

**Assistive Technology Demonstration and Education Project
ND Protection and Advocacy Project
IPAT Final Summary Report
December, 2006 – September, 2007**

The Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT), an affiliate of the North Dakota Association for the Disabled, entered into a contract with the North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project to carry out assistive technology educational/demonstration presentations and assistive technology (AT) assessments. The target population was people experiencing substantial impairments to memory or cognitive abilities due to dementia. In the area of AT assessments, this population was later amended to include persons with a disability requiring an AT assessment to identify assistive technology needs in the areas of daily living and major life activities. These individuals were expected to be denied an assistive technology evaluation by a private insurance company or governmental program.

EDUCATIONAL/DEMONSTRATION PRESENTATIONS

IPAT researched and developed a training module specific to assistive technology and dementia. The module was used during presentations to educate the attendees in the area of AT and dementia, so they would become aware of AT solutions available for themselves, family members or a person they serve. IPAT funded the purchase of a range of AT devices to be used during the presentations and for demonstration purposes. The 'AT & Dementia' training provided background information on dementia, hands-on equipment access and demonstration of devices in the areas of AT for memory loss, safety and wandering. The presentations were approximately 1-1 ½ hours in length with time allotted as needed for Q&A. A detailed handout was provided to all who participated (see attached). IPAT provided a total of 8 presentations directly impacting 107 people.

Western North Dakota

June 12, 2007

St. Alexius Medical Center, Bismarck

Alzheimer's Family Support Group

Attendees: 18 (family members 17, social worker 1)

June 19, 2007

St. Alexius Medical Center, Bismarck

Alzheimer's Family Support Group

Attendees: 10

September 7, 2007

Sertoma Park , Bismarck

IPAT – CAC Membership
Attendees: 12

September 24, 2007
MedCenter One – Mandan Care Center
Alzheimer's Family Support Group
Attendees: 7

Eastern North Dakota
May 17, 2007
MeritCare OT Department
Occupational Therapists
Attendees: 18

June 27, 2007
Cass County Social Services-Adult-Cass County Annex
Social Workers-Adult Services
Attendees: 18

July 17, 2007
Waterford in Fargo
Family members and service providers
Attendees: 9

July 18, 2007
Bethany Homes, Fargo
Senior Companions
Attendees: 15

The trainings were well received and provided a springboard for discussion. A comment frequently made following the training was the need for family members to have had the information earlier. Participants indicated that they needed this information prior to the point of attending a support group. This raises the question of how to find and disseminate this information at an earlier entry point.

Future use of this training material is possible through IPAT. The North Dakota Division of Aging Services has been made aware of its availability and is exploring avenues to utilize it, possibly in upcoming statewide trainings and conferences. IPAT will be doing this presentation at the national Assistive Technology Industry Conference in January, 2008. It will be an opportunity to highlight not only the technology and its use, but the successful and ongoing partnership between Protection and Advocacy and the State AT Program, IPAT.

AT ASSESSMENTS

A women with dementia explored devices for wandering, memory loss and safety. Many devices were demonstrated and discussed with the daughter and

mother. They determined the most urgent need was a medication dispenser. The family purchased it for her and now knows of other options for potential needs in the future.

A woman with significant physical limitations due to MS was assessed for environmental controls and phone access. At present, she has only voluntary movement of her facial muscles, an assessment determined a consistent and effective access method for her to control the devices. She continues to live in an assistive living situation and was set up with a voice controlled phone purchased through the state Telecommunications Equipment Distribution (TED) program. The use of an environmental control system (ECU) for this individual is an ongoing process. Someone who has not used technology can find it overwhelming to learn the systems so it is necessary to introduce and train on the devices by prioritizing them. She is borrowing an ECU from the IPAT Equipment Loan Library and is in the early stages of the learning curve. IPAT will continue to provide her support to learn the device and explore funding options if and when it is needed.

A man with quadriplegia who finds it necessary to stay in his bed 20 hours/day is looking for a way to access a computer and control his environment. He would like to be able to use a computer to communicate via email, to do research on his disability, to help him pay bills, to shop, to read, to write and for entertainment. He was assessed for these needs and it was determined a laptop with Dragon Naturally Speaking and a joystick for backup would be appropriate for computer access. Funding is currently being pursued via the Medicaid Waiver and the Grand Forks Mayor's Committee for these devices. He decided he did not really need the ECU he tried at this time.

