

services in Iowa for the past 11 years, said Joan Discher, general manager, Magellan care management center in Iowa at the Magellan Behavioral Care of Iowa, Inc.

Between July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006, Iowa's Medicaid program for behavioral health, the Iowa Plan, approximately 55,514 eligible recipients received at least one service during the year, said Discher.

"Magellan has been here since 1995 managing the behavioral sector," Discher told *MHW*. "In 1998 at the time we developed Intensive Psychiatric rehabilitation services, it really was to assist clients' development and help them become active participants in determining what that goal will be," she said.

Discher added, "It's terrific we're able to pilot this program. We have a firm belief that persons with mental illness should be active participants in their own recovery; it's our mission."

Officials may expand this self-directed care program once they determine its success after a careful evaluation, she added. "As we establish new services, we pilot them, we evaluate them and determine how successful they are, what we need to change, and how it should be expanded," Discher said. •

Magellan program offers Iowa consumers coaching, funding, flexibility in services

The program elements for Magellan's new Self-Directed Care program, established in partnership with Hope Haven, an Iowa-based rehabilitation facility, include:

- **Person-centered planning** — Individuals participate in a life planning process through which they devise their unique health care recovery plan. Participants identify goals that will aid their recovery and list services that they believe will help advance their achievement of those goals. For example, a participant's goal may be to live independently.
- **Life coaching** — An independent coach works one-on-one with participants to help design, develop and manage their recovery plan, which specifies the services and resources needed to help participants achieve their life plan goals. The coaches provide support, encouragement and guidance, but ultimately, the participants take control of their individual recovery plan.
- **Recovery purchasing plans** — Individuals have greater control over how funds are used for their care and recovery. Together, participants and their life coaches build a recovery purchasing plan that outlines services and items that can be purchased to assist participants in attaining their goals. Participants have access to a \$2,000 one-time credit that they can use to purchase approved goods and services that support their identified recovery plan. Magellan and Hope Haven facilitate the payment for those services on the participants' behalf.
- **Expanded provider network and services** — Participants have more flexibility in choosing providers and support services to supplement their care. Participants are required to demonstrate that the expanded services are not currently covered by their Iowa Plan and that the service received would directly address their rehabilitation goals. Examples of expanded services include tutoring, mentoring, transportation, and services related to employability, among others.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Skin test for Alzheimer's?

Researchers with the Blanchette Rockefeller Neurosciences Institute have developed a quick, painless skin test that may be the first available test for diagnosing Alzheimer's Disease (AD) in living patients. (An AD diagnosis currently relies on an autopsy for confirmation.) Reuters reported last week that in testing human tissue samples Tapan Khan, Ph.D. and Daniel Alkon, M.D. found that AD stimulates unique changes in a specific enzyme. The test even distinguished AD from other dementias such as that caused by Parkinson's

disease. Khan and Alkon wrote in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* that the test could eventually diagnose AD in its early stages, when treatments are significantly more effective.

Telecare's community care program recognized

Telecare, one of the nation's largest providers of adult mental health services, has announced that San Bernardino County, Calif. has received a 2006 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties in recognition of the success of Telecare's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) program. Telecare describes ACT as a community-

based alternative to inpatient hospitalization that "fully supports their recovery process while reducing the use of acute hospitalization and emergency psychiatric services." Since its inception in San Bernardino in 2003, ACT has enabled 95 clients to move from psychiatric facilities into community living environments, saving the county an estimated \$1.2 million annually.

Suicide hotline in danger of shutting down

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, reported on August 11 that the nation's largest suicide hotline, 1-800-SUICIDE, is scheduled to

Continues on next page