

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Workforce & Technology Center
November 16, 2011

Members – Present

Thomas Barkley
Michael Bullis
Earl Cooper
Charles Crawford
Tim Daly
Laurie Elinoff
Paulette Epps
Daniel Frye, Chair
Beth Lash
Thomas Laverty
Carol Lewis
Kali Mallik
Mary Manzoni
Sue Page
Anne Rea
Josie Thomas, Vice Chair
Michael Whitehill
Zosia Zaks

Members Unable to Attend

Rashid Reyazuddin
Barry Shaw
Al Sonnenstrahl
Jennifer Whitcomb

Support Staff Present

Polly Huston
Donna Lippa

DORS Liaison Staff Present

Donna Lettow
Jean Jackson
Sue Schaffer
Kimberlee Schultz

Guests

Brenda Isennock, DORS Executive Leadership Institute
Ron Winter, DORS Director of Field Services

Recognitions and Approval of Minutes

Chair Dan Frye welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that members and guests introduce themselves. Dan Frye, on behalf of the Council, presented Donna Lettow with an award for her work in making DORS information accessible to persons who have access challenges. Donna was unable to attend the fall DORS/MRA Conference in where this award was presented. Zosia Zaks who is a new member representing the autism population, introduced himself to the members. Mr. Zaks was welcomed to the Council. Minutes from the September 14, 2011 meeting were approved as written.

Region III SRC Learning Community Meeting, November 9, 2011 (Sue Page, Dan Frye and Josie Thomas)

Dan Frye began by stating that George Washington University, together with the TACE Program, has pulled together representatives from Region III (Agencies for the Blind and General Agency in Virginia, Maryland Combined, Agencies for the Blind and General in Delaware, the Agency in Pennsylvania and the combined Agency in DC) to participate in activities with other SRCs in how to be stronger and work effectively and collaboratively together.

A meeting was held on November 9, 2011 in Richmond, Virginia attended by Chair Dan Frye, Vice Chair Josie Thomas, and Director Sue Page. Dan Frye was asked to speak about how SRCs can be more involved in education and advocacy. Dan spoke about what a Council really should be based on the federal act and how the Council can serve as the conscience of the Agency. The two principle points made were: (1) Councils are able to be the best advocates and the best educators if you have an Agency Director who appreciates that this should be the role of the Council and is comfortable enough to let the Council act with independence, and (2) A strong Council has a committee of people to work with the Governor to make sure that the composition of the Council is people who are informed and free thinking.

Sue Page commented that a lot of time was spent talking about effective orientation of new SRC members.

Josie Thomas commented that there was discussion about how effective meetings are conducted with more active involvement of members and less reporting out by staff. Josie stated that it is important for Council members to feel a part of the discussion and not just sit passively and listen. Dan commented that this is his vision as Chair that the Maryland SRC. There should also be some kind or programmatic agenda item where we learn something else about the work of this Agency and be made aware of the success stories that this Agency has helped to foster.

Josie Thomas commented that there was discussion about inviting the public to participate in SRC meetings and allowing time for public comment. Some of the SRCs are currently doing this successfully.

ACTION: Dan Frye suggested that, beginning with the May 2012 Council meeting, we work with Josie Thomas and staff along with the SRC Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee to discuss a procedure for inviting the public to SRC meetings. Mike Bullis commented that if you want to empower the disability community, you must get them involved in their decision making.

Dan Frye stated that the next Community Partner's meeting is April 2012 in concert with the CSAVR Conference and that TACE will be soliciting from SRCs topics for discussion.

ACTION: Inform Josie or Dan of any topics for the next Community Partner's meeting in April 2012 which you would like to see discussed.

Grant for Employment Program for Veterans (Anne Rea, Adult Services Division and Chief of Operations, Way Station, Inc.)

