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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Penn State training aims to improve counseling skills

HOMEWOOD – The Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' (ADRS) Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VR) was recently invited to participate in a unique collaborative research study with Penn State University that aims to effectively improve supervisors' rehabilitation counseling skills and case management decisions.

The goals of the grant-funded study, designed by Dr. Jim Herbert of Penn State with assistance from Dr. Jared Schultz of Utah State University, specifically coincide with the department's ongoing initiative of stressing quality of services provided over quantity of clients served, and focuses on the development of an intimate working alliance between counselor and consumer.

As one of only 10 states chosen to participate in the study, ADRS Commissioner Cary Boswell and Assistant Commissioner Jim Carden were quick to realize the opportunity given to the department through this free training.

Herbert and Schultz were in Alabama last week to begin the study with the on-site training component, with follow-up training to occur throughout the next six months.

Fourteen VR supervisors statewide volunteered to take part in the research study. Evenly divided into research and control groups, the VR supervisors randomly chosen for the study were Craig Akin, Phyllis Barrett, Beth Hanks, Dee McBride, Tamara Robinson, Jennifer Smith and Ashley Townsend.

If results from the course study are positive, developers hope to package the training course and make it available for purchase.

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