

DISABLED CITIZENS ALLIANCE FOR INDEPENDENCE

WINTER /SPRING NEWSLETTER 2020 / 2021

Serving Crawford, Dent, Iron, Reynolds and Washington Counties



DCAI CELEBRATES 40 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

2020 was a very special year for us! DCAI celebrated 40 years of serving individuals with disabilities! On October 1, 1980, Disabled Citizens Alliance for Independence was established as the first totally rural Center for Independent Living to be funded by the United States department of Education. Since opening in 1980, DCAI has served thousands of individuals through a variety of services that assist people in being as independent as they choose. A small office established four decades ago, with just a handful of employees, today is a recognized as one of the strongest most successful Centers for Independent Living in the country.



DCAI is a not-for-profit organization committed to serving the needs of people with disabilities. Services are provided in a predominantly rural area, in which DCAI is centrally located. This often requires covering distances of 60 to 100 or more miles to meet a person's needs. We serve individuals in thirteen surrounding counties.

The majority of staff and Board of Directors that serve these individuals have one or more disabilities themselves.

Currently, DCAI employs 69 full time employees, 82 part-time employees and serves as a payroll agent for the Consumer Direct Services program through the state of Missouri for more than 1500 attendants. In 2014, DCAI opened up a second not-for-profit, DCAI Foundation. These services continue to expand on our belief of every person is entitled to self-determination and control of their own lives. These services include: Behavioral Health, In-Home Personal Assistance, Respite, Individual Support Services, Veterans Home Care, Nurse Visits and Accessible Housing.

Services provided by DCAI were designed to ensure equal access of society on a non-discriminatory basis. All services DCAI provides are constructed from five core services: Peer Support, Information and Referral, Advocacy, Skills Training and Transition. The goal of all services is to offer options for independence in the community. The fundamental concept behind Independent Living is that every person is entitled to have the right to control and direct their own lives as independently as they choose.



DCAI envisions an inclusive environment that values independence and self-determination for persons of all abilities. We believe that people with disabilities have the right to control and direct their own lives and to participate actively in society. This participation may include making cultural and life style choices that minimize reliance on others in decision making and in the performance of everyday activities.

Throughout the past 40 years DCAI is pleased to have such a positive impact on the community and individuals we serve. We have built many partnerships within our community.

This year has been one of the most challenging, uncharted eras any of us have ever experienced. As we adjusted to new ways of providing services and meeting needs for individuals, we found we are stronger together. We were able to build dynamic partnerships that broaden the amount of people we could assist during COVID19. DCAI has proudly partnered with many organizations and companies in the area such as the Iron County C4 School, Viburnum Police Department, Quad County Fire Department, City of Viburnum, Iron County Ambulance Service and Lifeway Center Inc. Throughout this unfamiliar year DCAI assisted hundreds of individuals and families with food, home modifications and PPE, (Personal Protective Equipment).

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff, consumers and community partnerships for supporting DCAI for the past 40 years. DCAI will continue to educate and advocate with consumers for their right to live independently in their home within the community. We look forward to many more successful years!



Still Wearing Them!

Extending another big Thank You to Norma Moore for helping keep us safe by making us masks! Social Distancing and proper hygiene along with wearing our masks can give us a chance to keep from contracting the Corona Virus.

Thank you, Norma!!



