Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Employment Services Model Evaluation - Findings Report

November 2017

PCG | **Human Services**
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I.   PURPOSE

The overall purpose of this effort is to provide the Indiana Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) an examination and analysis of the state's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Employment Services Model (ESM). Specifically, BRS seeks to understand whether ESM, implemented on July 1, 2015, is having a positive impact on service delivery and if it is achieving key programmatic goals.

This report is one installment in a series of program evaluation reports to be produced bi-annually by Public Consulting Group in partnership with BRS. Each report will analyze elements of ESM and address programmatic questions such as:

- What elements of service delivery lead to positive employment outcomes?
- Are there differences across certain populations that can be identified in order to better inform policy and practice?
- Are services being individualized to best suit the needs and strengths of each consumer?

The purpose of these reports is to measure and analyze a broad range of VR statistics, including hourly wages, weekly hours worked, and successful case closure rate, among others. Also included in this analysis is baseline information related to the Results-Based Funding model, ESM's predecessor. Although few conclusions can be drawn at this time due to the fact that ESM is still in its infancy, the data results presented in the following sections provide BRS with a foundation of knowledge on which to build upon in the coming months and years.

II.   BACKGROUND

As of 2010, nearly 19% of Americans live with a disability[1]. At 11.1%, individuals with disabilities have disproportionately high rates of unemployment relative to their peers without disabilities[2]. In addition, earned wages are 37% less on average, and in some states, even more, with the pay gap widening as educational attainment increases[3]. The differences in earned income impact not only individuals, but their families which often must support them, as well as the state and federal government that provides support in the form of various benefit programs. Workers with disabilities are more likely to be employed part-time, and largely in the service industries, as well as transportation and production. Individuals with disabilities are likelier to face persistent poverty compared to those without disabilities. Individuals with a disability often face barriers to employment, including mismatches between skill and their job, discrimination, and lack of job readiness. As of July 2016, approximately 20.4% of the workforce are individuals with disabilities[4].

The goal of vocational rehabilitation services is to assist individuals with disabilities in gaining meaningful employment. Vocational rehabilitation programs are funded by federal dollars as well as state dollars through the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Vocational Rehabilitation works directly with individuals with Physical or mental impairments to address the challenges they may face in the modern workplace, through authorizing a wide range of services and supports[5]. These services include job coaching, vocational assessment, training, assessing worksite accommodations, assistive technology, among other services. State vocational rehabilitation programs also assist in job placement of individuals with disabilities by developing relationships with local businesses.

The passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) introduced new requirements to how services are offered and how success is measured in vocational rehabilitation services administration and programming. In an effort to create accountability to job seekers and tax payers, WIOA emphasizes performance measures and stresses that agencies make data informed decisions. WIOA creates common performance measures, requires the establishment of primary indicators on attaining skills and credentials, and establishes annual reporting measures[6].

With this context in mind, Indiana BRS is taking the lead in using programmatic data in order to drive policy and promote positive employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The recently implemented **Employment Services Model**, described in the following section, was designed based on an in-depth analysis of consumer needs and service delivery gaps. Moving forward, BRS will further leverage data and information to improve services and programs.

TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MODEL

To understand the full impact that ESM is intended to achieve, it is important to briefly outline the evolution of the BRS Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Beginning in 2006, BRS shifted away from hourly-units of service to a structured milestone-based system, known as the Results-Based Funding model (RBF). The idea was simple and rooted in the ever-changing VR landscape: tie vendor reimbursements to specific "milestones", or consumer accomplishments, to promote comprehensive and effective service delivery. This in turn would lead to positive employment outcomes for individuals with a disability.

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[1] https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html
[2] https://www.dol.gov/odep/
[3] http://www.air.org/news/press-release/those-disabilities-earn-37-less-average-gap-even-wider-some-states
[4] https://www.dol.gov/odep/
[5] https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/reg/narrative.html
[6] http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa-meetings-on-final-regs.html

Additionally, BRS separated the RBF model into two tiers: one intended for individuals with high needs and multiple barriers to employment (Tier 1), and one intended for individuals that would require less intensive services than those in Tier 1 (Tier 2).

While the implementation of the RBF model was a positive step for Indiana's Vocational Rehabilitation program, it did not entirely accomplish BRS' service delivery goals. An analysis performed by BRS revealed that vendors were spending less time with consumers during the initial intake stages. This upfront work allows vendors to identify consumer strengths, skillsets, barriers to employment, and career goals, and thus lead to positive employment outcomes.

In July 2015, BRS implemented a new service delivery model for its Vocational Rehabilitation program known as the Employment Services Model (ESM). Commonly referred to as a "hybrid service model" because it contains elements of both the RBF model and hourly units of service, ESM intends to find the balance between service structure and vendor flexibility, as well as emphasis on both achievements of outcomes and individualized, high quality services. Furthermore, ESM eliminates the "one size fits all" approach that unintentionally resulted from the milestone-based service structure by allowing vendors to tailor their service hours to each individual consumer, based on the unique needs of each individual.

Overall, the purpose of ESM is to:

- Inject flexibility into the service structure;
- Eliminate barriers for individuals with the most significant disabilities to receive appropriate services and supports; and
- Ensure that employment plans are tailored to the unique needs of each consumer served.[7]

The goal of BRS' new model is to re-emphasizes the work at the start of the consumer's journey to employment, referred to in ESM as the "Discovery" phase. There are several Discovery services that vendors can leverage to better serve their consumers, including Situational Assessment, Work Experiences, and Job Shadowing. Another important goal is to increase access to supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities. Over the coming months and years, BRS will analyze the impact of ESM to better inform future policy and practice.

ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

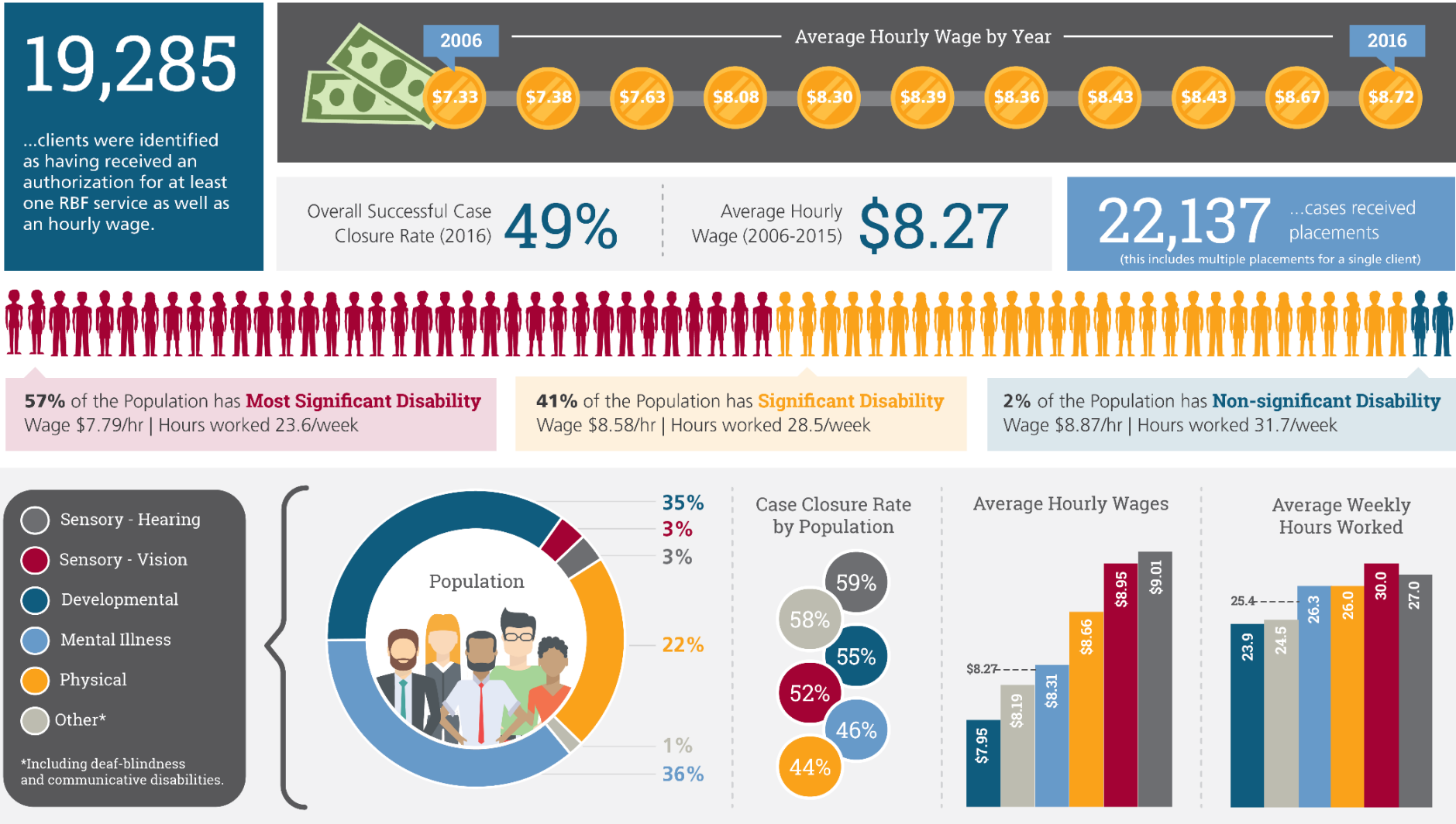For clarity, the components outlined below frame the following analysis:

- Consumers are designated as "RBF" or "ESM" based on date of earliest authorization. Consumers whose earliest authorization occurs between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2016 received the RBF designation. Consumers whose earliest authorization occurs June 30, 2016 received the ESM designation.

