

Dear Provider,

Thank you for publishing your new rates with Independence Northwest. A 10% increase to plan dollars and in turn to the cap of the rate ranges means not only increased purchasing power for the customer, but also the ability to more completely cover the costs that you incur to provide services to your customers.

As you know, the contract (Service Agreement) is an agreement between you and the customer. If you intend to raise the rate for any current contract you should discuss this with your customer. You should be ready to negotiate this with them and provide the reason behind your request. This will require a formal change to the terms of the contract, as the contract remains intact as written if no changes are made in writing and approved by all parties.

### Talking Points for Providers When Talking to Customers

#### Background:

In July of 2007, brokerage providers benefited from a COLA (Cost Of Living Adjustment) increase in the amount of 5.6%, and in July of 2008 a COLA of 2.1% . These COLAs were included in the terms of the contracts, and were meant to provide assistance with the rise in gas, food and shelter prices that we are all experiencing.

#### Overhead Costs of Managing Operations:

For this 10% rate increase, you may consider overhead (gas, travel time, etc) that exceeds the COLA that you have already received. For example: You live in the Portland metro area and provide supports to customers that also live in Portland. In this case you are likely incurring average costs for the services you provide. However, let's say you live in Portland and travel once a week to work with a customer that lives in Canby. When traveling a distance longer than average you might consider increasing your overhead to accommodate these additional costs.

#### Changes in Support Needs:

As you know, each customer is unique and requires different types and levels of support. If you have been receiving the upper limit of the rate range and have felt that you are not being paid adequately to properly support the customer you may consider if a contract revision is appropriate. For example: The customer you work with has difficulty maintaining stable housing, has a dual diagnosis (mental health and a Developmental Disability), has significant medical concerns, has demonstrated aggressive behavior, has a criminal history, or makes choices that endanger their health and/or safety. Many of our customers seek to grow their social circle and perhaps you are particularly skilled at helping customer make connections, build their community and create natural supports (friends!). Circumstances like these require you, as the provider, to call upon a level of skill not always called for in your work with every customer.

### Experience

As with any business, businesses that have a proven track record (longevity, reputation, awards, results, etc.) may have established rates that are higher than their less experienced peers. Many of you have published your rates in a range to be negotiated based on a customer's individual needs, with your base rate reflecting your experience and expertise in the field.

### **What happens now?**

After you have spoken with your customer regarding a contract revision, the customer should contact their PA to request that revision. **If at all possible, we would appreciate negotiating the increased rate upon plan renewal.** For plans renewing in November or December we may not be able to accommodate a revision, as those contracts will renew very soon. Please discuss what makes the most sense with the customers with whom you contract and their Personal Agents.

The Personal Agent will then revise the customer's plan according to the customer's decision based on their conversations with you and the Personal Agent. The Personal Agent will generate a contract revision form, and submit the revision form for the customer's authorization and yours. Please sign and return.