

## **Strategies for Success: Motivating Local SHIP Sites** **Q&A with Jo Murphy, Executive Director** **MMAP, Inc. (Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program)**

Jo Murphy understands firsthand the importance of motivating local SHIPs to succeed. When Jo became Executive Director of MMAP, Inc. (the Michigan SHIP), she set out to address some of the frustrations she experienced during her nearly ten years as a Regional MMAP Coordinator. As a Regional Coordinator, Jo was often troubled by the lack of feedback she received from the state MMAP office. Jo couldn't tell whether her SHIP was pulling its weight or lagging behind the fleet. She was also sometimes discouraged by a lack of communication and transparency between the state and local SHIP offices. So, when Jo became Executive Director, she seized the opportunity to turn the tide.

In the following Q&A, Jo describes the strategies she used to motivate her SHIP sites for success. You can use these strategies at your SHIP too. If you have questions, you can contact Jo at (517) 886-1242 or [jo@mmapinc.org](mailto:jo@mmapinc.org).

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### **What steps have you taken to motivate your SHIP sites for success?**

#### *Goals Provide Clear Outcomes To Strive For*

The first thing I did was give each local sub-contractor goals for its SHIP activities. The goals were based upon the CMS Performance Measures. This increased transparency and helped SHIP sites to finally understand what was expected of them. Once sub-contractors knew what they should be striving for, they were more motivated to reach or exceed those goals.

#### *Regular Feedback Fosters Self-Improvement*

After I established goals for each SHIP site, I began providing them with monthly feedback on their progress using an Excel spreadsheet (see attachment). This feedback was in addition to their semi-annual trainings and quarterly meetings. The feedback helped sub-contractors see how well they were doing and gave them the opportunity to modify their SHIP activities based upon regular feedback. It allowed them to quickly see how changes in SHIP activities impacted progress toward their goals.

#### *Staff Support Provides Personalized Attention*

Next, I assigned one MMAP staff member to work specifically with the local SHIP sites. This staff member provided support and technical assistance to the Regional MMAP Coordinators and oversaw the contracts between MMAP, Inc. and the local sites. The staff member motivated sub-contractors by helping them identify ways to meet their goals through small improvements in SHIP reporting and outreach. This helped increase communication and support between the state and local SHIP offices.

### *Contract Workshop Increases Understanding and Buy-In*

By far, the most successful thing that I did was hold a SHIP Contract Workshop for all Regional MMAP Coordinators and their Executive Directors (the Area Agency on Aging Directors). At this workshop, I reviewed the purpose of the SHIP grant, the CMS Performance Measures, the local goals, and all sub-contractor requirements. I also shared information about MMAP's performance over the last year so that attendees could see how we were doing and where we might improve. This workshop fostered increased understanding and buy-in among local SHIP sites.

### *Conference Calls Provide a Support Network and an Opportunity to "Be Heard"*

Recently, I began hosting monthly conference calls for the Regional MMAP Coordinators. We use these calls to discuss SHIP site progress, share ideas, and respond to any emerging issues. The calls are a way for the sites to "be heard." They allow us to communicate more frequently than we could through in-person meetings and have helped to support sub-contractors as they move toward their goals.

### *Awards Recognize Good Work and Show Appreciation*

Finally, I recognized SHIPs for their efforts by giving out several new awards at our annual MMAP recognition event. For instance, I honored the two SHIP sites that helped the most dual eligible beneficiaries with mental disabilities (DMDs). I also presented awards to the two sub-contractors who demonstrated the best reporting practices. These gestures showed appreciation for local sites while also reinforcing the importance of new initiatives and goals.

### **What advice can you share with other SHIPs?**

Be patient and remember that you may not see immediate results. It can sometimes be difficult to get all of your sub-contractors motivated, on the same page, and working toward the same goals. But, motivating sub-contractors through goal setting, feedback, and regular support can be a great benefit to both local and state SHIP offices. It gives local sites a clear idea of what they should be striving for and how well their efforts are paying off. It can help them feel more involved and supported in their SHIP activities. Further, it can give them a wealth of program data that they can share with their funding sources or Board of Directors. And, it can help the state SHIP office better understand and respond to its local sites.

Just take small steps to increase communication, feedback, support, and transparency, and you can motivate your SHIPs sites to succeed.