- All results are reported based on the number of cases rather than the unique number of consumers. This is a more accurate representation of the RBF model because it captures consumers that have had multiple cases with BRS with different determination attributes. For example, a consumer might have a severity determination of "non-significant disability" for one case, while another case for the same consumer might reflect a severity determination of "significantly disabled".

- In some cases, a consumer might receive multiple job placements before case closure. To ensure accuracy, only the most recent hourly wages and weekly hours received by a consumer are included.

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[7] BRS "Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual of Employment Services"http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/VR_Manual_of_Employment_Services_June_2015_FINAL.pdf

- Population distributions are categorized based on the primary impairment identified by the VR counselor. The primary impairment categories are as follows: Sensory-Vision, Sensory–Hearing, Physical, Developmental, Mental Illness, and Other. The "Other" category includes individuals who are deaf-blind or with communication barriers.

- Severity determination distributions are based on determinations required for federal reporting purposes. The severity determination categories are as follows:

  - **Non-Significant Disability (NSD)**: Consumer has a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment.

  - **Significant Disability (SD)**: Consumer has a severe physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or two functional capacities (communication, interpersonal skills, mobility, self-care, self-direction, work skills, and work tolerance) in terms of employment outcome and who is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period.

  - **Most Significant Disability (MSD)**: Consumer has a severe physical or mental impairment that substantially limits three or more functional capacities and who is expected to require multiple VR services over an extended period.

- Case closure rates are determined using three different case closure codes. Each code is associated with a specific reason for case closure. Cases can be closed for a variety of reasons, including a consumer leaving the program before completion. The case closure categories are as follows:

  - **Case Closure – IPE Not Implemented:** Consumer receives a comprehensive Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) but leaves the system prior to receiving VR services.

  - **Case Closure – Not Rehabilitated:** Consumer receives a comprehensive Individualized Plan for Employment but leaves the system prior to achieving employment placement and stabilization.

  - **Successful Case Closure:** Consumer is successfully placed in competitive and integrated employment, has achieved stabilization, and has retained employment for at least 90 days.

- Outliers' greater than two standard deviations from the mean were removed from the average hourly wage and average weekly hours worked analyses.

III.   RESULTS-BASED FUNDING MODEL

The following infographic summarizes the data results for consumers served under the Results-Based Funding model. Consumers that received their first service authorization after July 1, 2006 and before June 30, 2015 are included in these results.

19,285

...clients were identified as having received an authorization for at least one RBF service as well as an hourly wage.

Average Hourly Wage by Year

2006										2016
$7.33	$7.38	$7.63	$8.08	$8.30	$8.39	$8.36	$8.43	$8.43	$8.67	$8.72

Overall Successful Case Closure Rate (2016) **49%**

Average Hourly Wage (2006-2015) **$8.27**

22,137 ...cases received placements
(this includes multiple placements for a single client)

57% of the Population has **Most Significant Disability**
Wage $7.79/hr | Hours worked 23.6/week

41% of the Population has **Significant Disability**
Wage $8.58/hr | Hours worked 28.5/week

2% of the Population has **Non-significant Disability**
Wage $8.87/hr | Hours worked 31.7/week

Sensory - Hearing
Sensory - Vision
Developmental
Mental Illness
Physical
Other*

*Including deaf-blindness and communicative disabilities.

Population

- 35%
- 3%
- 3%
- 22%
- 1%
- 36%

Case Closure Rate by Population

- 59%
- 58%
- 55%
- 52%
- 46%
- 44%

Average Hourly Wages

- $7.95
- $8.19
- $8.31
- $8.66
- $8.95
- $9.01

$8.27

Average Weekly Hours Worked

- 23.9
- 24.5
- 26.3
- 26.0
- 30.0
- 27.0

25.4

The infographic in Figure 1 summarizes outcomes from the ten years in which consumers received service authorizations under the Results-Based Funding Model, beginning in July 2006 through June 30, 2105, and parts of 2016 during the transition into the new ESM model. The information is disaggregated in detail in the paragraphs below.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

An identified total of 36,670 cases received at least one RBF authorization from 2006 - 2015. Most consumers are those with a Mental Illness, and the second largest category are those with a Developmental disability. The least number of consumers are those with a Sensory-Hearing or Sensory-Vision impairment, and consumers that have a disability that is categorized as Other. The population is further broken down by severity of disability, showing most of the consumers had a disability categorized as most significant, while the least number of consumers had a disability that is categorized as not significant.

AVERAGE HOURLY WAGES AND WEEKLY HOURS WORKED

The infographic captures the average hourly wage a consumer receives upon achieving employment placement. In some cases, consumers may receive either multiple placements within the same case or with another case. This could be due to a variety of reasons, including that the original placement did not meet their desired employment goals or match their skillset. Consumers that experience this path to stabilization are also captured in this metric. The population with the highest average wage is Sensory-Hearing, and the population with the lowest average hourly wage is Developmental.

The infographic also captures the average weekly hours worked upon achieving employment placement for RBF consumers. The consumers with a Sensory-Hearing disability had the highest average weekly hours worked, while consumers with a Developmental disability had the lowest. Average hourly wages and weekly hours worked are further broken down by severity of consumer disability.

LENGTH OF TIME FROM FIRST AUTHORIZATION TO EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT

An additional metric analyzed in the RBF model data and not included in the infographic measures number of weeks of time between a consumer's first authorization for an RBF service to the time they achieved employment placement. As most consumers receive multiple service authorizations during their cases, the date of the earliest authorization was used. The query identified 22,137 cases that achieved placement with at least one RBF service authorization. The overall average length of time from the first authorization date to successful placement is 38.3 weeks. The population with the shortest number of weeks to placement is Mental Illness and the population with the longest number of weeks to placement is Sensory-Vision.

SUCCESSFUL CASE CLOSURE RATE

The successful case closure rate metrics measures the number of cases in the RBF model that received an employment placement and 90-day stabilization. The case closure rates reflect the proportion of closed cases that received "Successful Case Closure" designation compared to the other non-successful case closure designations. Consumers with a Sensory-Hearing disability had the highest successful case closure rate, while those with Physical disabilities had the lowest.

Overall RBF trends show outcomes that are similar to those in the ESM model, explored further later in the report, with consumers identified as not having a significant disability achieving the highest average hourly wages and weekly hours worked, but only represent less than 5% of the population. Those identified as having the most significant disabilities, which represents over half of the population, achieved the lowest employment outcomes.

IV.   EMPLOYMENT SERVICES MODEL

On July 1, 2015 BRS fully implemented the Employment Services Model. The following data results are for individuals that received their first service authorization on or after the date of July 1, 2015. Therefore, any unique cases that have an authorization that is on or before June 30, 2015, are not included in the data used to perform the analysis in this section.

FIGURE 1

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

Figure 1 displays the distribution of consumers by primary impairment. There are 7,567 unique consumer cases served under ESM. Most consumers are individuals with a Developmental disability, followed by consumers with a Mental Illness. The least number of consumer cases are of those with a Sensory-Hearing disability, or a disability categorized as "Other". This trend is similar to what the data has shown in the past few reports.
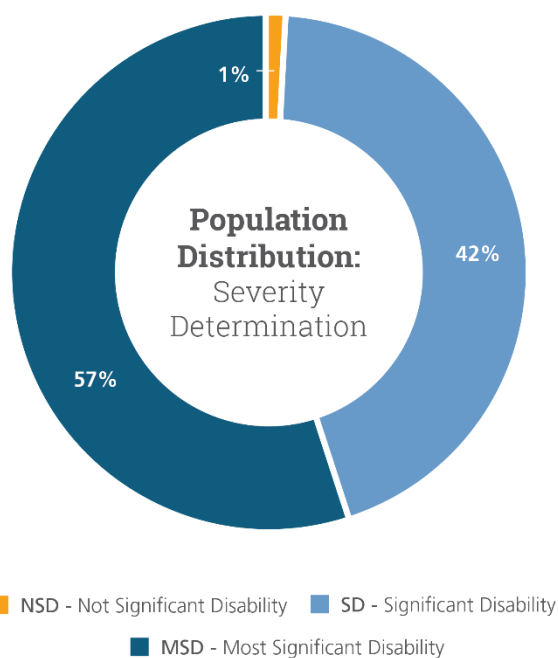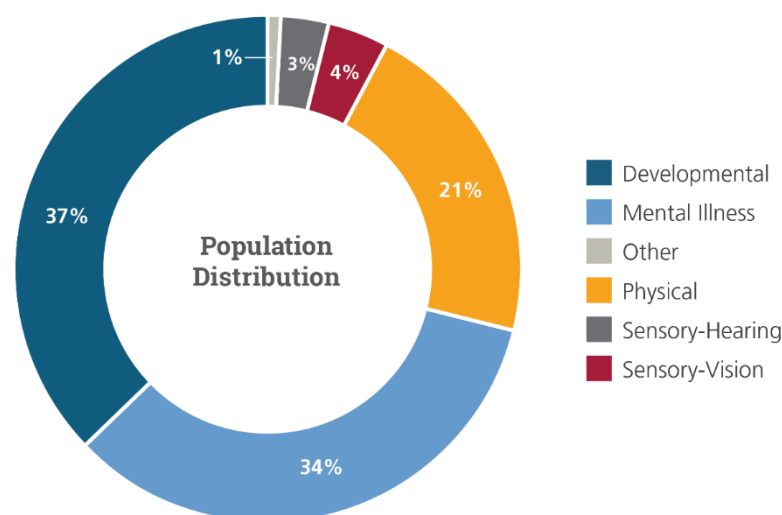

Figure 2 displays consumer population by Severity of Disability. The largest number of consumer cases are from consumers with the most significant disability. The least number of unique cases are of consumers with a disability categorized as not significant, which is similar to what we have seen in past reports.