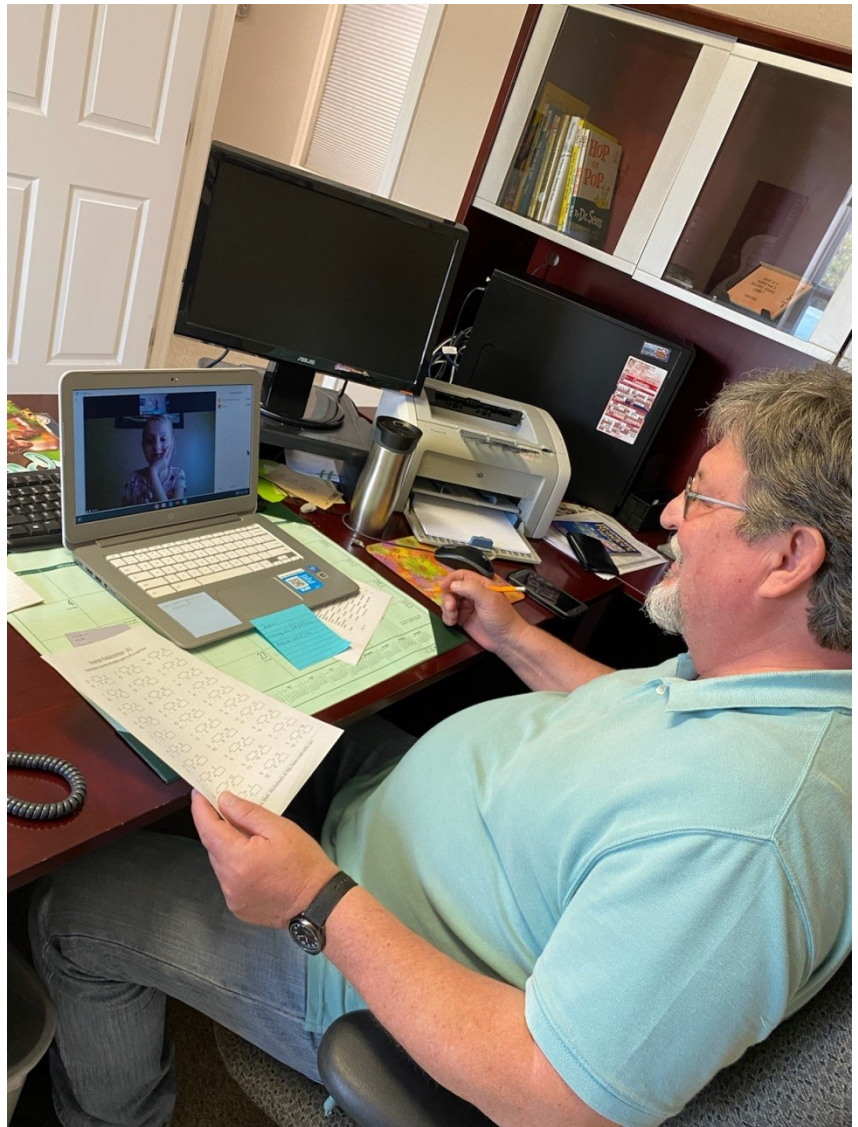
BREAKING BARRIERS

2020 has come with many obstacles and challenges to say the least. Our entire way of “usual life” has shifted and we’ve had to adjust to new ways of providing services. When the COVID19 pandemic hit, it completely removed what we knew as “normal.” The Education Department could no longer go into homes or schools to see students and consumers. This posed a great obstacle to continue assisting students and consumers with their school work and HiSET curriculum. DCAI recently began utilizing technology to continue seeing consumers and providing services.

Zoom is the leading enterprise to video communications. It allows live peer-to-peer teleconferencing, audio conferencing, chat, webinars and much, much more. It has become extremely useful during the season of social distancing and stay at home orders. Zoom has given DCAI Education department the opportunity for social education and it has been quite successful.

The Education department cannot be more excited to be actively serving consumers again and utilizing new means of technology. It’s only greater things from here. DCAI continues to break barriers and provide programs and services that give individuals with disabilities the choice to maintain independence in their homes and communities.

Resources: www.zoom.us



Pictured is Education Specialist, Dave Gillam, working with Skylne Eaton on math.

IRON COUNTY SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Instead of our Annual Back to School Fair, this year DCAI was able to supply free school supplies for all students of every grade level! We hope this donation will help ease the financial and emotional burden many may be facing! We wish everyone a Great back to school year and Please stay safe!



