
- [Long term services and support forms \(PDF\)](#) that were in use before MnCHOICES and now with MnCHOICES
- Offline/Online [step-by-step instructions \(PDF\)](#) and a [quick study checklist \(PDF\)](#) to refresh your memory
- [PCA processing \(PDF\)](#) guidelines with MnCHOICES.

Explore all the resources and watch for new ones!

## October is a Busy Month

During the month of October, 35 lead agencies launched. While preparing to launch, St. Louis County shared with us that they are ready to launch and take their first MnCHOICES Intake on October 29.

?Staff are excited, not quite like a kid on Christmas Eve, but maybe like waiting for the Easter Bunny!?

By the end of October, the total number of lead agencies using MnCHOICES to complete new assessments will be 67. This includes 75 counties and tribes.

## Good Luck Pam

On Tuesday, Sept. 30, Pam Erkel retired after 22 years of service at DHS. In recent years, she was manager of the Home Care, Case Management and Reform Projects unit within the Disability Services Division.

At a celebration on Sept. 29, Pam was honored for her dedication and received a modified MnCHOICES Assessment to determine what was important ?to her and for her? in retirement. Her Retirement Support Plan has her relaxing, traveling, spending time with her granddaughter and volunteering.

## Pencil in the Next Multidisciplinary Learning Lab (MLL)

By mid-November, all counties and tribes will have participated in MnCAT Step 3 ? Part 3 MLLs. This is the last training component before taking the test to become a Certified Assessor.

It has been over six months since the first MLL was held and since that time, some agencies have hired additional staff. We are developing sustainable methods to continue this valuable training component.

At this time, we are planning a Virtual Presence video conference. The tentative date and time is Nov. 24, 2014, from 2 to 4 p.m. Watch for details and registration material.

You are subscribed as ... to **MnCHOICES Matters**. For more information about MnCHOICES, visit us on the [DHS website](#). For technical assistance about MnCHOICES, visit us on [CountyLink](#). [Unsubscribe](#) from this list.

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