FIGURE 2

HOURLY WAGES

Figure 3 on the following page displays the average hourly wages by population, across the consumer population. 2,628 consumers were identified as receiving an hourly wage. The consumers with the highest average hourly wages at $9.60 were those with a Sensory-Hearing disability, which also had the highest average hourly wages in our last quarter. However, this figure decreased by $0.09. Consumers with a Sensory-Vision disability followed shortly after at $9.52, which increased by almost $0.10. The consumers with the smallest average hourly wages are those with a Developmental disability at $8.83, which increased by $0.04. Consumers with a disability categorized as "Other" had the second lowest wages, at $9.03, and also saw a reduction of almost $0.30 since the last quarter. The overall average for average hourly wage across all individuals is $9.26, which increased by $0.18 since the last quarter.
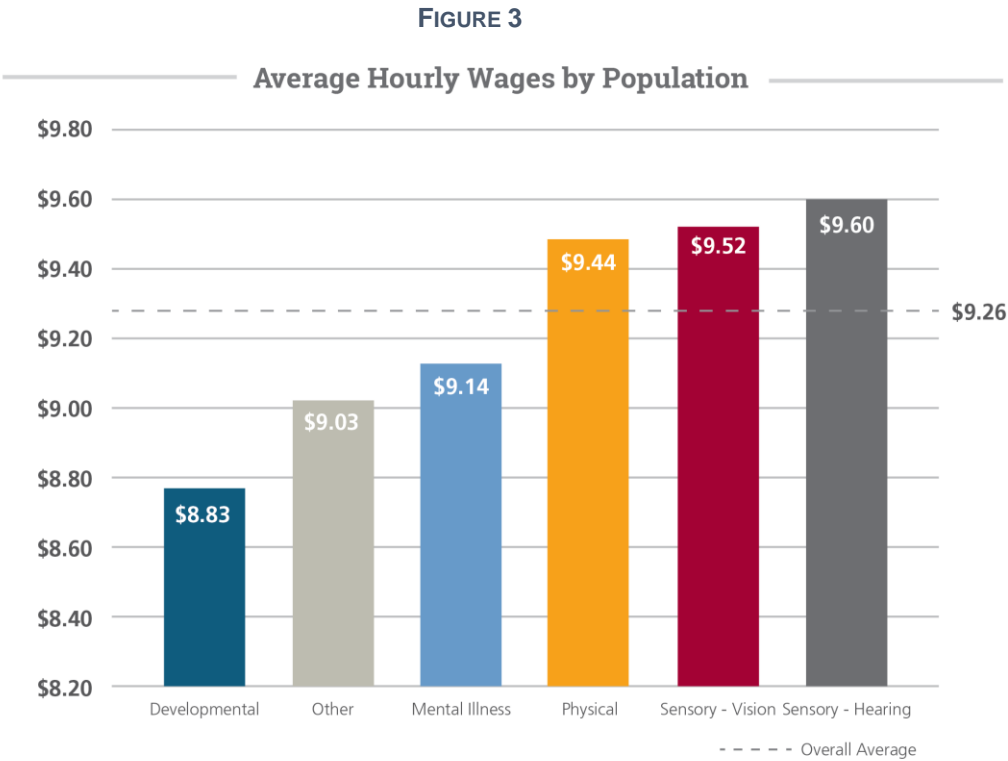
FIGURE 3

Average hourly wages are further categorized by severity of disability, as seen in **Figure 4** below. Consumers with the most significant disabilities achieved the lowest wages on average, at $8.78. Consumers with not significant disabilities achieved the highest average hourly wages at $9.66. These results are consistent with past reports.

	Severity of Disability	Average Hourly Wages
🟧	Non-Significant Disability	**$ 9.66**
🟦	Significant Disability	**$ 9.48**
🟦	Most Significant Disability	**$ 8.78**

FIGURE 4

WEEKLY HOURS WORKED

Figure 5 displays the average weekly hours worked by population. 2,635 unique cases received weekly hours worked. The overall average of weekly hours worked across populations is 25.4, changing minimally from last quarter. The population with the highest hours on average is Sensory-Hearing and Sensory-Vision, at 27.9 and 27.6 respectively. Consumers with a Developmental disability or Other had the lowest hours, at 23.4 and 22 respectively. These findings are consistent with those of previous reports. One thing to note is that **average weekly hours for consumers with a Mental Illness fell by 10.2 hours**, and those with a Physical disability had average weekly hours go down by .8 hours.
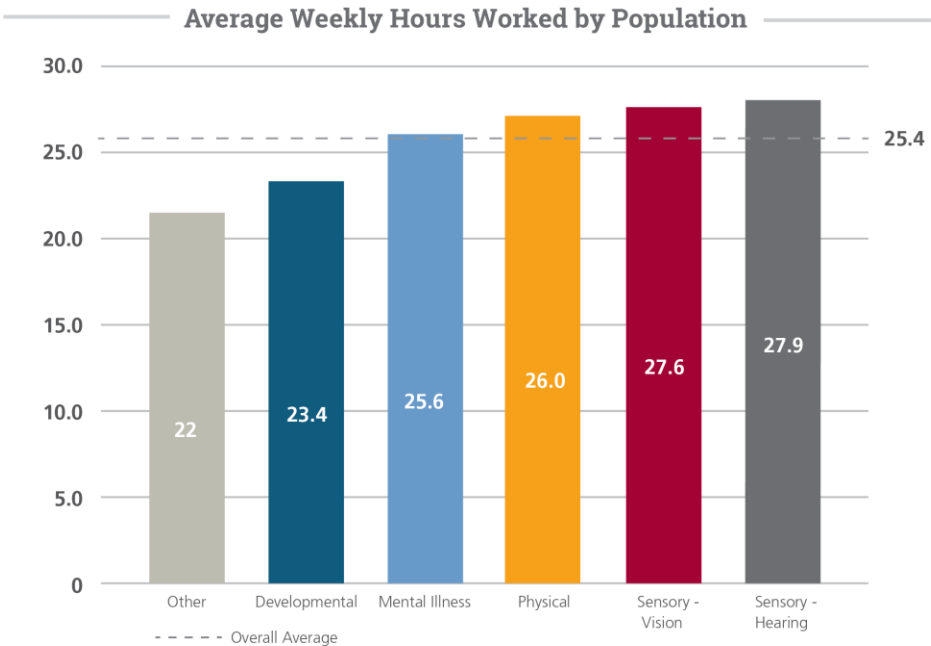
FIGURE 5

LENGTH OF TIME FROM FIRST AUTHORIZATION TO EMPLOYMENT PLACEMENT

Figure 6 displays, by disability, the average number of weeks from a consumer's first authorization to the date of employment placement. The length in time increased for all populations since the last quarter, with Sensory-Vision seeing the highest increase in weeks, from 29.3 to 39.1. The population with the longest length in time is Sensory-Vision, followed by Developmental and Other. The population with least time is Physical at 31.5 weeks, which increased by 4.8 weeks since the last quarter. The overall increase in weeks was noted in the last quarter as well, and has positive implications, as it could indicate increased focus on working with consumers through methods such as discovery and supported employment services prior to stabilization, which were two key goals BRS hoped to accomplish with the Employment Service Model.