BASKET WINNER

DCAI Foundation holds a drawing for a seasonal basket every quarter for their aides. To qualify for a chance to win the basket, the aide must not have more than 3 call outs for that quarterly time period.

December's basket featured 4 ceramic soup bowls with matching spoons and 8 Bear Creek Soups to make and have in the bowls!

The winner of this basket was Amber Baker! Amber has been employed with DCAI Foundation since October 2019. On her days off, you can find Amber spending time with her family. Her favorite part of being a care giver is meeting new people and hearing about the people's lives that she works with. Amber would give individuals that are considering being a caregiver, or a new person to the field, the following advice: "Always have patience with your clients. Always remember these are THEIR homes and they like things done THEIR way."



**Amber Baker,
DCAI Foundation
Fulltime Care
Aide, with the
basket she won.**

DCAI Foundation appreciates all the hard work that their care aides put into making sure their client's needs are met so that they may continue living independently in their home and in their communities!

CONSUMER CARE BAGS FOR THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges to food security across the U.S. Access to healthy food options and nutrition is important to overall physical and mental health and well-being. Food purchases increase for many households with more children not attending childcare and



school in-person, changes in employment and during stay at home orders during the COVID-19 pandemic.



DCAI is providing goods and services that advance the safety and health of consumers. We know the holiday season can be stressful, in addition to adding COVID19 to the mix causes even more worry.

DCAI is addressing COVID19 related needs this holiday season by providing a food program to consumers of basic food, supplies and PPE. We want to ensure consumers and their families remain safe and have life sustaining food in the upcoming months.



DCAI is providing a Wal-Mart gift card for

food purchases only. Due to many individuals having specific diets and needs, you received a food restricted Wal-Mart gift card. Also provided are personal care necessities including: shampoo, soap, deodorant, toilet paper, Kleenex, and laundry soap.

Lastly, you received PPE which consist of masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and alcohol wipes. DCAI will continue to provide programs and services that give individuals with disabilities the choice and resources to maintain independence in their homes and communities.



Medicare Savings Programs (MSP)

The federal government requires that state Medicaid programs pay Medicare premiums, deductibles, or coinsurance for qualified people enrolled in Medicare Parts A or B.

The Missouri Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) program pays for Medicare premiums, deductibles, and coinsurance for eligible persons enrolled in Medicare Part A with incomes up to 100% of FPL. In June 2020, 106,527 individuals received benefits through the QMB program, 88% of whom also received MHABD coverage.

Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) program that pays for all or part of the Medicare Part B premiums for persons whose incomes are between 100 and 175% of FPL. In June 2020, 37,443 individuals received assistance under the SLMB program. Forty percent of SLMB recipients also received MHABD coverage.

If you missed your initial enrollment period to sign up for Part A or B, you can do so through the General Enrollment Period (Jan-Mar) with coverage starting July 1st. If you need help signing up, please contact our office @ 866.797.6080 or Missouri CLAIM @ 800.390.3330.

COVID-19 Pandemic

In January 2020, the secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), declared the COVID-19 pandemic a public health emergency. Since then, the pandemic has resulted in historic job loss, causing many to lose their health insurance. With this, more people were eligible and sought out coverage through state Medicaid programs. In addition, Administrative policies were quickly altered that temporarily expanded eligibility rules. Consequently, MO HealthNet saw a sharp increase in enrollment. The pandemic also impacted the financing of MO HealthNet, with higher rates of federal matching dollars for the program. The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on MO HealthNet in SFY 2020 were far reaching and are reflected throughout this report.

Missouri's Emergency 1135 Waivers

At the beginning of the COVID-19 public health emergency, CMS approved blanket 1135 waivers that gave states flexibility to make changes to their Medicaid programs without submitting formal requests. In addition to these blanket waivers, CMS approved a supplementary 1135 waiver for Missouri that made changes to provider enrollment processes, prior authoriza-

tions, settings for care, nursing facility assessments, beneficiary and provider fair hearings, and public comment periods for state plan amendments. These waivers will be active until the end of the PHE declaration.

