

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Workforce & Technology Center
September 2011

Members – Present

Al Sonnenstrahl
Barry Shaw
Beth Lash
Daniel Frye
Earl Cooper
Josie Thomas
Kali Mallik
Laurie Elinoff
Mary Manzoni
Paulette Epps
Suzanne Page
Tim Daly
Thomas Barkley
Beth Lash

Members Unable to Attend

Anne Rea
Charles Crawford
Debra Fieldhouse
Jennifer Whitcomb
Michael Bullis
Michael Whitehill
Rashid Reyazuddin
Carol Lewis

DORS Liaison Staff Present

Donna Lettow
Kimberlee Schultz
Jean Jackson

Support Staff Present

Polly Huston
Donna Lippa

Guests

Tom Laverty, Client Assistance Program
Ron Winter, DORS Director of Field Services

I. Recognitions and Approval of Minutes

Chair Dan Frye welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that members and guests introduce themselves. Mr. Frye thanked the outgoing Chair Kali Mallik for serving as Chair of the Council for two years and presented him with a gift. Minutes from the May 4, 2011 meeting were approved as written.

II. Comments and Perspective of new Chairperson Dan Frye

- **Vision of SRC Leadership** – Mr. Frye stated that he is honored to serve as Chair of this Council. The role of the MSRC is critical to the effective operation of the VR Program. It is the role of the MSRC to work collaboratively with the management and staff of DORS and we have an excellent repore with the Director and her team and look forward to cultivating further relationships and managing to help the work of the VR program to flourish. The MSRC represents the diversity of the community across the state and have support from our staff liaisons and together we can offer a perspective that will keep agency management in touch with the views of the disability community in Maryland. The role of the Council is articulated in the federal rehabilitation statute and in the recently adopted 36th

Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI). Together we will make a big difference and this is my goal as Chair of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council.

- SRC Priority Goals and areas of focus for 2012 – Mr. Frye stated that the Council will work closely with the necessary roles that the Council has a law i.e. satisfaction surveys, state plan, etc. A principle interest is to bring to the attention of the Agency any current events that may emerge.

III. Presentation –DORS Employment Initiatives (Darlene Peregoy, DORS Employment Specialist)

Partnership and Customized Trainings

- Completed first run of Professional Animal Workers (PAWS) training in conjunction with CCBC. All six students graduated successfully and are involved in job search.
- Starting sessions of both warehouse and security guard training in conjunction with CCBC instructors
- In the process of renewing our training/employment partnership relationship with CVS in Maryland. Starting a “hybrid” training program with one month non-paid internship leading to two months of OJT for successful interns – resulting in employment at CVS. Currently identifying four participants to start with (two Baltimore-Metro and two PG County) and hope that we can continue to expand this opportunity.

Employment Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumers

- As of last month WTC staff was at 116% of their projected goal for participants in WTC programs and they have increased employment of deaf and H/H consumers by over 50% from previous years. Placements have included everything from warehouse work to a recent federal hire at National Institute of Health.
- Facilitated the “WAVE” summer program (Work and Vocational Experience) for 10 students from MD School for the Deaf who will be graduating within the next year or two. The students lived at WTC for two weeks and participated in Career Assessment, work shadowing and simulation experiences, field trips to work sites and some other social activities. All of this is to assist with preparing them for upcoming graduation and entry into the work force.

*A critical issue is that since the public school system changed testing requirements, many deaf students who do not have strong English/reading skills will not be able to pass the mandatory exams and, as such, will NOT graduate with their high school diploma. So, this is a whole new group of young people with an additional barrier to employment.

Internship Programs

- Franklin Square Hospital/Morrisons Health Services – Working with WTC to identify interns for both cafeteria/food service areas and patient relations workers (the workers that take orders/serve food to patients). Not a guarantee but it is anticipated that successful interns will have a good possibility of employment there. Identifying candidates now
- Towson State University – identifying another intern for their food service area.
- QUEST – QUEST program for 2011 is wrapping up. There were 32 individuals participating in internships in state of Maryland agencies throughout the state.
- FMS/Department of Treasury – We had six interns at FMS this summer. One intern was extended for a month. There are plans to bring one of the interns back through the Student Employment program in January. All reports are that they did very well.
- NASA/GSFC & Wallops Island – three consumers participated in internships this summer.
- Blind Industries and Services of MD (BISM) – arranged an internship in their production warehouse beginning next week. We hope to expand this into a full program.
- Numerous individual internships are taking place in a variety of public and private businesses doing a variety of different types of work.
- Social Security Administration – We are having ongoing discussions for development of an SSA/DORS internship program. SSA will be scheduling a meeting soon.

Job Readiness Training

- Workforce & Technology Center (WTC) employment services staff continue to teach monthly series for students and “field” referrals – every afternoon for two weeks each month
- Lucas Gerace – the new employment services staff for Baltimore City – just recently completed teaching the first round of his job readiness class for 8 Baltimore City DORS consumers.
- Deaf and H/H staff at WTC will be taking their class on the road and teaching a series at the Wheaton office in November
- Deaf and H/H staff at WTC are facilitating a weekly job club starting 9/21 for consumers in the Baltimore Metro area.