FIGURE 6
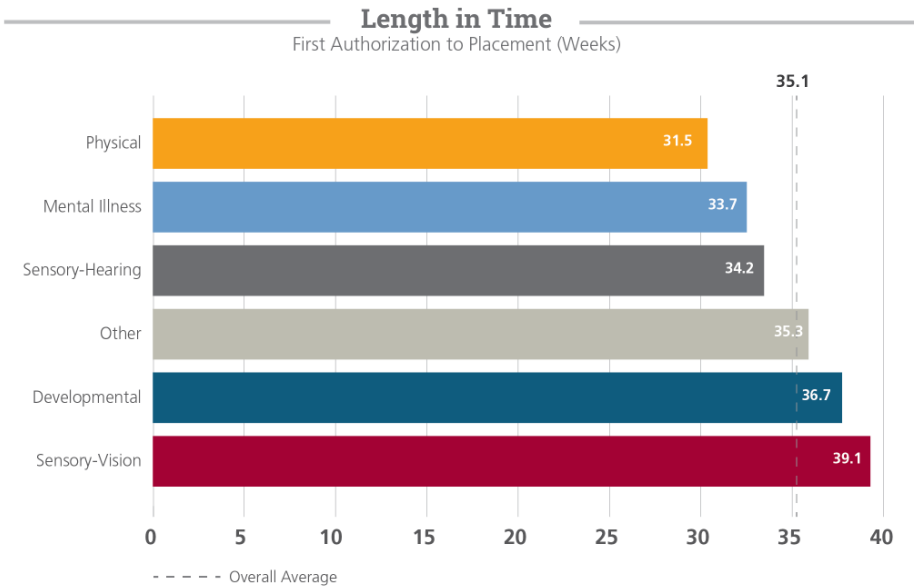
SUCCESSFUL CASE CLOSURE RATE

Figure 7 displays the rate of the number of cases that received both an employment placement and 90-day stabilization. The case closure rates reflect the proportion of closed cases that received a "Successful Case Closure" designation, compared to other case closure designations. 3,805 unique cases received a case closure code. Consumers with Sensory-Hearing and Other disabilities had the highest case closure rate, while those with Physical disabilities had the lowest. **The metrics are almost reversed from the last quarter, where the Sensory-Hearing and Other populations had the lowest case closure rates, while consumers with Physical disabilities had the highest.** The overall case closure rate stayed about the same at 39%.

Case Closure Rate by Population

	Physical	35%
	Mental Illness	36%
	Sensory - Vision	42%
	Developmental	43%
	Sensory - Hearing	44%
	Other	52%
	Overall Average	**39%**

FIGURE 7

DISCOVERY HOURS COMPARISON

Figure 8 below represents the average number of hours ESM consumers spend in the discovery phase by population. The population with the highest number of discovery service hours are those categorized as Other, is similar to the last two reports. Other increased slightly by 2.2 hours, which was also the highest increase since last quarter. Sensory-Hearing had the least time spent in discovery, at 18.4 hours, which is also a reduction by .6 since the last quarter. Sensory-Hearing and Physical tend to have the lowest time spent in discovery, as is seen in the past few reports. **All populations had a slight increase in time spent in discovery, except Sensory-Hearing, as noted above.**

FIGURE 8

Average Time Spent in Discovery

Population	Hours
Physical	18.4
Sensory - Hearing	19.2
Sensory - Vision	20.9
Mental Illness	21.3
Developmental	25.3
Other	28.9
Overall Average	22.3
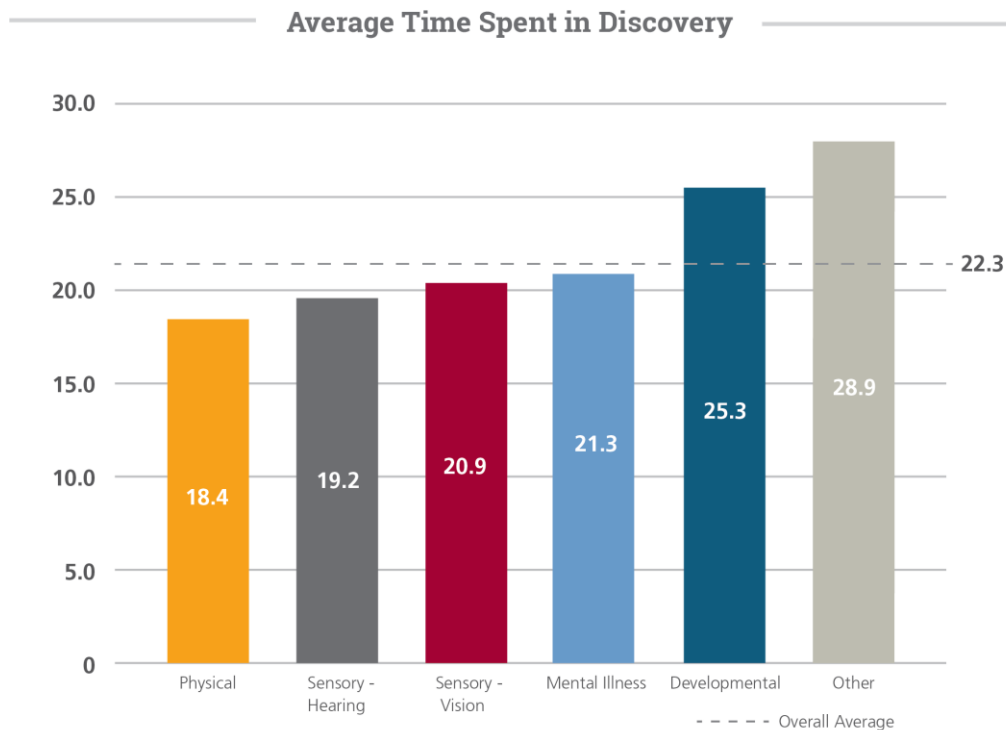
INDUSTRY PLACEMENT

Industry Placement by Job Function

BRS uses O*NET federal job codes to designate a consumer's employment placement. These job codes correspond to a "Job Family" category. A Job Family is composed of different occupations that require similar skills and expertise. In Other words, a Job Family is grouped by job functions. Categorizing consumer employment placements by job functions allows for an easy analysis across multiple industries. For the sake of clarity, any reference to "category" in the remainder of this section will refer directly to the Job Families found in O*NET.

#	Job Family by Function	Percentage of BRS Placements
1	Production	24.8%
2	Office and Administrative Support	15.9%
3	Food Preparation and Serving Related	14.7%
4	Transportation and Material Moving	11.2%
5	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	9.4%
6	Sales and Related	6.3%
7	Personal Care and Service	5.7%
8	Healthcare Support;	2.4%
9	Community and Social Service	1.7%
10	Protective Service	1.3%

FIGURE 9

The table above displays the industry placements as a percentage of the total consumer placements. 1,800 unique cases were identified with a federal job code, which correlates to a Job Family Categorization based on their employment placement. The categories with the largest percentage of consumer placements in ESM are as follows:

- **Production**
- **Office and Administrative Support**
- **Food Preparation and Serving Related**

These findings are consistent with our previous reports, with the top ten job placement categories remaining unchanged.

In 2015, the estimated number of employment opportunities for Production-related jobs occupations in Indiana was 377,510. Similarly, the number of employment opportunities for Office and Administrative Support was 406,130, and 277,960 for Food Preparation and Serving jobs[8].

Since July 1, 2015, 357 consumers have been placed in occupations designated in the "Production" category. Many of

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[8] OES Dashboard

these consumers achieved the job title of "Helpers-Production Workers". Production workers perform activities such as supplying or holding materials or tools, cleaning work area or equipment, examining products for quality assurance, and starting equipment[9]. The skills required are minimal, although some occupations may require knowledge of mechanical concepts (maintenance, machines, tools), or some technology. Educational requirements for occupations in this Job Family typically require a high school diploma[10]. Nationally, the average wage for Production Worker occupations is $13.44 hourly, and in the state of Indiana, the average is slightly higher at $16.65. The ESM data reflected an average wage of $9.22 for this category. Projected growth (2014-2024) for Production Worker occupations is expected to see a 4% decline nationally, but is expected to increase in the state of Indiana by 8%.[11]

The second largest Job Family, with 237 consumer placements, is "Office and Administrative support". An example of a job title received by a consumer is "Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other". Other consumers in this job category find employment in occupations such as Stock Clerks, Customer Service Representatives, Receptionists and Information Clerks, and Hotel, Motel, and Resort Desk Clerks. The skills required for these jobs include clerical and administrative duties, and often require moderate on-the-job training[12]. Educational expectations are high school diploma, though some college education is required for certain job titles. The average wage nationally is $15.67, and $14.45 in the state of Indiana[13]. The ESM data reflected an average wage of $10.71 for this category. Projected growth for Office and Administrative Support occupations is expected to be at 7% nationally and 8% in Indiana[14].

The third largest category that consumers were placed in is "Food Preparation and Serving Related" Job Family, with 218 consumer placements. Most consumers received a "Food Server, Non-restaurant" job title. Activities that are typically performed under this Job Family include serving food to individuals outside of a restaurant environment, such as hotels and residential care facilities, and often have occupations such as "Dietary Assistant", "Food Service Worker" and "Room Service Server". [15] The skills required include active listening, speaking, service orientation and monitoring/assessing to make improvements or take corrective action[16]. The educational requirements to obtain a job in this category include less than high school diploma to some college[17]. The average wage nationally for occupations in this Job Family is $9.80 hourly, and $8.85 in Indiana[18]. The ESM data reflected an average wage of $8.35 for this category. Furthermore, career growth is expected to be at 13% nationally, and 16% in Indiana between 2014 and 2024. [19]

Figure 10 on the following page displays two data points, the top 10 Job Family Placements, which represents the Job Families with the highest consumer placements, and the average weekly hours worked for each Job Family. Food Preparation and Serving Related, our third highest Job Family, had the lowest weekly hours worked on average, at 20.2, which is similar to the last quarter. The highest weekly hours worked was for consumers that were placed in jobs categorized in Installation, Maintenance, and Repair, at 34.3 weekly hours worked. However, only 2.4% of consumers found a job placement in this Job Family. Production, our first highest Job Family, decreased by 0.3, staying largely the same at 26.3 weekly hours worked. The second highest Job Family, Office and Administrative Support, has an average of 25.3 hours per week. Overall, industry placement data remains largely unchanged from the last quarter, with the most notable change being a slight decrease in average weekly hours worked.