Anne Rea shared with the Council programs for veterans that Way Station, Inc. has been providing. They are:

- 1) Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program – which assists incarcerated veterans who are homeless or “at risk” of homelessness to reintegrate in the community through meaningful employment. Services offered are job search assistance, career counseling, occupational and skills training, life skills support services, job placement and follow-up activities and case management, including referrals for health care, addiction treatment and housing services.
- 2) Welcome Home Program – which assists veterans in achieving residential stability, increase their skill levels and/or income and obtain greater self-determination. Services offered are life skills development, case management, including referrals for health care, addiction treatment and housing services, and job search, placement and follow-up supports.
- 3) Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program – which assists veterans who are homeless or “at risk” of homelessness to reintegrate in the community through meaningful employment. Services include job search assistance, career counseling, occupational and skills training, life skills support services, job placement and follow-up activities, and case management, including referrals for health care, addiction treatment, and housing services.
- 4) Veterans Workforce Investment Program – which provides support and training services that assist eligible veterans with reintegration into meaningful employment. Services include assistance in accessing occupational and skills training including financial, career counseling, job search assistance, job placement and follow-up, life skills support services, case management including referrals for health care, addiction treatment and housing services.

Legislative Training: Effective Techniques that can be used when Meeting with Legislators (Dan Frye, Chair)

Dan Frye distributed the Legislative Advocacy Strategies and Resources handout for members to use at the MSRC Legislative Event in February. Mr. Frye reminded members that the most important strategy is to just be yourself when meeting with your elected officials. He stated that the following would be of use to the new and/or apprehensive person undertaking awareness or advocacy efforts with their federal or state legislators:

- 1) Be at Ease
- 2) Be professional but Friendly
- 3) Be Focused and On Issue
- 4) Be in Touch

5) Be Informed

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

- Letter to Representative Chris Van Hollen – Federal Budget Control Act (BCA) – Dan Frye stated that a letter has been sent, on behalf of the Council, to Congressional Chris Van Hollen, member of the super committee under the Budget Control Act (BCA) charged with developing a proposal to reduce federal spending over the next 10 years. The letter emphasizes the concerns of the Council about the possible implications as the result of reductions in funding for the public State-Federal VR program.
- CSAVR/NCSAB Conference & National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSAB) Meeting - Dan Frye attended the CSAVR/NCSAB Conference in Phoenix, Arizona in November. There was also a meeting of the State Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSAB). Discussion took place about the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Rehabilitation Act. It will most likely not be reauthorized until 2013. There is considerable controversy over one of two aspects of the legislation. There is a lot of emphasis being put on transition in this proposed Senate version which could potentially disadvantage existing adult people receiving rehabilitation services. They will need to find a balance between transitioning services and the traditional role of adult services in rehabilitation.
- MRA/DORS and Transitioning Conferences, October 2011 – Dan Frye along with other SRC members attended the conferences which were held in October 2011 in Ocean City, MD. The MRA/DORS Conference was good, but the Transition Conference was a little weaker than it could have been.
- **Action: In May 2012 we will be adding 30 minutes to each full Council meeting thus the meeting in May will begin at 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. This will allow more time if we are to have consumer input in the future. All in favor.**

Director's Report

- DORS Fiscal Year 2012 Budget – Sue Page stated that we are currently in a continuing resolution (CR) which ends November 18, 2011 and the expectation is that there will be another continuing resolution that will run through the end of December. During the CR process, the state VR Program is not included in the 1.5 % across the board reduction. RSA has provided a couple scenarios for funding and in both, the VR program fairs on the positive side, but this could change with the work of the President's Super Committee.
- DORS Fiscal Year 2011 Accomplishments – MD Disability Determination Services cleared 75, 883 disability claims; DORS assisted 2,437 persons with significant disabilities achieve successful employment; DORS Office for Blindness and Vision Services increased successful rehabilitation by 4.1 to 170; the Workforce & Technology Center served 2,102 persons; DORS served a total

of 9,228 youth with disabilities transitioning from school to post-secondary education and careers.; the VR program's waiting list increased from 1,789 to 2,946.