A woman with ALS is in need of an augmentative communication device, computer access, and environmental controls. She currently lives in a nursing home and expressed some interest in moving home to live with her husband and children. After the AT assessment, it was determined a Dynavox would meet all of these functional needs.

A woman with MS was assessed for computer access, environmental controls, daily living aids and phone access. After exploring devices in all of these categories she felt her main need was computer access. Equipment was loaned to her from the IPAT Equipment Loan Library. After completing the equipment trial, she decided not to pursue a purchase at this time.

A man with a diagnosis of dementia/Alzheimer's and family members requested an AT assessment after one of them attended one of the AT and Dementia training. This individual also has vision and hearing losses. The specific concerns they asked to be assessed were related to phone and appliance usage, getting lost, and eating independently. Several AT options were explored with them and the family members decided to start with a JV-35 phone and auto voice

dialer. This will be purchased through the TED program. The family members will look into alternative remotes, a stove controller, vision raised dots and a door marker next. They will also connect with their local Senior Center and County Social Services for direction in weekend meals and possible in-home care.

A woman with a mobility impairment due to a stroke asked for an AT assessment for environmental control for her lamp and heater, remote control options for her TV/VCR, and computer access. The AT assessment identified the use of voice dimmers to control her lamp and heater as satisfactory. She currently has one on loan from the IPAT Equipment Loan Library. A voice controlled remote control for her TV/VCR will be tried. IPAT has one on order for the Loan Library for her to try. Dragon Naturally Speaking worked well for her for computer access. However, she is not a computer user so she will need computer training if computer usage is pursued. This assessment process is ongoing while equipment is purchased by IPAT for her to try.

A man with a diagnosis of dementia/Alzheimers daughter visited an IPAT Technology Access Center after hearing one of the AT and Dementia presentations. They requested an AT assessment in the area of medication reminders, emergency help, and assistance with getting in and out of a car. After trial use of devices to address these needs, the daughter purchased a MedReady pill dispenser which is working well for him. Alert One was determined to be the best solution for emergency help. The options for assisting him to get in and out of the vehicle did not work so they continue as before.

An AT assessment was requested for a woman with a history of falling in her home. Safety in the bathroom was identified as the priority concern. After assessing her bathroom situation, it was determined a portable suction cup grab bar be strategically place within her shower stall. She tried one from the IPAT Equipment Loan Library with success and the family purchased one for her. They are also considering a toilet safety frame and possibly a toilevator. A fee for service alerting system was discussed with family members.

A woman was mentioned as someone who could benefit from a home-based AT assessment. At the time of this report no further information has been received. Once background information and releases have been provided an AT assessment will be scheduled.

BUDGET

IPAT has met and exceeded the number of presentations and AT assessments agreed upon within the contract. The entire amount allocated to this project has been expended. It should be noted that IPAT exceeded this compensation without intent of further reimbursement. This was mainly due to the significant amount of research time necessary to develop the training materials. There is no concise information regarding this topic and it was necessary to investigate many different resources in order to put together training information that is accurate,

comprehensive and current. It is valuable information for a targeted population that is growing; it meets the mission and purpose of IPAT, and has the potential to be utilized at a state and national level.

OUTCOMES

People Served

- 9 AT assessments with 1 pending
- Presentations for 107 people

Increased Knowledge, Awareness, & Access

- IPAT's staff, service providers, & family members have an increased knowledge of AT solutions specific to dementia
- Handout is available with range of devices for easy retrieval of information
- IPAT Technology Access Centers have increased the inventory to include devices for people with dementia
- Devices are available for people to loan and try out in their own homes

Increased Training Capacity

- IPAT staff gained the knowledge, materials and devices to train others in the area of AT for memory, safety, and wandering
- Training on AT for dementia is now available within North Dakota for family and providers from aging services, health department, rural outreach workers, AARP, gerontologists and others
- IPAT is scheduled to present this information at a national conference in January, 2008

Lessons Learned

- There is a real need for this information NOW
- Reaching family members, especially the children of those diagnosed with dementia early on is a key to promoting safety through AT for the individual while simultaneously providing care-giver support
- Proper dispensing of medication and the ability to connect with others in an emergency were needs identified consistently by those with a loved-one living alone with dementia
- The potential dementia has to overwhelm our health-care system and deplete our resources – individuals with dementia are expected to double by 2020