- The Office for Blindness and Vision Services second session of the Career-Life Planning program is currently underway. The next Job Squad will begin on October 2nd.

Networking – Business Development

- DORS Business Services Specialists will be participating in several Disability Networking Events
- DORS Business Services Specialists will be attending the Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) annual conference in Baltimore October 2 – 4.
- DORS Business Services Specialists will once again have a display table at the MRA DORS Annual Conference in October to network with conference attendees and share current employment-related information and materials.
- DORS staff will be meeting with Human Resource Management from Kaiser Permanente in DC, along with Business Services Representatives from DC RSA, on October 23rd to discuss partnership and employment opportunities.
- DORS staff will be presenting at the Rock Creek Community Partnership Luncheon on September 21st; the presentation topic is On-The-Job Training. Rock Creek is a community rehabilitation provider.
- DORS staff has been working with the MARC Disability Workforce Consortium which will be hosting a Federal Employment Champions Event to honor federal agencies and employees who are making a difference in the hiring, retention and promotion of individuals with disabilities in the federal workforce. The event will take place on October 20th at the USDOE. Director Sue Page will be presenting the Maryland awards.

DORS Business Services Network

- DORS has lost a number of field business liaisons due to increased caseloads.
- The agency has begun the process of developing position descriptions to recruit six contractual Business Service Specialist positions.
- The Business Services Implementation Council, which meets quarterly, will continue to look at the organization and provision of our business services.

Dan Frye suggested that the DORS Business Services Implementation Council have representation from the MSRC to help enhance the business understanding.

ACTION: DORS staff will invite a member from the MSRC to attend the Business Services Implementation Council meetings. This member will most likely be a representative of business, industry & labor.

Kali Mallik asked if the employment services were being expanded to the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland. Darlene responded that they have done many things but would like to do more.

IV. Chairperson and Vice Chairperson Report, (Day Frye and Josie Thomas)

- CSAVR/NCSAB Conference, October 23-27, 2011, Chandler, Arizona - Dan Frye stated that there is a national community of state rehabilitation councils called the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) of which the Maryland SRC is a member. This national community meeting is held in concert with the CSAVR/NCSAB Conferences. Dan Frye will be attending these meetings in October in Chandler, Arizona representing the MD SRC.
- MRA/DORS Conference/Transitioning Conference, October 16-19, 2011, Ocean City, Maryland - Members of the Council are invited to attend the MRA/DORS/Transitioning Conferences in Ocean City, Maryland October 16-19, 2011. Please let Donna Lippa know if you would like to attend.
- SRC Learning Community Region III Meeting, November 9, 2011, Richmond, Virginia - The SRC Region III Learning Community (Delaware, Virginia, DC and Maryland) will meet in Richmond, Virginia on November 9th with facilitators from George Washington University. Sue Page, Josie Thomas and Dan Frye will be attending this meeting representing the Maryland SRC.
- Summary of SRC Executive Retreat held in August 2011 – In August 2011 the leadership of the MSRC met and discussed future directions for the MSRC for the year ahead. One of the highlights of the retreat was the opportunity to hear from Steve Wooderson, newly appointed Executive Director of CSAVR. He was able to give the retreat a perspective on the federal climate in rehabilitation. Discussion took place about the challenges and advocacy that will be required in the next few years to assure that the importance of vocational rehabilitation is emphasized to the members of the Congressional Super Committee as they work to prepare a fiscal cutting program.
- MSRC Legislative Event, Tuesday, February 7, 2012 - The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council will be having their legislative event in Annapolis, Maryland on February 7, 2012. Have not identified to date any specific substantive issues or legislative objectives, except to reinforce the value of this agency's work and ask our legislators that they not do anything to harm the agencies financial standing. Laurie Elinoff stated that this is a great way to make contact and get to know your representatives. Al Sonnenstrahl requested that Council members receive some type of training to assist them in meeting with their legislators. Dan Frye stated that he would be more than happy to present on ways to make your presentations more effective at the next full Council meeting.

- Council Logistics
 - a. Structure and Composition of SRC Committees - The structure and composition of the SRC committees is the responsibility of the Chair. Tom Lavery will be the new Chair of the SRC Policy and Planning Committee.
 - b. Length of Meeting Time – Chair Dan Frye recommended that the Council consider conducting one four hour meeting per year. This meeting will take place in May 2012. Two hours will be added to the beginning of this meeting. Dan Frye would like to see more public participation in the MSRC meetings.

V. Director's Report

- Federal Funding for FY 2012 – Sue Page reported that we are currently in the state fiscal year 2012 and so far everything seems to be going good. Federal fiscal year 2012 will begin October 1st and we are looking at reductions of federal funding. A Super Committee of congressional representatives has been formed to develop proposals for even further reductions. When Steve Wooderson spoke at the MSRC Retreat in August he suggested that the states meet with their representative.

Action: Dan Frye requested that staff draft a letter for the MSRC to be sent to Maryland Congressional Representative, Chris Van Hollen.

- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Reauthorization - There are no updates on the Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Steve Wooderson spoke at the MSRC Executive Retreat in August about the concerns that the VR program has with some of the language in the Reauthorization which appears to put transitioning students on the forefront of services which could be a detriment to non-transitioning consumers.
- DORS Waiting List/DORS Staff Capacity - DORS continues to experience a huge demand for services with an existing human resource capacity issue which appears to be a national problem. Currently the number of cases in delayed status is 2,852. Have made a concerted effort to close cases that have not been active. Our open case load as of the end of August was 18,366.
- Institute of Community Inclusion (ICI) On-Site Visit to DORS - The Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) visited DORS to conduct a research project. The subject of this research was best VR practices in the areas of quality assurance, human resources and strategic planning practices. The team interviewed numerous DORS staff, Kali Mallik and Dan Frye from the SRC, representatives from MSDE, DDA, and MHA. This report will be shared with the Council when it is finalized.
- Partners in Employment Systems Change – Major focus is a systems change in order to expand competitive employment in integrative settings. DORS is part of

a grant proposal that the Development Disabilities Council has submitted. This grant is funding offered by the administration on development disabilities within the administration to children and families U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is a project of national significance and partnership in employment systems change. The purpose of the funding is to enhance collaboration across existing state systems including programs administered by DDA, VR, educational agencies and other entities to increase competitive employment outcomes for youth and young adults with development disabilities including intellectual disabilities.

- Rehabilitation Technology Services Expansion Initiative - DORS had committed to enhancing our Rehabilitation Technology Services. We have taken a vacant position from our medical area and moved this to the RTS unit. We will continue to look at vacancies as they occur.

VI. Update on Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council, Laurie Elinoff

- Laurie Elinoff stated that the Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council had an Independent Living Conference in June focusing on our Centers for Independent Living in Maryland.
- On September 21, 2011 there will be a rally in Washington, DC on Medicaid matters.
- The IMAGE Center, a new center for independent living serving Baltimore County, Baltimore and Harford County, will have their open house on September 27th.

VII. Committee Reports

Policy and Planning Committee, Beth Lash

- The basic activities of the Policy and Planning Committee are working on public meetings, State Plan, representation on the DORS Policy Review Committee.

Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee, Mary Manzoni

- The committee has not able to meet but plans are being made to begin review of the DORS Quality Assurance.

Membership and Resource Committee, Josie Thomas

- The application for MSRC membership of Zosia Zaks, representing the Autism community has been forwarded to the Governor's Appointments Office and is pending.
- A membership packet is being prepared for the Governor's office recommending appointment of new members, as follows: Appointments: (New members) Debra Fieldhouse, GWIB, Thomas Lavery, CAP, and Zosia Zaks

- Beth Lash phases off of the Council with her new role and Tom Laverty's promotion to CAP director; she will continue as an ad hoc member of the Policy and Planning Committee.
- Several SRC members' terms expire this year; all are eligible for reappointment: Dan Frye, Charles Crawford, Al Sonnenstrahl, Mike Bullis, Mike Whitehill and Tim Daly. These individuals have agreed to be reappointed and their names will be submitted to the Governor's Office for reappointment in the next couple weeks.
- Orientation for new members: The Committee is planning for the Orientation for New SRC Members. Tentative dates are under consideration with TACE Center staff that will provide the program. More information will be provided to members as plans are finalized.

Employment & Career Development Committee, Sue Page

- Paulette Epps stated that at the last employment meeting Kate Drake, DORS Staff Specialist for Community Rehab Programs (CRPs) presented information on the Employment First Initiatives. This initiative offers consumers served by DDA the option to work first before considering supported employment or day care.
- Christine Franklin, Supervisor of Employment Services at WTC presented some of the current DORS employment initiatives with the federal government. She also discussed WTC updates related to the deaf program, internships, community partnerships and training program changes.
- During the full group discussion, members stated that they preferred to use the SHA as its primary meeting place since it was centrally located for most.
- A future agenda item will be discussion on how the committee can assist DORS/WTC to move forward in providing employment services.

Blindness & Vision Services Committee, Sue Schaffer

- The committee met via teleconference on August 31, 2011 and was given an update of office services for the DORS Office for Blindness and Vision Services, a report on expanded technology services, an update on the current Blind Enterprise Program Training and other training opportunities for the blind.

New Council Business & Adjournment

Al Sonnenstrahl asked if DORS staff is involved in the Washington Metro System as it pertains to orientation and mobility (O & M) for disabled individuals. Dan Frye stated that he is aware that the Washington Metro System has some significant O & M staff that serve in the interest of blind individuals and also have staff that work with individuals who are deaf or H/H.

Dan Frye stated that if this is of interest to the Council he would ask staff for a report. We will make this a topic of conversation at a future meeting. Laurie Elinoff stated that David Sharp, Chair of the Statewide Independent Living Council, is involved in metro access. Beth Lash stated that Independence Now, Inc., a center for independent living in Montgomery County, currently has a grant for mobility training so this might be a good start in accessing this information.

The next full Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at the Workforce & Technology Center in Baltimore, MD.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna M. Lippa, MSRC Staff Support