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For Immediate Release

Contact: Toni Wolf

508 485-5051 ext 222

twolf@employmentoptions.org

David Greenwood

978-568-1374

david@davidagreenwood.com

Marlborough-based Employment Options Could Face Devastating Cuts at Governor's Hand

Safety Net for Hundreds of People with Mental Illness is Threatened in Marlborough and Metrowest

Marlborough, MA; October 27, 2009: Employment Options, a recognized leader in providing a variety of crucial services to individuals recovering from mental illness could face harsh budget cuts if the Governor cuts the part of the state budget that funds these services as rumored on Beacon Hill.

The Governor according to several reports is due to announce potentially devastating cuts to Clubhouse Rehabilitation and Recovery Centers that aid over 8,000 people in Massachusetts who have serious and persistent mental illness live in the community. This threat would permanently discontinue the services that are provided by Employment Options, an agency serving individuals recovering from mental illness living within the Metro west area.

The services provided by Employment Options assist individuals with mental illness prepare for employment and other vital tasks in their community and help provide them with a sense of dignity and respect, something all individuals strive for. In FY09, Employment Options served 357 people with an average daily attendance of 71 individuals accessing employment, housing and family services.

“While we do understand the Governor has not yet proposed final cuts to these programs, we do know these cuts would directly threaten the lives and well-being of hundreds of individuals who rely on these services,” states Toni Wolf, executive director of Employment Options. “We have been the safety net for many individuals recovering from mental illness in the area and to close our doors is irresponsible to the people we serve and the greater community. We cannot wait for our voices to be heard after the fact.”

In addition to the statewide advocacy efforts, Employment Options is also seeking local awareness and advocacy to continue to serve a vulnerable population served by Westborough State Hospital. As of April 1, 2010, due to financial hardships, Westborough State Hospital will be closing its door, and an additional 73 individuals with severe mental illness will be living in the local community.

“It is essential now more than ever that we remain a resource for the community, “according to Wolf. “We have to ask, where will these people go and how will they manage their lives as they leave a state facility where they have resided for years? Without a safety net such as Employment Options or other agencies that serve this population, individuals will out of necessity use the streets as a place to go and inadvertently utilize the police and emergency rooms. These cuts will just shift costs somewhere else and we believe the Massachusetts taxpayer will not be happy as a result.”

About Employment Options:

Employment Options is a non-profit organization based in Marlborough, MA. The organization has been in operation for over 30 years and is well-known for providing mental health rehabilitation services, through the ‘Clubhouse’ program. Employment Options’ primary funding comes from the Department of Mental Health. Through inspiration, support and encouragement, Employment Options creates a home-away-from-home where people can overcome barriers to employment and discover personal growth, self-sufficiency, and hope. <http://www.employmentoptions.org/>

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