

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Annapolis, Maryland
February 10, 2012

Members – Present

Thomas Barkley
Michael Bullis
Earl Cooper
Charles Crawford
Laurie Elinoff
Paulette Epps
Daniel Frye, Chair
Thomas Laverty
Carol Lewis
Sue Page
Barry Shaw
Josie Thomas, Vice Chair
Michael Whitehill
Zosia Zaks

Members Unable to Attend

Tim Daly
Kali Mallik
Anne Rea
Rashid Reyazzuddin
Alfred Sonnenstrahl

Support Staff Present

Polly Huston
Donna Lippa

DORS Liaison Staff Present

Guests

Amy Blandford, DORS Executive Leadership Institute (ELI)
Joan Dier, ELI
Brenda Isenock, ELI
Yvonne Kranitz, DORS
Donna Lettow, DORS
Sylvia Porter, ELI
Kimberlee Schultz, DORS
John Stem, ELI
Michelle Stewart, ELI
Ronald Winter, DORS

Thanks to everyone who participated in the MSRC Legislative Event on February 10, 2012. Your work is very important and effective.

Recognitions and Approval of Minutes

Chair Dan Frye welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that members and guests introduce themselves. Dan thanked Council members for taking the time to come to Annapolis today to meet with their legislators and stated that this exercise is one of the most important for the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council. Minutes from the November 16, 2011 meeting were approved as written.

Discussion on Visits with Legislators and Legislative Issues

The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council met today in the Thomas V. Mike Miller Senate Office Building, President's Conference Center West I in Annapolis, Maryland. Members met to receive materials and proceeded to their prearranged meetings with their legislators. After the meetings with legislators, members met for lunch followed by a full Council meeting. There were 54 scheduled visits with Senators and Delegates for the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council members. The message to legislators was as follows:

- Thank you for your support of DORS budget in the past.
- DORS is a jobs program – we help people with disabilities go to work and reduce reliance on public benefits.
- Please support the MSDE/DORS budget for 2013 – any reductions may result in DORS losing federal funds.
- DORS currently has a year long waiting list of nearly 3,000 individuals with significant disabilities who want to go to work.
- The Governor's budget includes 6 contractual positions for rehabilitation counselors and 3 contractual positions for assistive technologists. Please support the budget so more people with disabilities can get back to work.
- DORS services lead to employment and economic self-sufficiency for persons with significant disabilities; 2,437 persons with significant disabilities became employed last year as a result of DORS services.

Members of the Council felt that staff appeared receptive to their perspectives. Legislative staff felt confident that the issues discussed were not controversial and affirmed that legislative representatives would be supportive. Legislators were all very concerned about the budget and stated that there are a lot of hard decisions to make. Legislators also expressed concern about the DORS waiting list.

Members commented that the materials prepared by DORS staff for legislators today were very well done and wanted to thank the DORS staff.

Ms. Page and Chair Dan Frye thanked the members of the Council for coming to Annapolis for the day and their support of the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the public VR services.

Chairperson's Report (Dan Frye)

- 2012 Spring CSAVR/NCSAB Conference, April 21-27, 2012, Bethesda, MD – Dan Frye will be attending these conferences as a representative of

the MD State Rehabilitation Council and will report out at the May 2012 meeting.

- SRC Social Media Presence - There was much discussion about having a Face book or Twitter page for the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council to make the public more aware of the Council and as an avenue to recruit new members. Members were concerned about the time it would take to maintain and update this information. Dan Frye, Chair, commented that he would be happy to maintain a Twitter page for the Council, but members were concerned that a future Chairperson may not want to engage in this responsibility.

ACTION: A formal “social media policy” will be developed by the SRC Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee and reviewed by the Council at the May 2012 meeting.

- MSRC Presentation of Testimony for SB 167 and HB 116 – Chair and Vice Chair of the MSRC prepared testimony, on behalf of the Council, in support of SB 167 and HB 116, Tax Credits for Qualifying Employees with Disabilities which supports the continuation of the tax credit.
- SRC Full Council Meeting – Due to a schedule conflict, the date of the November full Council meeting will need to be changed.

Director’s Report (Sue Page)

- FY 2013 DORS Funding and Waiting List – The Governor’s FY 13 allowance fully funds DORS to meet the Agency’s Match and MOE requirements for all its federal grants; the waiting list is the result of a human resource issue vs. a funding issue; the Governor’s FY 13 budget increases the agency’s contractual threshold that will allow the agency to bring on six (6) VR counselors. Basically one per region in an effort to help reduce the waiting time; the agency will lose three PINs in FY 12; and the FY 13 federal budget will hopefully be flat funded.
- Implementation of Milestone Payment Structure for all Evidence-Based Supported Employment – DORS provides time-limited supported employment job coaching services through approved community providers to individuals with most significant disabilities as needed to achieve competitive employment. Findings from implementation of a two-phase pilot confirmed that the Milestone Payment System significantly streamlines provision of services for DORS and provider

staff by reducing preparation of authorizations, invoicing and tracking hours of service, and simplifying reporting.