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[9] Details Report for: Helpers- Production Workers
[10] Summary Report for: Helpers-Production Workers
[11] Salary Finder: Production Workers, All Other
[12] U.S. Department of Labor
[13] Salary Finder: Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other
[14] Occupational Profile: Office and Administrative Support Workers, All Other
[15] Summary Report for: Food Servers, Non-restaurant
[16] Skills Summary
[17] Summary Report for: Food Servers, Non-restaurant
[18] Salary Finder
[19] Occupation Profile

Consumers in Top 10 Job Family Placements & Average Weekly Hours Worked

FIGURE 10

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Utilization Dashboard

Overall Data July 2016 through Mach 2017

Average Hours Per Utilization by Popuation, per Month

Population	Mar-17	Apr-17	May-17	Jun-17	Jul-17	Aug-17	Sep-17
Developmental	35.2	27.3	29.4	38.5	36.7	35.1	35.1
Mental Illness	25.5	30.1	26.5	38.8	32.4	33.8	25.6
Other	0	20.5	21.8	30	35	35	25
Physical	26.9	34.8	21.7	32.6	40.3	32.3	62.3
Sensory - Hearing	19.8	10.5	0	30	34	19.0	8
Sensory - Vision	10.7	0	10	25	30	18.1	0

Average Supported Employment Hours Utilized Per Case & Number of Unique Cases, by Month

Average Hours Per Case by Population (Quarter: January, February, March 2017)

Average of Sum SE Hours

Supported Employment Utilization by Population

- Developmental
- Mental Illness
- Physical
- Other*
- Sensory - Vision
- Sensory - Hearing

*Including deaf-blindness and communicative disabilities.

Highlights

1.6 months of Supported Employment services is the average length of time per case.

Physical and Other had the highest hours utilized per month.

The overall number of unique cases utilizing Supported Employment is increasing.
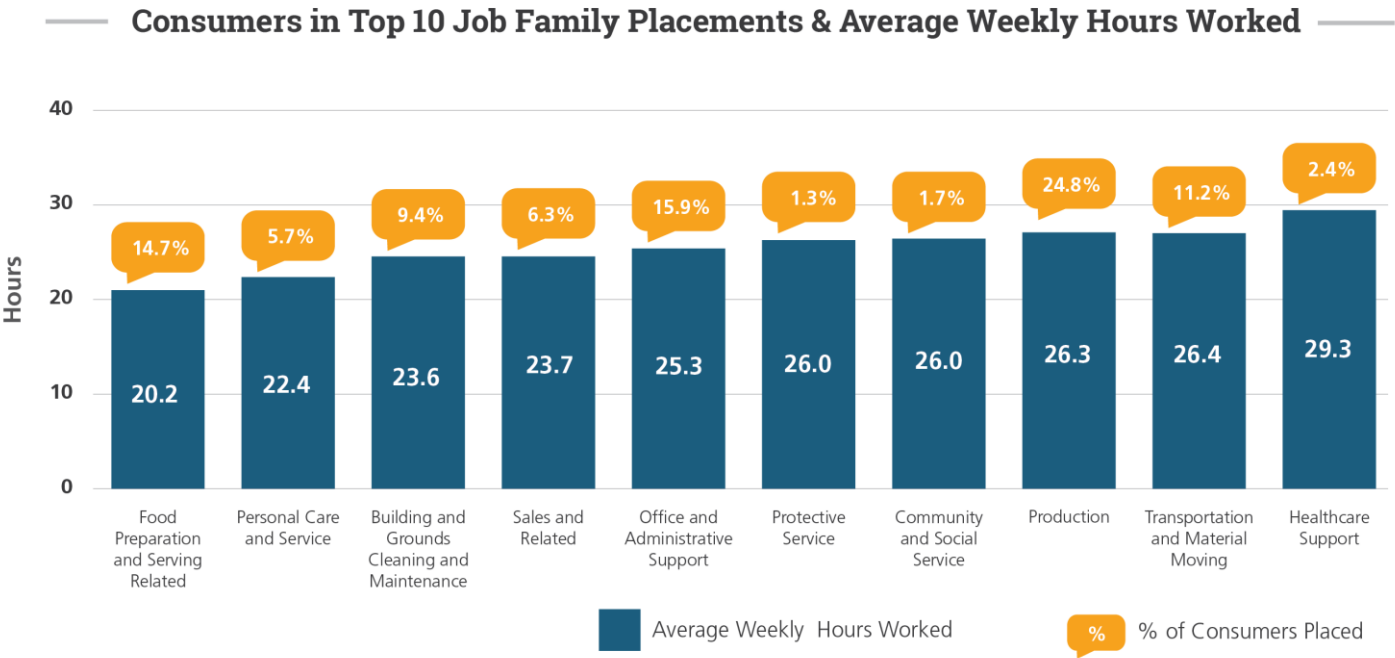
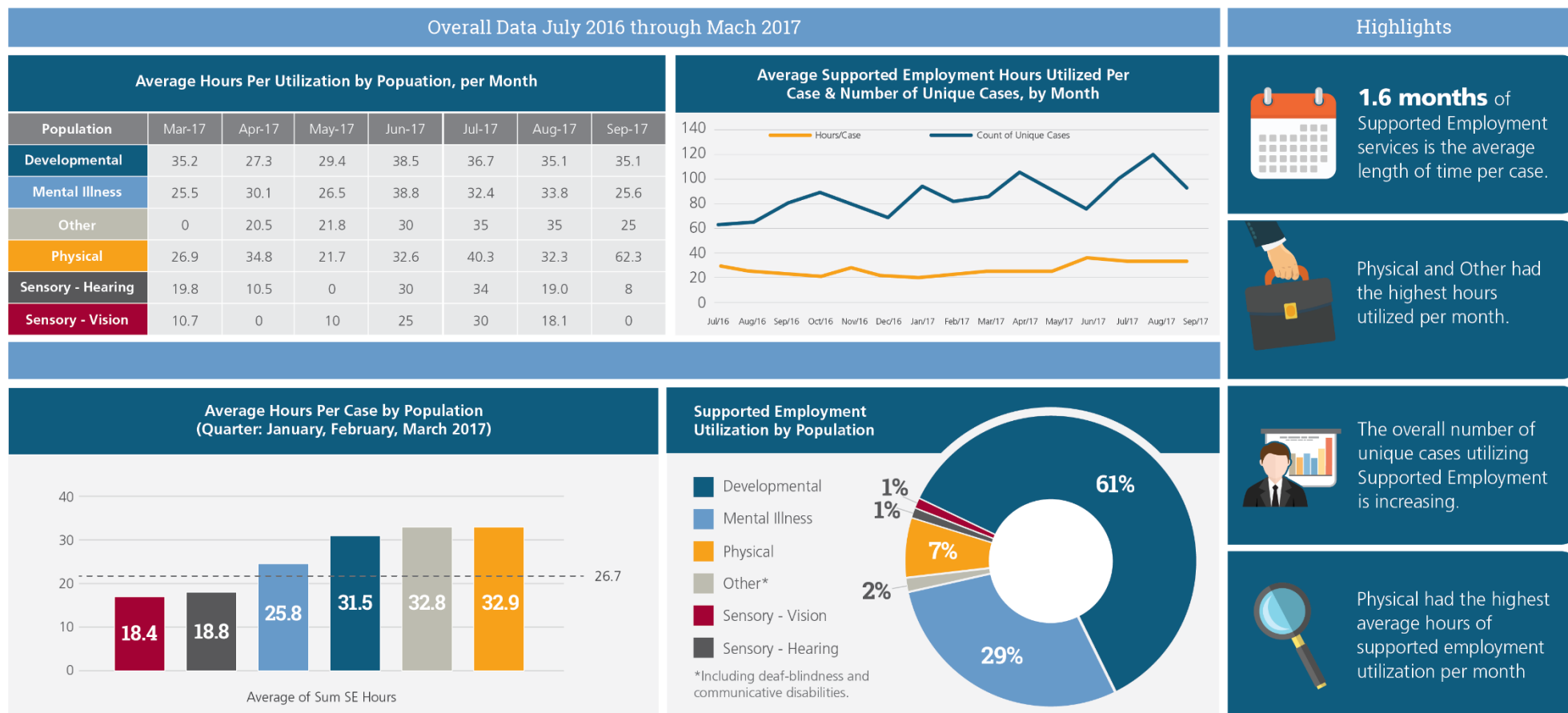Physical had the highest average hours of supported employment utilization per month

FIGURE 11

Supported Employment is a support service intended to support individuals with most significant disabilities achieve employment stabilization. Supported Employment is authorized for consumers with the most significant disabilities and is authorized on an hourly basis to offer additional support in order to reach stabilization and job retention[20]. Many of these consumers have either had past employment opportunities interrupted by their disability, or traditional employment has not occurred at all.

In recent years, there was nothing in place to deter vendors from quickly closing a case after placement in order to receive the final milestone payments. The new ESM helps limit the desire to close a case quickly by providing financial support to vendors serving individuals with highest needs that might need longer to stabilize at their place of employment.

