

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council  
Workforce & Technology Center  
May 8, 2013

**Members – Present**

Michael Bullis  
Timothy Daly  
Laurie Elinoff  
Paulette Epps  
Daniel Frye, Chair  
Thomas Laverty  
Mary Manzoni  
Barry Shaw  
Josie Thomas, Vice Chair  
Zosia Zaks

**Members Unable to Attend**

Thomas Barkley  
Charles Crawford  
Al Sonnenstrahl  
Michael Whitehill

**Support Staff – Present**

Polly Huston  
Donna Lippa

**Guests**

Christofer Conklin, candidate for membership  
Jo Ann Materkowski, Director, Office of Field Services  
Jeff Moran, candidate for membership  
Mary O'Connor, candidate for membership

**DORS Liaisons to Council**

Donna Lettow  
Kimberlee Schultz  
Susan Schaffer

**Introduction and Approval of Minutes**

Chair Dan Frye welcomed guests and members to the Council meeting and asked that everyone introduce themselves. Director Sue Page was unable to attend the meeting today and attending the National Governor's Association (NGA) Conference in Pittsburgh. In her absence, Sue Schaffer, Director, Office for Blindness and Vision Services, will represent her.

The minutes from the February 6, 2013 meeting in Annapolis, Maryland were approved as written.

**Vision of New Director, Office of Field Services** (Jo Anne Materkowski)

Jo Anne began by stating that she has been with DORS for approximately 20 years. Ms. Materkowski stated that her emphasis is on quality employment outcomes. Ms. Materkowski stated that employment is not an afterthought but it would be at the beginning of the planning process. We are focusing on a back to basics approach by working with our staff in terms of staff development and providing training to assure that we are focusing on the front end of services, making the appropriate decisions in terms of eligibility and order of selection, and getting into quality career counseling.

DORS is preparing for a two-day statewide training for all staff geared toward assuring that the career choices our consumers are making that provide the support and information that is helpful for them. Ms. Materkowski stated that she is very committed and I want staff to be committed to working in collaboration with our Community Rehabilitation Programs. DORS cannot achieve the employment success alone so that we really need our community providers to work with us and be there to help them in the planning. The emphasis for the DORS counselor is to recognize the CRPs as strong partners and to work collaboratively with the community programs.

We are going to be looking at all of our programs relative to quality assurance. A committee has been developed to provide oversight. This will help us in deciding where we need training and focus our efforts to assure our staff are really prepared and know the priorities and are able to affect the outcome.

Dan Frye thanked Ms. Materkowski for her commitment to the mission of the Agency and congratulated her for her appointment as Director of the Office of Field Services.

**Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report** (Tom Lavery, Client Assistance Program)

Mr. Lavery began by stating that CAP provides information and referral, advocacy and legal services to individuals applying for and receiving services from DORS. The Maryland CAP is located within the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services. Each State must have a CAP in order to receive funding for their VR Program. Funding for the CAP is received from the US Department of Education, RSA in the form of an annual grant.

In Fiscal Year 2012, the CAP provided information and referral services to 278 individuals. Case services were provided to 143 individuals. One hundred of these cases were closed where issues were resolved in the individuals favor. In 13 cases

CAP determined that the position/decision made by DORS was appropriate for the individual.

Dan Frye asked Tom Lavery if the issues were systemic in nature. Tom Lavery stated that the majority of the issues are about the availability of funding through the DSU and also the Order of Selection.

Josie Thomas stated that there is some confusion about why CAP is located in DORS. Tom Lavery responded if your state had a program prior to 1984 receiving funds through the Department of Education the state could choose to keep that program once it was written into the Act. Maryland choose to keep the program at that time. In order to re-designate there is a formal federal process that involves the Governor and various other individuals statewide. The federal regulations that cover the duties of CAP are clear about how that occurs. Josie commented that the benefit of being within the agency is that you know the staff and can comfortably call and talk over the issues, but the challenge is that this is confusing for consumers.