Enrollment and Spending Growth

Until the COVID-19 pandemic, both enrollment and spending growth have slowed in recent years. Nationally, the program saw a sharp decrease in enrollment from December 2017 to July 2019 (~1.1 million, -3.0%). Of 48 states reporting, Missouri experienced the largest percentage decrease in child enrollment (-16.1%) with over 118,000 children dropped from the program. The reasons for this decline are not entirely clear. Improved economic conditions, renewal processes, upgraded eligibility systems, and enhanced data matching for eligibility verification may have contributed to some of the decline, but there is also evidence that many of the Missourians who lost coverage may still have met eligibility requirements. In March 2020, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared a national public health emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To assist states in responding to the crisis, HHS provided enhanced FMAP funding for states. As a condition of this funding, states agreed to uphold maintenance-of-effort (MOE) requirements in which they could not impose new eligibility restrictions or reduce coverage during the PHE. A combination of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic and the MOE requirements resulted in a steady increase in MO HealthNet enrollment through the pandemic. From January to September 2020, enrollment increased by over 140,000 people, including an increase in coverage of parents of 24.2% and pregnant women of 76.6%. This steep enrollment increase is expected to continue over the next year. Another contributor to enrollment growth during the COVID-19 crisis was a policy adopted by MO HealthNet that allowed continuous eligibility for children for 12 months upon enrollment. This temporary policy, however, will no longer be in effect upon termination of the public health emergency.

Enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act authorized a 6.2 percentage point increase in federal Medicaid matching funds to help states respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. States can access the additional funds from January 1, 2020, until the end of the public health emergency. In order to receive the enhanced FMAP, states must uphold certain requirements through the end of the month when the public health emergency ends, including:

- Maintain eligibility standards, methodologies, or procedures that are no more restrictive than what the state had in place as of January 1, 2020
- Limit premiums to those that were in place as of January 1, 2020
- Cover (without any cost sharing) testing, services, and treatments— including vaccines, specialized equipment, and therapies—related to COVID-19 for Medicaid-eligible populations
- Continue Medicaid coverage for individuals if they were enrolled in the program at the start

of the emergency period, or become enrolled during the emergency period, unless the individual voluntarily terminates eligibility or is no longer a resident of the state

Medicaid Expansion in Missouri

Under the Affordable Care Act, states may choose to expand eligibility for Medicaid to all adults between the ages of 19-64 with income up to 138% of FPL. Expansion includes coverage for childless adults, a population that has previously not been eligible for Medicaid in Missouri. The FMAP for the expansion population is 90%, considerably higher than federal cost sharing for other Medicaid groups. In August 2020, Missouri residents voted to expand Medicaid through a ballot initiative that amended the state constitution, making Missouri the 38th state to adopt expansion. Approximately 230,000 additional Missourians are expected to gain health insurance through MO HealthNet as a result of the expansion. The language of the constitutional amendment requires the state of Missouri to implement Medicaid expansion by July 2021.

Summary

MO HealthNet impacts the lives of low-income children, families, older adults, and people with disabilities in Missouri. The availability of Medicaid reduces the number of uninsured Missourians and provides health insurance coverage for populations that might not otherwise have health coverage. MO HealthNet supports the state's health care infrastructure by providing health insurance coverage that helps to reduce uncompensated care, promotes earlier treatment in appropriate settings, reduces preventable hospitalizations, decreases unnecessary emergency room use, and supports education and training in academic medical centers. Missouri's program exists as a complex system that affects the lives of individuals and families in every county across the state. Policymakers must consider that Medicaid is a collection of programs, services, and funding mechanisms. In many cases, an adjustment to one element of this system can have unintended effects or consequences on other elements. Changes can also impact the entire health care system and the economy, since MO HealthNet is a major health insurance program. Understanding the basics of this system is an important step in addressing the health care needs of all Missouri residents.

"Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery. And today? Today is a gift.
That's why we call it the present."

.....Bill Keane

CONSUMER DIRECTED SERVICE PROGRAM NOW PAPERLESS

On January 1, 2021 all Medicaid-funded personal care services, both agency and self-directed, were mandated to have Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) implemented. Missouri had gotten an extension the last two years, but that ended on December 31, 2020. The EVV is required by Federal Law. If you refuse to use the EVV, you will risk losing your personal care services.

DCAI has several options to meet your needs for EVV purposes:



Telephony: this option is for someone that has a home phone. This attendant will have to use your phone to clock in and out when providing services to you. This will verify that your attendant is in the home at the time the visit starts and ends.

Validator: This option is for someone that does not have a home phone and only a cell phone with no internet access. This is a small battery powered box that will be placed in a stationary place in your home, commonly placed on your light switch plate. The attendant can call in using a phone number and will provide an 8 digit code that will be entered when prompted from the DialInDocument call in system. This will verify that you and your attendant is in the home at the time the visit starts and ends.



GPS Mobile Website: This option will allow your attendant to clock in and out using a website. This option will require you to have internet access, either through the home or through electronic devices. You will have to allow the access of location from your device. This option only verifies your location at the start and end of the visit when having the website open. This will be GPS Verified to the consumers address and is the way to verify the services



are being provided at start and end of the visits.

GPS Website/Validator: This option is for someone that does not have internet access, home phone, or cell phones with no services in their home. The website will be opened prior to going out of services. When arriving to the home of the consumer the attendant will open the app and clock in additionally adding the 8 digit Validator number into the system, and completing the same step when clocking out. Once the attendant gets cell services the app will be opened again and it will automatically connect with the accurate information for a successful clock in and out.

The personal care attendants have a personal access code that is given to them. That code is only for the attendant and should not be shared with anyone including the Consumer.

If you experience a system outage or trouble clocking in and or out, please call the office right away so that we can assist you with your issue.

DND
Mobile Care Solutions
Senior Communities & Support @ Home

The Validator™
The DND Validator™ provides time and attendance verification when a client's phone is unavailable. The Validator™ is a secure and reliable method for verifying a caregiver is at a client location.

Quick Installation
The Validator™ can easily be secured using the provided tamper resistant mounting screw or strap. Installation can be completed in only a few minutes.

Easy as 1, 2, 3
Using The Validator™ is simple:
1) Press the button to display the unique code.
2) Call the toll-free documentation line.
3) Enter the code when prompted.

Customer Approved
The Validator™ is in use in thousands of locations verifying when and where documentation is required where other means of visit verification are unavailable.

Contact us to learn more!
856-669-7066
www.dndmcs.com

**Consumer Directed Services Consumers can now choose
to pay their personal care attendants
between \$10.30, up to \$12.00 an hour!**

TIME PASSES ON

It has been several months since I have taken the time to write an article. Time never sits still to give us time to catch up. COVID 19 has definitely affected our lives and how we are living right now. I hope and pray that this finds you all healthy, safe, and happy. I know that my life has greatly changed in the last few months.

My Mother passed away on Sunday November 29th. She had several health issues over the last several years. She died in her home from congestive heart failure. We were very blessed to have had her in our lives for many years. She was 86 years old. Her birthday would have been just 5 days from her passing.

My sister Rita has come to live with me on the farm. Rita had lived with my mother for all of her 60 years. If you remember, in 2018, we built the bunk house to be prepared for this time. The bunk house is a one bedroom apartment with a living room, bathroom, kitchen, and laundry room. Rita has done very well during this time and now has come to accept the bunk house as her home. When Rita asks about Mom, we tell her that Mom has gone to live with Jesus in Heaven. She always replies, Good!