Supported Employment authorizations are compensated on an hourly basis, in order to ensure that employment is stable and meets the needs of consumers. This hourly service gives consumers adequate support in their employment journey, and may also incentive vendors to work with consumers as long as they need. This service allows consumers to receive support after achieving employment placement, for up to 24 months. Supported Employment services may be provided on-site or off-site, or a combination[21], and are expected to "fade", or lessen, as consumers work towards stabilization.

Even while BRS continues to allocate funds specifically for Supported Employment, the service has been historically underutilized. VR counselors have been encouraged to routinely authorize Supported Employment as soon as a consumer with a most significant disability obtains employment. In addition, BRS has provided multiple training opportunities for vendors, through webinars and various other methods, to encourage the use of Supported Employment.

The dashboard on the preceding page shows an overall positive trend in the use of supported employment activities. The average length of time utilizing supported employment per case went up by .2 months, and average hours per month and cases receiving supported employment are increasing steadily. The following paragraphs explore trends in the utilization of Supported Employment services, through the period beginning in July 2016 through September 2017.
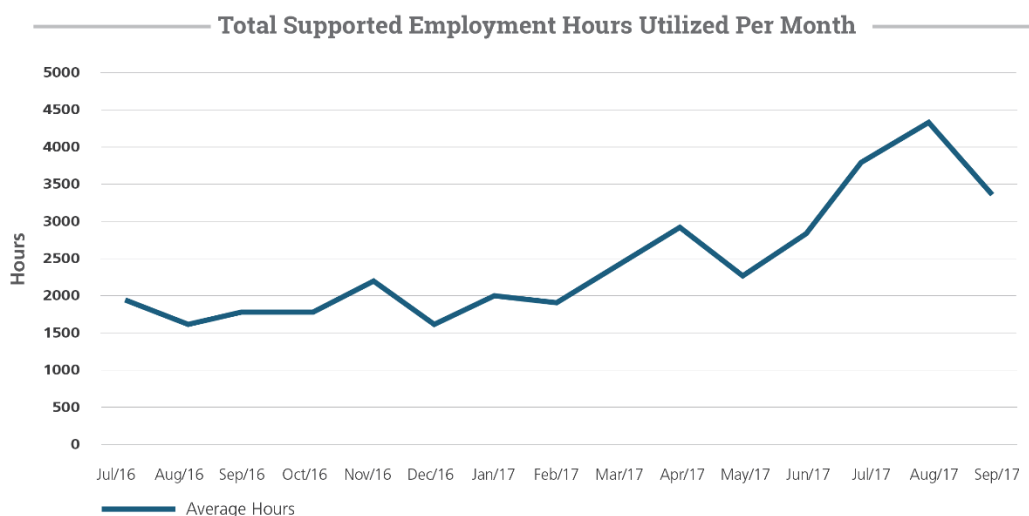
Supported Employment Hours Authorized Per Unique Case

FIGURE 12

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[20] http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/VRS-Manual%20of%20Employment%20Services%20Revised%20September%202016.pdf
[21] http://www.in.gov/fssa/files/ES_Round_2_training.pdf

Figure 12 above displays the total number of Supported Employment hour utilizations by month. As noted in the previous report, the month with the least number of supported employment hours utilized is December 2016. The months with the highest supported employment utilization are August 2017, followed by July and September 2017. This indicates a clear trend of increasing utilization of supported employment services. BRS expects Supported Employment hours to increase as it continues to work with vendors on leveraging this service, which is reflected in the data on consumer utilization.

Figure 13 below shows the Supported Employment utilized per unique case by month, as well as the overall number of cases utilizing the service. July 2016 and August 2016 had the least number of cases receiving supported employment services, at 66 and 69 unique cases, respectively. August 2017 and April 2017 had the highest, at 131 and 115 unique cases.
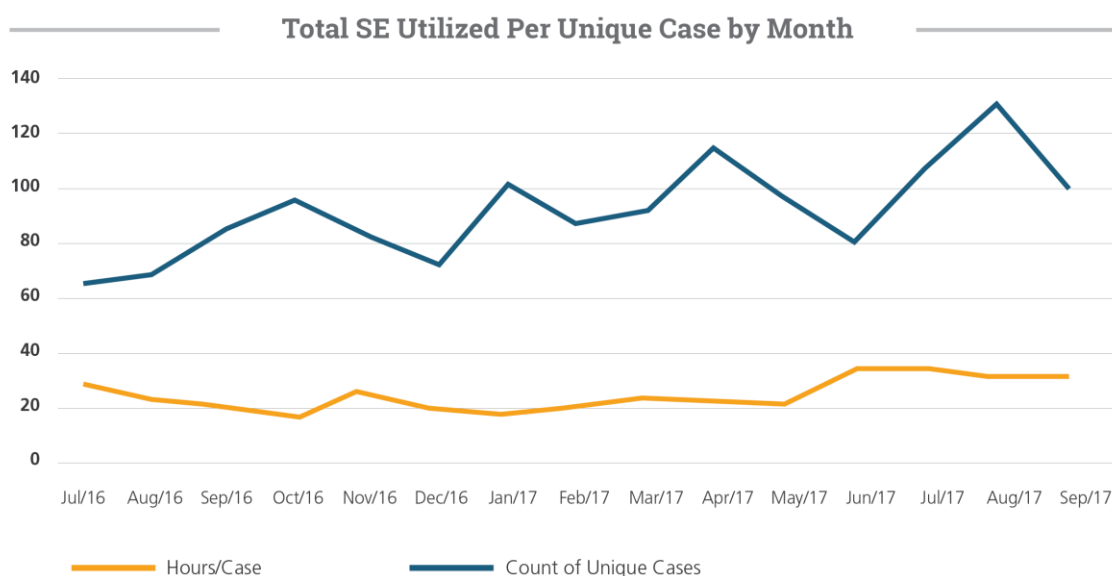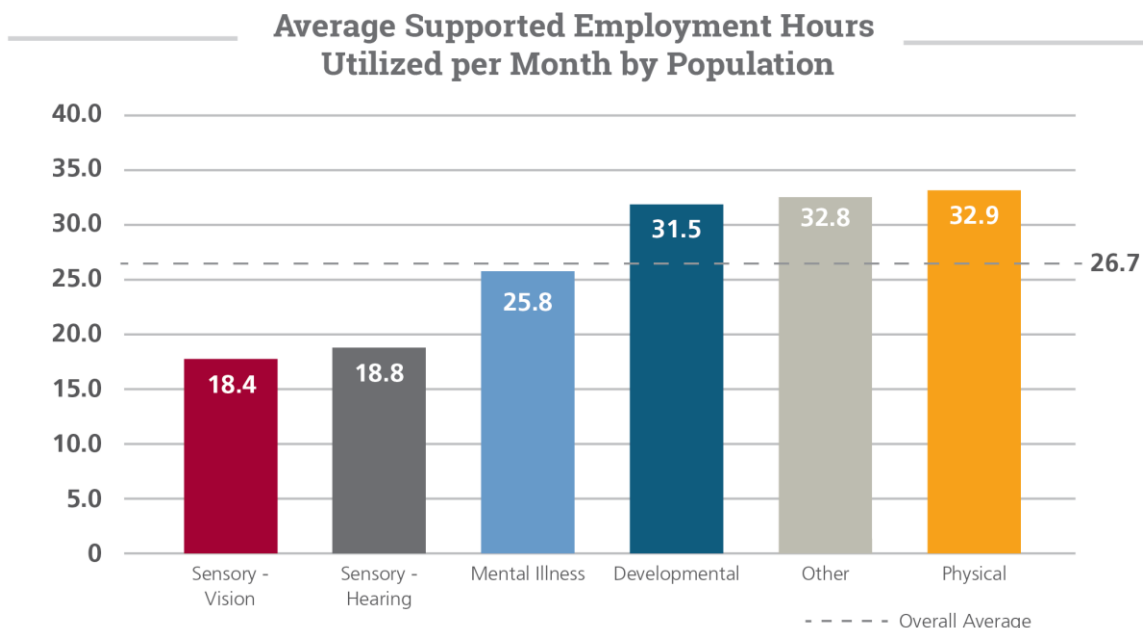

FIGURE 13

October 2016 and January 2017 had the lowest hours per case at 19.2 and 19.9 hours respectively. July 2017 and June 2017 had the highest hours per case at 35.4 and 34.6 hours, followed by August 2017 at 33.4 hours per case.

Total Supported Employment Utilizations by Population

Figure 14 on the following page displays the average utilization of Supported Employment services per month by population. 782 unique cases utilized Supported Employment hours over the 15-month period we examined. The overall average number of supported employment hours utilized per case is 47.4, which is slightly lower than the average hours per case from last quarter. It is important to note that we are analyzing a much larger data set in this report, however. The average length of time a case utilized Supported Employment hours is 1.6 months, which is an increase by .2 from the last quarter. Consumers with a Physical disability received the highest number of supported employment hours on average per month, at 32.9, compared to the last quarter in which consumers in this category received some of the lowest hours per month in our previous report. Consumers with a sensory- vision disability received the lowest supported employment hours per month, at 18.4 hours, and also had received the lowest hours in the last quarter, at 16.8. Although Sensory-Vision and Physical had an increase in hours, Sensory-Hearing hours reduced by 8.5 hours, Mental Illness decreased by 2.4, and Development decreased by 6.1, and Other decreased by 7.5.

