

PRISM and Common Measures

January 18, 2007

Present: Jeanette Fish, John Glen, Aaron Hughes, Karen Humelbaugh, April McGuire, Al Pierce, Evelyn Roth, Lily Sehon, Rod Simmons, Graham Slater, Greg White.

Absent: Ray Worden.

Welcome and Introductions

Overview of the Current PRISM Measures

John Glen overviewed the current PRISM measures.

- Placement rate = (participants with wages during the exit quarter or the quarter after exit) / (participants who completed services and had a goal of employment).
- Retention rate = (participants who had wages in each of the four quarters after completing services) / (participants who were employed during the quarter of completing services or the quarter after completing services).
- Wage gain = (fifth quarter average hourly wages) - (earnings during the quarter of exit or the quarter after exit).
 - This only includes those who had wages in the fifth quarter.
- TANF Caseload management
 - (OED just publishes this; does not compute any data.)

The definition of “exit” is set by each individual agency.

Overview of the DOL Common Measures

John included Attachment A from an ETA TEGl ... which shows the adult and youth common measures:

Adult:

- Entered employment = *Of those who are not employed at the date of participation: (# of adult participants who are employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter) / (# of adult participants who exit during the quarter).*
 - Differences with PRISM:
 - no requirement for employment goal
 - no reflection of being employed during quarter of exit (only quarter after exit)
 - limited to those who were not employed at the time of participation in services
 - exit is mandatorily defined as 90 days of no service, but this is an exit from any workforce system service ... i.e. someone may have

completed service from Title 1b, but would still be being served by OED. This person would not yet have exited.

- Employment retention = *Of those who are employed in the first quarter after the exit quarter: (# of adult participants who are employed in both the second and third quarters after the exit quarter) / (# of adult participants who exit during the quarter).*
 - Differences with PRISM:
 - definition of exit;
 - only three quarters, not all four quarters.
- Average earnings = *Of those adult participants who are employed in the first, second, and third quarters after the exit quarter: (Total earnings in the second plus total earnings in the third quarters after the exit quarter) / (# of adult participants who exit during the quarter).*
 - Differences with PRISM:
 - measures actual earnings, not wage gain
 - is a two-quarter average, rather than comparing two individual quarters
 - would not be an hourly figure, would be a semi-annual figure
 - total earnings, not hourly.

Youth ... not discussed much, as none of the three measures would be computable from PRISM. The first one would have some PRISM input:

- Placement in employment or education: *Of those who are not in post-secondary education or employment (including the military) at the date of participation: (# of youth participants who are in employment (including the military) or enrolled in post-secondary education and/or advanced training/occupational skills training in the first quarter after the exit quarter) / (# of youth participants who exit during the quarter).*

Do ETA Common Measures apply to any programs outside of Department of Labor? Currently, no. But they came from an OMB report and are supposed to be used for other federal agencies. But no others have started using them yet.

Note: In order to fully implement common measures across all relevant agencies, we would need the ability to have a shared database to track when individuals completed services from the entire system.

OED and DCCWD are already using the DOL Common Measures.

- OED calculates the measures using DOL-provided software ... the software calculates the rates from file extracts.
- DCCWD calculates the measures using programs that Al Pierce wrote, but at the end of the year, he has to use standard federal software (the WIA version of what

Gus uses). As long as the two numbers are within a certain percentage, no reconciliation is required.

- Each agency is computing their own exits, without reference to the other agency's exit date.

Pros and Cons of Switching PRISM to Common Measures

Pros (to changing PRISM)	Cons (to changing PRISM)
Staff in various programs currently see two sets of numbers – the common measures, the PRISM measures. It’s confusing. If we made the change, people would all see the same numbers, all the time.	Significant reprogramming of all PRISM reports. Significant cost. Some agencies would not want to contribute to these costs if they’re not required to implement common measures or WISPR.
The definition of exit would be consistent across all programs.	It could take a long time to get measures for individuals, as they have to exit the entire system before they are measured.
The feds say we have to go to the common measures; PRISM may make it more achievable.	Significant cost to all agencies, to work through new data definition and submission agreements.
We will have to commit resources to “something” ... a single system for the common measures. So why not put them into a rewrite of PRISM?	Federal common measures won’t last forever. Do we want to spend a bunch of money on this, only to have to change them again later?
This would likely be similar to the transition we went through when we moved from SIS to PRISM.	Moving to new measures would lose the time series we’ve built up.
The data are already in PRISM; but the calculations would all be completely different.	For PRISM to be used for WISPR, we would need to change the statute.
	PRISM has flexibility in pulling custom reports; would the common measures/WISPR system have this flexibility?

Other Discussions

If all the data were sitting in one place, we could choose whatever measures we wanted, whether or not the data were actually in what we now call PRISM.

Karen's request: whatever decision we make, it would be great if we all agree on using a finite number of measures, all with the same definitions. It's too confusing for legislators and others when we have slightly different versions of what appear to be the same things.

Important: even if PRISM could compute the common measures, we would need a completely new system to handle WISPR. WISPR reports individual records to DOL; not just aggregated records. WISPR has many more data elements than PRISM contains.

Caution: we should not make decisions about PRISM until we've worked through more detail about common measures and WISPR.

Developing a Consensus

Discussion of whether or not we should start a brand new system instead of trying to adapt PRISM to this new system.

Karen's suggestion: this group should fully document what the new system should be – to serve purposes of the current PRISM, to meet common measures and WISPR requirements.

Wrap-Up / Next Steps

The group should meet again. Future discussion should include:

- Can we develop a system to serve all purposes?
- What are the needs for the common measures and WISPR systems?
- Should we change to the common measures from the PRISM measures?
- This discussion should be part of the larger IMIS / WISPR project ... which will be after legislature ... there will be a project manager leading.
- We should consider whether or not this group should meet again; also whether this group should feed into future PAPAL discussions; etc.

ACTION: Graham will seek a time for a second meeting and develop an agenda agreed on by all.