Rita has had personal care services through the State of Missouri for years. This has been a huge blessing for our family. These services allow a personal care aid to stay with Rita while I am at work and in the evenings. I spend most of the nights with Rita in the Bunk House. We now have it set up for an aid to stay the night once or twice a week to give me a break. The Bunk House is built on to my large hay and feed shed. It is located just about 50 yards from my house. I am always available if I should be needed in the evenings.

I have had many individuals ask why did you need to build the bunkhouse. They go on to say, why didn't you just move her into your house? These are valid questions for which I have answers. For years, our family has tried to give Rita a life similar to ours. This would be a life that allows her to have her own home, independence, and allow her to have the joy of having her own space and she loves calling the bunkhouse hers. As most of you know, I am a strong advocate of the independent living philosophy. Even though I have lost my vision, I continue to live my life without focusing on any of my limitations. I have a great family, friends, job, home, 96 acres, 34 head of cattle, and 8 cats to make my life full. Who has time to stop and worry about what tomorrow will bring!

My day starts around 5:15AM every morning and ends when I go to bed about 9:30 or 10. I start the day with a cup of coffee, exercise, feed the cows and calves, walk Rita's dog, and make sure if Rita needs anything before I go to the house to get ready for work. My work day is from 8 to 4. I return home around 4:15 to 4:30 each day. I quickly change clothes and get out and feed and water the cows. I check to see if they have enough hay, if needed, I will roll out 2 or 3, 1000 pound bales. Once I am done with all my chores, I start my daily jogging routine. I try to be back in the house by 6:30 or 6:45 to wash up and eat dinner. At 7:30, I start getting my teeth brushed and get ready to go over to the Bunk House at 8PM to stay the night with Rita. I am very happy with this daily routine. I have always enjoyed staying busy. I simply don't have the time to get bored.

Everything is going great on the farm. There is always something to do or fix on the weekends. Lane and I have several more acres to pick up rocks on the 84 acres we cleared last year. The grass is coming up well and we will give it another round of fertilizer and seed the end of this month. We have all the fences put in with 4 pastures being fenced off to rotate the cows this spring and summer.

My plan is to put my cows and calves on the 84 acre farm in May. I am excited because we finally have everything done, except picking up rocks, to turn our cows out to graze. We have had to clear all the land I have purchased to turn them into pastures. All of my land was trees, brush, rocks, and ditches when I bought it. This experience makes me think about what the pioneers did in the earlier part of our country's history. I love my country life!

My cattle herd has continued to grow from the first 5 heifers I purchased on May 10, 2016. I have 23 bred cows and heifers, 1 Angus bull, and 10 calves, with eight calves currently being weened. We definitely have had choir practice the last few nights with the balling cows and calves. By separating the calves has added an additional 20 minutes in the morning and evening to my chores. I have 4 of these calves already sold once I get them weened. Within the next 2 months, we will have another 14 calves born with 7 being born in late summer. It doesn't get any better than that.

I turned 65 last August. After my Mom's death, I have been giving it a lot of thought about what I want to do in the future. My priorities have changed with a heavier focus on my family since Rita has moved to the farm. I purchased my farm to give me something to do now and when I retire. I am not ready to retire, but definitely know that I need to start planning for that day.

I have 2 ½ years left on my contract with DCAI. It is my intent to fulfill that time commitment and possibly a few years beyond that. As CEO, it is my responsibility to see that this organization has steps in place when I decide to retire. DCAI plays a huge role in helping individuals with disabilities and the communities in our service area. Our Board of Directors has formed a special committee of Board members to study and establish transitional ideas and steps to prepare for the day when I decide to leave. There will be no one named as my replacement until I announce a retirement date. To stop all speculation and assumptions, candidates would be interviewed and selected by the Board of Directors when that day comes. Our organization will continue to make adjustments and changes that will keep DCAI highly efficient, effective, and viable.

I have loved the 8 ½ years that I have lived and worked in the Viburnum community. I built my house and purchased my land to make this my home for the rest of my life. I have a great interest in seeing that DCAI is still in operation for many years to come after I retire. There are many talented individuals that work for DCAI. The Board should have good candidates to consider in a few years.