FIGURE 14

Total Supported Employment Hours Utilized by Area

The heat map on the following page illustrates the Supported Employment hours by area. Indiana has 22 area VR offices across four distinct regions. The data analyzes Supported Employment hours utilized in each respective area. The data included in the map includes the following, per Area:

- Total number of Supported Employment hours utilized
- Average hours per case
- Percentage of unique cases in the Area, in relation to the overall BRS cases

The hours per case and overall varied across areas. It is important to consider factors such as the number of unique cases in the Area when analyzing the data. Notable data points are Area 4, which had the highest total number of supported employment hours utilized at 4,336.5, as well as the highest number of unique cases receiving supported employment at 92. Area 18 had the highest average hours per case at 113.5, and only had about 1.9% of the total cases which received supported employment services. The area with the least number of hours utilized was Area 8, with 201.5 hours total, and had the least number of cases receiving supported employment, at 9 unique cases. A few key takeaways related to Supported Employment utilization throughout Indiana are:

- **Highest average Supported Employment hours utilized per case**: Area 18 (113.5 hours per case)
    - o   Last quarter comparison: Area 10 (105 hours per case)
- **Highest number of total utilized supported employment hours:** Area 4 (4,336.5 hours, 92 unique cases)
    - o   Last quarter comparison: Area 4 (2,776 hours, 55 unique cases)
- **Highest number of cases utilizing Supported Employment hours:** Area 4 (92 unique cases)
    - o   Last quarter comparison: Area 4 (55 unique cases)
- **Second highest number of total supported employment hours:** Area 14 (3,083.3 hours)
    - o   Last quarter comparison: Area 15 (2,347.25 hours, 43 unique cases)
- **Second highest number of cases utilizing Supported Employment hours:** Area 14 (71 unique cases)
    - o   Last quarter comparison: Area 14 (49 unique cases)
- **Least number of average hours per case:** Area 9 (19.6 hours)
    - o   Last quarter comparison: Area 7 (18.5 hours)

Compared to the last quarter data, Area 4 remained with the highest number of total utilized supported employment hours and cases utilizing this service. Figures went up across areas. **Most notably, the Area with the least number of hours last quarter, Area 7, went up from 18.5 hours per case to 36.1 hours, and was replaced by Area 9 at a slightly higher average of 19.6 hours per case.**
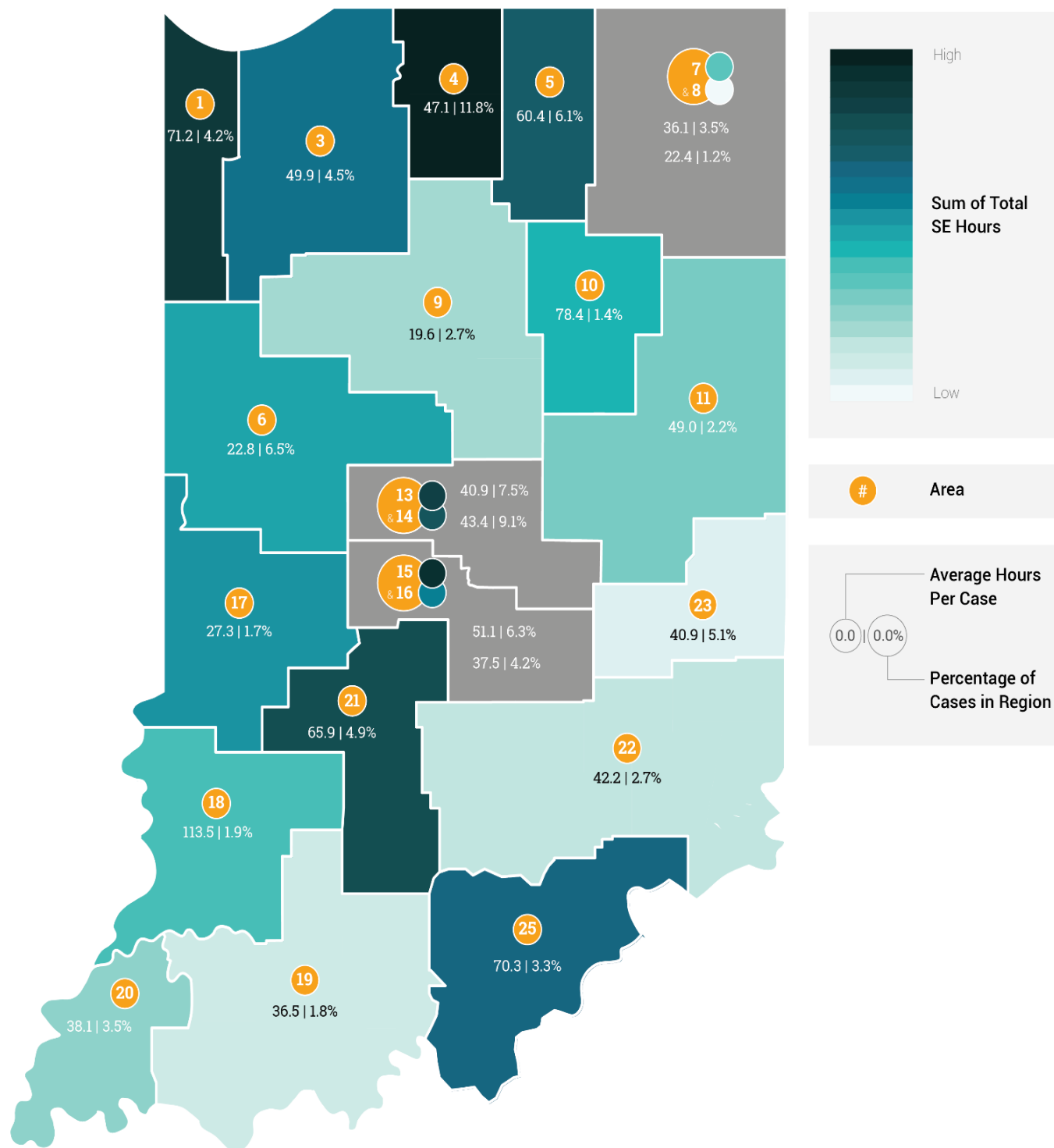

FIGURE 15

VENDOR ANALYSIS

This section is an analysis of the six vendors in each population with the most claims for Milestone 1, as a measure of vendor activity, in the past six months (beginning April 1, 2017). Therefore, these are the six most active vendors from each population category. This high-level analysis examines consumer outcomes for the entire vendor population as well as the top six vendors individually. For the purposes of this report, we replaced actual vendor names with generic titles such as "Vendor A", "Vendor B", etc.

