



BOB RILEY
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALABAMA

**DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
AND MENTAL RETARDATION**

RSA UNION BUILDING
100 N. UNION STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 301410
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA 36130-1410



KATHY E. SAWYER
COMMISSIONER

January 20, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

The Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation has worked closely with Lana Norwood and Labor Relations Alternatives, Inc. for the past two years in the development of a comprehensive incident management system. The relationship has been excellent. We put the whole program under LRA's guidance and now have a first-rate system with well-trained professionals in both the state facilities and community mental health centers.

LRA's work for the Department fell within three general areas: training of investigators; training of staff to conduct training of investigators and in incident management; and policy consultation and Plan development.

Training in the basics of investigation was a three-day course attended by staff from all 14 state facilities as well as over 100 staff from the community providers in eight sessions. Advanced investigation training and weighing evidence training were also offered to a limited number of investigators. A session in evaluating and presenting incident data was given to 25 quality improvement staff.

Train-the-trainer sessions in how to conduct serious incident investigations were provided to some current investigators. Included were observation sessions of actual training. This acquired competency has allowed us to train and refresh our own investigators. We were also trained to teach all Department staff and new employees in incident management.

Perhaps the most important contribution LRA made to our system was in development of policies around incidents and the formation of a single incident management plan. Especially valuable were the discussions and revisions and the attention to detail over months of work. Lastly, the self-assessment of our adherence to the plan created an instrument, which allows us to monitor and improve the quality of our investigations.

LRA has helped Alabama's Mental health department develop a comprehensive system through the activities mentioned above. Throughout this period LRA and Lana Norwood has shown exceptional leadership and professionalism along with the flexibility to meet any concerns which may arise. The Department recommends LRA highly and will seek their services again, should the need arise.

Sincerely,

Paul Bisbee, Director
Mental Illness Facilities