It doesn't seem like I should be 65 years old. Time goes on, and we need to move along with it. One person doesn't make an organization great but all the employees, their hard work, and the individuals that they serve build an effective organization. Time will continue to move quickly and that day that I decide to leave will come. We want to be prepared and ready for whatever the future brings.

Let's focus on today and plan for tomorrow! Looking back and thinking about time past will only slow down our quest for happiness and joy. Planning and preparing for the future will help bring about positive and effective transitional change. We don't have to worry about time passing if we are prepared. We will continue to adapt and adjust as the demands of this world come up. DCAI will be prepared for the days ahead! I pray that you will accept this challenge to join me in making our time joyous, effective, and to make a difference in our communities.

Don't just let time go by! If you spend all your time thinking about the past, you will not have the time to make the future better.

Dr. Dennis W. Atkins

March 2021

*"Do what you can with all you have,
wherever you are."*

- Theodore Roosevelt



DCAI Foundation

ISS & In-Home Services

***** NOW HIRING *****

We are currently seeking applicants in Iron, Dent, Crawford, Washington, Reynolds and St. Francois Counties!

**\$12.00 per hour Monday-Friday
\$13.00 per hour on Weekends & Company Observed
Holidays! Paid Training!**

Qualifications:

- ♦ Must be at least 18 years of age
- ♦ Must have driver's license, vehicle and auto insurance;
- ♦ Must be able to read, write and follow directions; AND
- ♦ Have at least six (6) months paid experience as an agency homemaker OR at least one year paid or un-paid experience caring for children or for sick or aged individuals

Qualified applicants may call or complete an application at the office; visit our web-site at www.dcai.us/DCAIFoundation/Employment, or visit us on Facebook!

DCAI Foundation staff assists persons with disabilities in efforts to ensure individuals have the choice to safely maintain independence in their home and in their communities.

Individualized Support Services will strive to encourage/support Individual's with meaningful choices pertaining to all aspects of daily living; promote socialization and interpersonal relationships, educate and promote health/safety, assist with maintaining healthy relationships with family, and encourage community integration/involvement.

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DCAI Foundation is seeking immediate applications for a

DCAI Foundation launched this new service to expand on the quality services that DCAI and DCAI Foundation already have in place which include Consumer Directed Services, In Home Services, Individualized Support Services, Education Services and Independent Living Services.

Behavioral Health Services include but are not limited to, Assessment and Diagnosis in Children, Adolescents and Adults and Outpatient Counseling for Individuals and/or Family.

It is our mission to help individuals gain and protect their ability to remain independent in their own homes.

Outpatient Therapist duties include:

- Providing in-home or in-office counseling and/or interventions to identified clients in order to enhance and foster the client's optimal functioning and interactions in the home and community.
- Ability to assess situations and administer counseling services including evaluation, diagnosis, development of treatment plans and progress notes for clients;
- Ensure policy and procedures meet clinical standards for proper care of Behavioral Health clients and general program integrity;

Applicants must possess a Master's degree in Human Services, Social Services or a related field and have one year verifiable experience; Must possess valid Missouri LCSW license; Have experience providing mental health counseling to adults, adolescents and children with broad background of experience with various patient populations and modes of service delivery;

***Qualified candidates may submit a resume` and cover letter to Human Resources. Mail to: DCAI; ATTN: Stacey Harmon PO Box 675 Viburnum, Missouri 65566 Email to: staceyt@misn.com; Fax to: (573) 244-5410 Or call for more information (573) 244-5402.**

Should you wish to speak with someone in reference to the Behavioral Health service please call our office at (573)-244-5555 or (875)391-4488, Monday-Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

*For Behavioral Health Crisis after hours, call;
1-800-356-5395 for Reynolds County,
1-800-833-3915 for Crawford & Dent Counties
1-800-811-4760 for Iron & Washington Counties.*