



# OPTIMAL SOLUTIONS GROUP LLC

ENABLING DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

WELCOME

Fall 2007

QUICK LINKS



The cooler days of Autumn have finally arrived and along with them, the close of a busy proposal season and the beginning of a new federal fiscal year. At Optimal, we worked diligently to complete numerous proposals, while continuing our commitment and focus to provide rigorous and timely policy research and technical assistance. As you read on, you will see that Optimal is implementing innovations that are efficacious and efficient. Many of our new contracts reflect the government's goal to deliver effective services while providing accountability to taxpayers. Optimal's four



policy centers of education, health, housing and workforce development, and social policy continue to seek answers to today's perplexing policy questions within an environment of increased fiscal uncertainties.

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Mark D. Turner, Ph.D., President and CEO  
Tracye Turner, Vice President

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**Questions or Comments?**  
**Contact us for more information:**  
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[info@optimalsolutionsgroup.com](mailto:info@optimalsolutionsgroup.com)

## SPOTLIGHT

### **Supporting Healthy Marriage Study**

The Supporting Healthy Marriage (SHM) study is a

large-scale, multi-site, multi-year, impact evaluation of marriage education programs for low-income married couples. Optimal, a subcontractor to MDRC, designed and customized the management information system (MIS) to facilitate intake, random assignment, and the tracking of participant activities and outcomes. In addition, Optimal is using its customized helpdesk software to track and respond to inquiries from marriage education programs around the country. These innovations have resulted in costs savings, but have also provided researchers with a real-time window pane into the complex dynamics of program implementation.

## Turner Presents Research at The American Assembly

Optimal has been invited to contribute a paper for the American Assembly's "Restoring Prosperity in Older Industrial Areas: Economic Development in Weak Markets" project. The Assembly commissions such papers to bring about highly focused discussions for assembly meetings. Mark Turner, Laurel Davis, and Andre Cruz co-authored a paper on "Industry Clusters, Employment, and Opportunity" to be included at the assembly meeting occurring November 8-11, 2007 in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Brookings Institution Press will publish contributing papers, findings, and policy recommendations in a book for broad distribution.

Read more about The American Assembly [here](#).



## Walton Co-authors Chapter for NCES and NESSI

Ebony Walton, a Research Analyst II at Optimal, serves as a subcontractor at the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) and works with the Associate Commissioner's office to respond to information requests about the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP). Walton co-authored a chapter, "Large-Scale Indicator Assessments: What Every Educational Policymaker Should Know", in the Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education with the Associate Commissioner, two senior researchers from NCES, and the NAEP Education Statistics Services Institute (NESSI).

Read more about Walton's authorship [here](#).

## Gent Named New CMS Practice Manager

Kelly Gent has been promoted to CMS Practice Manager within Optimal's Health Policy Research Center (HPRC). Gent, Optimal's 2006 Employee of the Year, has demonstrated subject matter expertise, exceptional personnel and time management skills, and most importantly a commitment to deliver quality work to CMS (the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services). Prior to joining Optimal in 2005, Gent was Policy and Research Manager at the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services, the state agency that administers Medicaid.

## New Contract Announcements

Optimal has a number of new prime research contracts kicking off this fall within the Education and Health Policy Research Centers. They include:

- ED/IES/NCES Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Graduation Rates Validity Study (GRS)
- ED/OSERS National Center on Service Obligations
- HHS/CMS Modernizing Medicaid: Improved Documentation of Citizenship
- HHS/CMS Evaluation & Oversight Contractor for Qualified Independent Contractors
- HHS/CMS Medi-Medi National Coordinator
- Evaluation of Virginia's Medicaid Mental Health Demonstration Waiver

## New Optimal Research Staff

Optimal has recently hired several new research staff: [Robin Ingle](#), Senior Research Associate (HPRC); [Evan Olson](#), Statistician and Research Analyst II (ERC); [Christabel Dadzie](#), Research Analyst II (HPRC); [Elizabeth Arnold](#), Research Analyst I (ERC); [Scott Long](#), Associate Programmer (WSPRC).

## Continuing the "Green" Trend

For emergency backup and for the sake of saving electricity, solar power chargers are gaining popularity for smaller electronic devices. One solar device that has proven useful for Optimal staff is a cell phone/PDA charger by Soldius. Placed on a windowsill in full sun, Blackberry's charge easily. Chargers left plugged in without being used continue to consume and waste energy in your home and/or office.

Visit [www.mysoldius.com](http://www.mysoldius.com) for more information.