- Approval of State Plan for VR Services – RSA has approved the State Plan for VR services.
- DORS Work Group Established to Review Services for Deaf/Blind – A work group has been formed that has made recommendations for improvements in deaf/blind services. DORS is beginning by reviewing the way some of their consumer's cases have been coded to make sure that someone who is deaf/blind is receiving the correct services.
- Governor's Executive Order: Governor's Job Creation through Regulatory Reform Initiative – The Governor has issued an Executive Order to have each state agency take a look at doing a comprehensive review of its regulatory policies to see if there are any regulations that need to be rescinded, revised, amended to reduce unnecessary regulatory burdens and promote economic growth and job creation. .
- Case Management Focus Group – DORS has established a case management focus group of highly effective counselors throughout the State to find out what they are doing to be so successful. Recommendations from this group will be shared with management.
- Institute of Community Inclusion (ICI) Focus Group – DORS has received a draft report from ICI. This group looked at several states that had effective practices in the area of (1) Management, (2) Human Resources, (3) Quality, and (4) Strategic Planning. DORS management staff will review for comments and edits.
ACTION: The ICI final report will be shared with the full Council.

Committee Reports

Policy and Planning Committee, Tom Laverty

Tom Laverty commented that the Policy and Planning Committee has not met recently but a meeting is scheduled November 28, 2011. The agenda items for this meeting are: (1) Planning for the 2012 Public Meetings; (2) Review of the revised cooperative agreement between the Maryland Mental Health Administration and DORS regarding the provision of employment services, and (3) Review of the status of MSRC recommendations included in the 2012 State Plan. This information will be discussed at the February 2012 meeting.

Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee, Mary Manzoni

Tom Barkley reported on the activities of the Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee in the absence of Mary Manzoni. The committee met in October 5, 2011 and discussed four committee charges: (1) Development and distribution of the MSRC Annual Report; (2) Legislative activity in February 2012; (3) Mary Manzoni will be

getting in touch with Chair Dan Frye to discuss his letter for the 2011 Annual Report; and (4) Quality Assurance. The committee spent most of their time at the meeting discussing what DORS does in the areas of quality assurance. Had discussion about the various consumer satisfaction surveys and at the May 2012 will be prepared to share the committee's thoughts on DORS Quality Assurance. The next committee meeting is January 18, 2012. Tom Laverty also discussed with the committee the CAP Report and the committee will be working with Tom and Donna Lettow on the annual CAP Report to make it as user friendly as possible.

Membership and Resource Committee, Josie Thomas

Josie Thomas stated that the Membership Committee had a conference call on November 9th. The new member orientation is January 11, 2012 from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Workforce & technology Center. The TACE Center from George Washington University will be here to do the training. All members are invited to attend.

Membership Committee would like to reach out to a 504 student to represent the 504 process. Also interested in finding a young adult in the transitioning process and take a look at consumers with a broader range of disabilities and reach out to additional minority members, especially Hispanic. Josie asked that members be thinking about these categories and let her know if you have anyone who meets this criteria. The membership application is on the website. We are also in the process of developing a fact sheet for distribution to potential members.

Employment & Career Development Committee, Sue Page

Sue Page stated that the Employment & Career development Committee has not met since the last meeting. A meeting has been scheduled for November 30, 2011.

Laurie Elinoff suggested that the Employment Committee add to a future agenda discussion regarding employment for consumers of IL services at CILS who are not just DORS consumers, but individuals who may want part time employment. Mike Bullis stated that as a member of the Employment Committee he will see that this subject is addressed.

Blindness & Vision Services Committee, Sue Schaffer

Mike Bullis stated that the Blindness & Vision Services Committee has not met since their last meeting.

New Council Business & Adjournment

- Laurie Elinoff shared that the IMAGE Center had their Open House. Mike Bullis, Executive Director, stated that the IMAGE Center is in the process of developing a transition programs for teens to help them develop small businesses and other activities to help in their success. IMAGE Center is hoping to raise about \$15,000 to help in this initiative.
- Polly Huston shared that Melissa Diehl will be leaving DORS to begin working with RSA.
- Paulette Epps mentioned if Council members have heard about the

mismanagement of Development Disabilities Administration (DDS) funding and possible impact on transitioning youth. Sue Page and Dan Frye felt that this issue was premature at this point. The Council will just watch to see how this unfolds.

The next full Council meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 10, 2012 in Annapolis, Maryland at the Miller Senate Building.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna M. Lippa, MSRC Staff Support