PURPOSE OF A HEALTH HISTORY

Keeping an eye on the health of our consumer’s means knowing their starting point regarding diagnoses and other health issues. Then it requires keeping up to date information regarding emerging health issues. Put together there is a documented health history containing baseline information and records of past and present health issues. It should include a medication section, lists of hospitalizations and ER visits, medical tests done with results, list of past and present doctors and immunizations. It must follow the consumer from provider to provider. Some consumers will have long complicated health histories and others may only have occasional colds or flues.

This is good advice for all of us. Do you keep a health history for you and your family???

A copy of this health history should be kept where the consumer lives, especially if more than one caregiver, nurse; therapist (etc.) visits the person.

This information travels with the consumer and is kept updated.

Who should have access to this information? Positive person-centered outcomes often depend on help from a variety of people within their current circle of supports. These individuals form an interdisciplinary team and each should be aware of that consumer’s health history, so they can see changes in a consumer over time and respond in a timely and appropriate way. Maintaining an optimum level of health is an ongoing process and depends on team effort.

If there is not a current health history, then one must be compiled using information from the consumer, family, therapists, old medical records, pharmacy records, reports from other health care professionals. This forms a baseline for this consumer.

Being aware of a consumer’s health history gives you clues about what type of information you may want to collect each week, month or quarter. This might be weights, seizure records, accu check records, medication changes and other health issues.

Maintaining a consumer’s level of health requires knowing their “normal”, whether it is sleeping patterns, gait, or behaviors (etc). Someone providing close support to a consumer may see a change before his or her family or doctor does.

Example: A staff person notices a consumer frequently has belching after eating. The doctor may ask for details, ‘how long has this been going on’, has this been an issue before? Questions about current and past health issues that will help make an accurate diagnosis.