- Benefits Planning Updates – DORS initiated a fee-for-service system for benefits planning services just over a year ago. Many DORS consumers have had the opportunity to receive a personalized review of their benefits situation and a report about the impact of employment through these services. It is felt that consumers with full knowledge of work incentives are more likely to work up to their potential, increasing the likelihood that many will be able to discontinue receiving benefits which in turn enables DORS to receive reimbursement for the full cost of their rehabilitation services. This should mitigate the cost to DORS for benefits counseling, and may even result in additional reimbursement exceeding the cost of this service.
- DORS Multicultural Access Committee – A number of years ago DORS established the Multicultural Awareness Committee to address our agency's work with individuals from other cultures and backgrounds. Accomplishments of the committee at that time included conduct of a staff survey to determine agency resources and staff needs; provision of training on effective use of the foreign language interpreting and translation service; development of a desk guide on working with a telephone interpreter; provision of statewide training on multicultural awareness; posting of multicultural resources on the agency intranet; and provision of several related training program.

The committee had a brief hiatus due to staff changes, but has been reactivated with new members and an updated charge reflecting current diversity in our state of individuals seeking assistance of DORS. Tom Laverty, CAP Director and SRC member, will chair this committee.

- 2012 State Legislative Update - DORS is currently monitoring activity of the following bills:
 - ✓ HB 53: Higher Education - Community Colleges - Tuition Waiver for Disabled Individuals
 - ✓ HB 116: Blind Industries and Services - Procurement Preference - Exception
 - ✓ SB156/HB29: Minority Business Enterprises - Not for Profit Entities and Termination Extension

- ✓ SB 167: Tax Credits for Qualifying Employees with Disabilities - Sunset Repeal
- ✓ SB 347: Registration Plates for Individuals with Disabilities - Parking in Baltimore County
- ✓ SB 488: Protective Headgear Requirement for Motorcycle Riders - Exception

Update – Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Independent Living and vocational Rehabilitation Monitoring (Polly Huston)

Polly Huston stated that the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) will be conducting two (2) separate reviews of the agency in the next few months (IL and ILOB and the VR Program). Focus areas for both reviews will be: Organizational structure; Fiscal integrity; Priority services, including transitioning; and, a look at prior RSA review. The dates for the onsite review are March 5-8, 2012.

Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (Ron Winter)

The Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (MSTC) was established through a Transition Demonstration Grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. The focus of MSTC service delivery model is to improve post-secondary and employment outcomes of participating students with disabilities through a sequential delivery of specific transition service components. DORS is working on the sustainability of this grant. Maryland currently has 11 sites statewide. Three hundred thirty-eight students has participated with 121 completing high school and 90 have made a seamless transition.

MSRC/DORS 2012 Public Meetings (Kim Schultz)

Discussion topics this year will be (1) Improving DORS Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services, (2) DORS budget and capacity issues, (3) Transitioning and Autism and Aspergers VR services, (4) Deaf and Deaf-Blind VR services, and (5) The 2012 State Plan for VR Services.

The MSRC/DORS public meetings are scheduled for the following dated:

- March 26, 2012, Department of Social Services, La Plata, MD
- March 28, 2012, Deafnet, Hagerstown, MD
- March 29, 2012, Workforce & Technology Center, Baltimore, MD
- April 2, 2012, Statewide teleconference
- April 5, 2012, The Chesapeake Center, Easton, MD

Committee Reports

Policy and Planning Committee, Tom Laverty

- The committee is assisting with planning the 2012 MSRC/DORS Public Meetings.

- Committee reviewed the Mental Hygiene Administration cooperative agreement and proposed changes.

Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee, Mary Manzoni

- The committee prepared the MSRC 2010 Annual Report for distribution at the Legislative Event today.
- The Committee will develop a Formal Social Media Policy for the May 2012 meeting.

Membership and Resource Committee, Josie Thomas

- The Governor's Appointments Office has advised that new members Thomas Laverty and Zosia Zaks have been appointed by the Council, and Dan Frye, Charles Crawford, Al Sonnenstrahl, Mike Bullis, Mike Whitehill and Tim Daly have been reappointed. Welcome and welcome back!
- We were advised that Debra Fieldhouse is no longer with the Governor's Workforce Investment Board. The GWIB has recommended Mary O'Connor for appointment to the Council representing that organization.
- The TACE Center, Pat Tomlinson and Tom Jennings, as well as Josie Thomas and DORS staff presented new member orientation to SRC members on January 11, 2012.

Employment & Career Development Committee, Sue Page

- Committee met on December 9, 2011 and received an update on the Workforce & Technology Center Program
- Jody Boone presented a report to the committee on DORS Employment Initiatives
- A group discussion took place on how the committee can assist DORS/WTC move forward in providing employment services.

Blindness & Vision Services Committee, Sue Schaffer

- The Blindness & Vision Services Committee will present a report at the May 2012 meeting.

New Council Business & Adjournment

The next full Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 9, 2012, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m., Workforce & Technology Center, Room T-130.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna M. Lippa, MSRC Staff Support