City
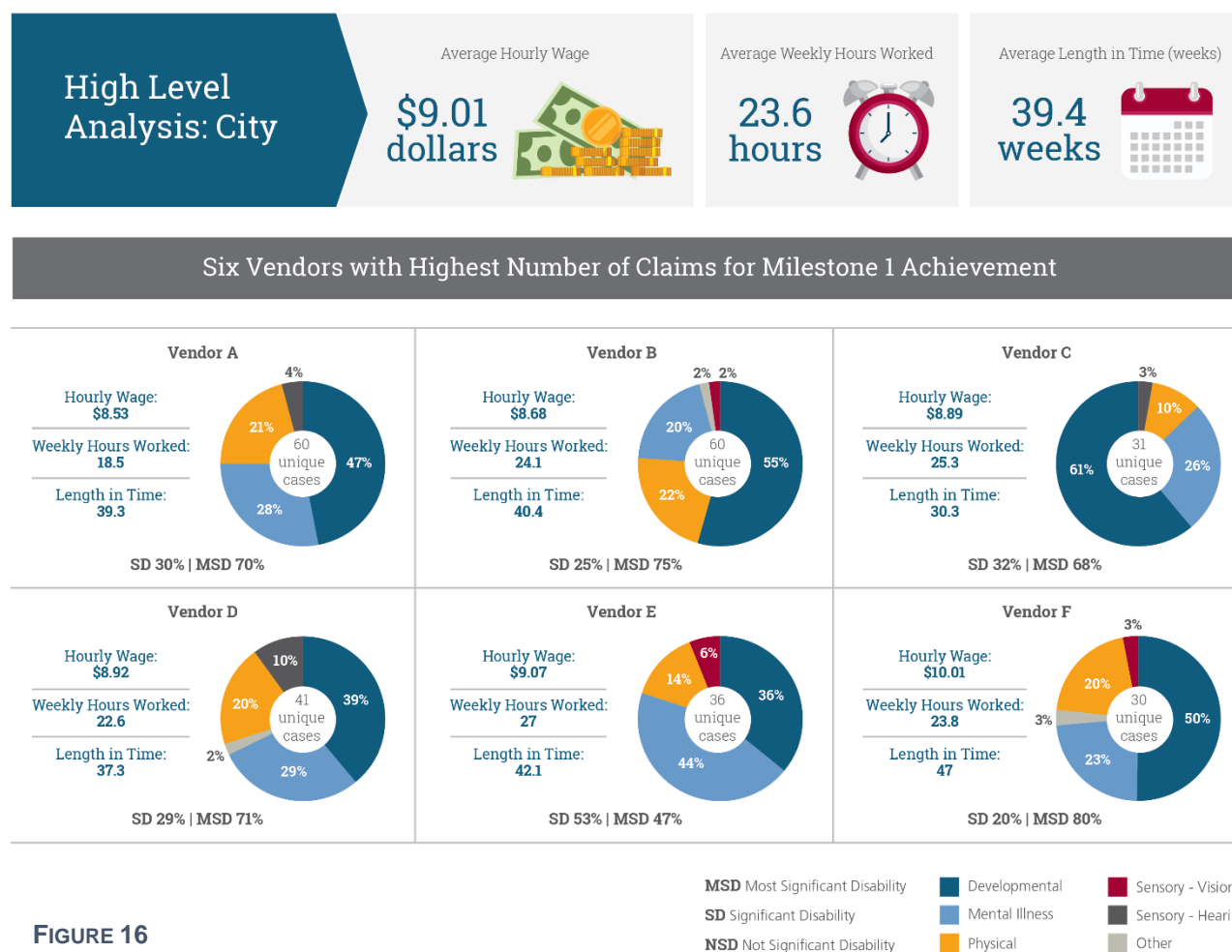
FIGURE 16

The graphic above displays data for vendors in counties with an overall population of over 100,000 people. Consumers in this category have an average wage of $9.01 and average weekly hours worked of 23.6. The length in time from the first authorization to status 22 on average is 39.4 weeks. Vendors in this category had the most cases, and the longest length in time compared to the other two area categories. This could be due to the fact that vendors in areas with a higher population density had more staff and resources, and it is likely that these cities also had more vendors in general to offer services to consumers, which would lead to more time spent with consumers engaging in various discovery and supported employment activities.

Vendor F, which had the highest hourly wage in the region, also had the longest length in time. This further reinforces the idea that this vendor may have spent more time with the consumers through activities such as

supported employment, which ultimately led to positive employment outcomes. Another major takeaway is that all vendors served only cases determined to be an individual with a Significant Disability or Most Significant Disability.

Metro

High Level Analysis: Metro

Average Hourly Wage	Average Weekly Hours Worked	Average Length in Time (weeks)
$8.49 dollars	23.9 hours	35.7 weeks

Six Vendors with Highest Number of Claims for Milestone 1 Achievement

Vendor G
Hourly Wage: $8.23
Weekly Hours Worked: 23.1
Length in Time: 31.2
16 unique cases — 38%, 25%, 25%, 13%
NSD 19% | SD 25% | MSD 56%

Vendor H
Hourly Wage: $8.25
Weekly Hours Worked: 26.6
Length in Time: 34.8
18 unique cases — 28%, 72%
SD 22% | MSD 78%

Vendor I
Hourly Wage: $8.53
Weekly Hours Worked: 22.2
Length in Time: 34.2
21 unique cases — 24%, 52%, 24%
SD 43% | MSD 57%

Vendor J
Hourly Wage: $8.53
Weekly Hours Worked: 26
Length in Time: 45.2
21 unique cases — 24%, 24%, 52%
SD 43% | MSD 57%

Vendor K
Hourly Wage: $8.53
Weekly Hours Worked: 20.9
Length in Time: 30.6
19 unique cases — 5%, 16%, 37%, 42%
SD 32% | MSD 68%

Vendor L
Hourly Wage: $8.85
Weekly Hours Worked: 24.4
Length in Time: 38.2
29 unique cases — 17%, 52%, 31%
SD 48% | MSD 52%

MSD Most Significant Disability
SD Significant Disability
NSD Not Significant Disability

Developmental
Mental Illness
Physical

Sensory - Vision
Sensory - Hearing
Other

FIGURE 17

The above graphic displays data for vendors in areas categorized as "metro"- which are areas that have an overall population that falls between 82,000 and 35,000. Vendors in these areas had the least hourly wages and the least length in time between their first authorization and employment. This observation also reinforces the idea that more time spent with a consumer in various discovery and supported employment activities leads to higher wages, hours worked, and overall employment outcomes.

Rural

High Level
Analysis: Rural

Average Hourly Wage
$9.12 dollars

Average Weekly Hours Worked
25.6 hours

Average Length in Time (weeks)
34.7 weeks

Six Vendors with Highest Number of Claims for Milestone 1 Achievement

Vendor M
Hourly Wage:
$8.39
Weekly Hours Worked:
24.4
Length in Time:
37
16 unique cases
6% | 25% | 31% | 38%
NSD 6% | SD 19% | MSD 75%

Vendor N
Hourly Wage:
$8.52
Weekly Hours Worked:
24.6
Length in Time:
28.6
11 unique cases
9% | 45% | 45%
SD 55% | MSD 45%

Vendor O
Hourly Wage:
$8.76
Weekly Hours Worked:
17
Length in Time:
45.4
9 unique cases
22% | 78%
SD 22% | MSD 78%

Vendor P
Hourly Wage:
$9.23
Weekly Hours Worked:
27.1
Length in Time:
30.3
8 unique cases
50% | 50%
MSD 100%

Vendor Q
Hourly Wage:
$9.39
Weekly Hours Worked:
28.6
Length in Time:
30.7
65 unique cases
2% 2% 2% | 23% | 35% | 37%
NSD 5% | SD 34% | MSD 61%

Vendor R
Hourly Wage:
$10.44
Weekly Hours Worked:
31.9
Length in Time:
36.1
7 unique cases
14% | 29% | 29% | 29%
MSD 14% | SD 86%

MSD Most Significant Disability
SD Significant Disability
NSD Not Significant Disability

Developmental
Mental Illness
Physical

Sensory - Vision
Sensory - Hearing
Other

FIGURE 18

The above graphic displays data for vendors in areas categorized as "rural"- which are areas that have an overall population that is under 35,000. Consumers in rural areas had the highest average hourly wages and weekly hours worked. Overall, consumer outcomes in rural areas were very similar to those in cities, specifically the average wages and time between the first authorization to employment. This could be due to the fact that due to a smaller overall population, vendors spend more time with consumers in various activities. Quality being higher due to smaller caseload is likely a contributing factor to these positive outcomes. One analysis for BRS to note is that Vendor R had the highest hourly wage and highest weekly hours worked out of any of the vendors in all three area categories. This could be a good vendor to further explore to identify potential best practices.

ORDER OF SELECTION

On August 1, 2017, Indiana BRS implemented an "order of selection", a federally-sanctioned process that must be implemented when a state VR agency does not have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals. Under an order of selection, VR is federally required to give consumers with most significant disabilities priority in receiving VR services, including employment services. The impact on employment services and outcomes is unknown, however this will be evaluated as applicable in future reports. It should be noted that the majority of consumers that receive employment services are those with a most significant disability currently, and this population is expected to increase over time. BRS continues to encourage VR employment service providers to work with consumers for as long as they need to achieve stable employment, through services such as supported employment, and to provide appropriate and comprehensive discovery activities.

V.   KEY OBSERVATIONS

As VR services continue to be authorized under ESM, the data set has grown and is revealing broader trends and patterns. Key observations will drive future analyses and reveal questions for further consideration.

- **Observation 1: The use of Supported Employment is showing clear and steady increases each month. This is indicative of a strong trend of vendors providing support services to VR consumers.**

  As noted in the previous report, the utilization of Supported Employment hours is increasing. This increase is not just in the number of hours being utilized, but also in the number of cases receiving the services. Vendors are providing more supported employment services to consumers, across disability and severity types, intended to improve employment outcomes. This is a very positive trend, and we hope to see this continue in future reports.

- **Observation 2: Consumer outcomes amongst vendors in different geographic areas of Indiana display strong similarities, including mostly serving consumers with significant and most significant disabilities.**

  The vendor data analysis reveals that vendors in rural areas and cities have similar consumer outcomes. Although it is likely that this is due to the existence of more employment counselors in the cities, and subsequently less consumers in the rural areas, leading to more time spent with consumers in both instances, there could also be other, unrevealed factors at play. This will be an area for further exploration in future reports.

- **Observation 3: ESM outcomes continue to steadily improve.**

  Outcomes for ESM consumers continue to improve, with the highest current ESM wages over $1.00 higher than the average overall RBF hourly wages. Consumers are receiving better employment outcomes, and spending more time between their first authorization and employment placement. This trend could be tied to the increase in supported employment utilization, as well as the steady increase in discovery hours, which was one of the goals ESM had hoped to achieve.

VI.   FUTURE ANALYSES

This report is one installment in a series of program evaluation reports to be produced quarterly by Public Consulting Group in partnership with BRS. As each report builds off its predecessor, BRS will identify areas for further exploration. Based on the key observations to date, the following areas should be considered for future analyses:

- **Trend Analysis:** ESM has been active for slightly over two years, and we now have enough data to begin analyzing trends. In the coming reports, we will focus on the changes in consumer outcomes since the start of ESM. Although we have done analysis on the changes from report to report, we will look at trends over a longer period of time, which is important in measuring the impact of ESM on consumer outcomes.

- **Further Vendor Analysis:** The analysis of consumer outcomes by vendor in this report revealed valuable information and many questions about employment services, especially outcomes in rural areas and cities. PCG will analyze other important factors such as discovery time and supported employment services by vendor, in order to see if correlations are present between the increased supports and improved outcomes.

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