

SPOTLIGHT ON MARIE DI COWDEN

Marie A. DiCowden, PhD is in this month's Clearinghouse Spotlight for four reasons: 1) She is a plenary speaker at the upcoming 11th Annual NACC Meeting on ICF on clinical applications of ICF in her comprehensive care Biscayne Institutes of Health and Living; 2) she used the ICF in a Florida court case; 3) she used the ICF in her CARF accreditation renewal, and 4) she has many scientific publications, including several interesting ICF articles. Marie's PhD is in Clinical Psychology from the George Washington University in Washington, DC, and since 1982 she has been a Board Certified Licensed Psychologist in Florida.

She has built the Biscayne Institute as an outpatient rehab center specializing in brain injury and spinal cord injury. It now regularly treats about 50 children and 40 adults, and she serves as its Administrator. Nearly all 28 staffers at the Biscayne Institute have been familiarized or trained in the ICF. The ICF was an attractive way to view patients because of its comprehensive nature, which matches the comprehensive nature of injuries and therapies used. The injuries include orthopedic injuries, all types of brain injury, pediatric disorders both congenital and postpartum, spinal cord injury, amputation rehab, chronic disease, pain rehab, and cognitive difficulties. The interdisciplinary team there includes physical therapy, neuropsychology, cognitive retraining, speech therapy, social work, family therapy, art therapy, Chinese medicine, voc rehab, biofeedback, whirlpool therapy, OT, neuromuscular massage, and holistic medicine. The facility has been CARF and CORF accredited for 15 years. In its most recent CARF accreditation renewal request, the ICF was specified. One of her ICF publications (with Seltser and Gerry Hendershot) is "Terrorism and the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health: A Speculative Case Study Based on the Terrorist Attacks on New York and Washington", *Disability and Rehabilitation*, Vol. 24, No 11-12, 2003, pp. 635-643. Each patient at her clinic gets quarterly review by the entire treatment staff, and they collectively assign ICF codes to each patient. These are cross-matched to the FIM and FAM scores, and other assessment tools as well. Marie says: "Our bottom line is treating the person who has the disease, not treating the disease the person has. It's that shift in philosophy that allows psychologists to be at the head of this enterprise. We're setting the medical model on its ear and surviving!"

DiCowden's application of ICF in a court case involves "Joseph", a 42-year-old meter reader who was nearly killed by a car in 1996 while on the job giving tickets. Two years after the accident, he could not speak or walk, and was in a 5 point restraint due to behavior outbursts. He was deemed untreatable and sent to a nursing home. His mother thought Joseph still had potential, and she found Dr. DiCowden and the Biscayne Institute. With their comprehensive therapies, he can now read, do double digit math calculations, do Math Blaster on a computer, stand independently, toilet independently, converse in small groups, and behave in a pro-social manner. She has sued the insurance company for the one million \$ in free treatment which they have since given him, and used the ICF in court testimony to chart his progress since 1998. In court, she used the FIM, the FAM, and the ICF with severity indicators. Others who testified in court were

Dr. Raymond Seltser and Dr. Don Lollar. Marie can be reached at the Biscayne Rehabilitation Institute, 2785 NE 183rd Street, Miami, FL 33160, tel 305-932-8994, fax 305-932-9362, bri@gate.net and MDCatbihl@aol.com. Better yet, come and meet her personally at the NACC ICF Meeting at Mayo in Rochester.