**2013 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation and Career Needs of Individuals with Disabilities** (Polly Huston, Director, Office of Program and Community Support)

Ms. Huston stated that federal regulations require a comprehensive assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with a disability in the State of Maryland once every three years. There was a 14-member team made up of DORS staff and members of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council who collected and analyzed existing data and conducted surveys, focus groups and interviews and analyzed them. The purpose of the assessment was to assess the VR needs of Marylanders with disabilities, particularly:

- With most significant disabilities (e.g., blind/deaf/-blind, deaf/hard-of-hearing)
- Minorities (e.g., Hispanic, Asian)
- Those served through other components of the statewide workforce development system (e.g., community colleges, One-Stop Career Centers)
- Those unserved or under-served by the VR program (e.g., those with Autism Spectrum disorders, transitioning students with developmental disabilities, those impacted by the availability of Agency staff resources or the availability of supported employment for individuals with mental illness)
- Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) within the state.

Recommendations from this assessment were:

- Promote & facilitate staff development for DORS staff and community rehabilitation partners.
- Enhance relationships with community partners to provide employment services and address transportation needs.
- Enhance resources for deaf/hard-of-hearing consumers.
- Finalize the DORS/DDA Cooperative Agreement incorporating concepts from Employment First.
- Promote expansion of quality services for individuals with Autism spectrum Disorder.
- Continue to reach out to minorities, especially those of Hispanic and Asian background.
- Provide targeted outreach to blindness/vision impairments and deaf/blindness.
- Review distribution of DORS staff assigned statewide and adjust deployment of staff and programming.
- Review longitudinal data trends related to use of services and use this data to inform program development and training needs.
- Continue to support the Governor's statewide Skills2Compete initiative.

### **Election of Officers**

Dan Frye and Josie Thomas were re-elected as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the 2013-2014 year.

### **Summary – MSRC/DORS Public Meetings/Public Comment and Recommendations (State Plan attachment) for DORS** (Tom Laverty, Chair, Policy and Planning Committee)

The Maryland State Rehabilitation Council made the following recommendations which were included in the FY 2014 State Plan attachment:

- The Council supports DORS efforts to enhance its quality assurance system and recommends that the agency address the methodology of consumer satisfaction surveys and explores web-based surveys. Consider strategies to expand sample size, reach underrepresented groups, and preserve anonymity. Explore Web-based surveys, follow-up phone calls, and other response methods.
- The Council recommends that DORS continue to emphasize the Counselor's role in providing career counseling to assist consumers with developing appropriate and achievable vocational goals.

- The Council recommends that DORS continue collaboration with local providers, the Maryland Department of Disabilities, and the Developmental Disabilities Administration at the State and local levels, as related to the Employment First initiative.
- The Council recommends that DORS continue to look at innovative transportation options. DORS staff should be reminded of the available transportation options and resources and these statewide resources will continue to be posted on InDORS and on the public website.
- The Council recommends that DORS continue to explore, identify, and implement innovative practices in job development and placement, including evaluating the effectiveness of the new business services representatives.
- The Council appreciates the expansion of services at the Workforce & Technology Center for consumers who are deaf/hard-of-hearing, blind, visually impaired, deaf-blind and on the Autism spectrum, and recommends that WTC/DORS provide periodic updates to the Council on the effectiveness of these expanded services.
- The Council recommends that DORS review the Agency's website and social media strategy to continue to improve its effectiveness in providing consumer information, public education, outreach, and as a means of allowing stakeholders to provide feedback to the Agency.
- The Council is supportive of the Agency's efforts toward developing a three-year strategic plan.

**ACTION: The Council voted to approve attachment 4.2(c) to be included in the FY2014 State Plan**

**Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Reports** (Dan Frye and Josie Thomas)

- National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils Meeting (NCSRC) April 2013 – Dan Frye attended the NCSRC meeting which took place during the CSAVR Conference in April this year. The NCSRC is a group of people from different Councils across the country that come together and represent the interest of SRC at a national level. They have functioned for the last 6-7 years without a formal governing document to determine who is going to lead and how the leadership is going to be organized. They functioned largely with the financial goodwill of CSAVR.

This fall then intend to pursue adoption of a 501c3. As Chair of the Maryland Council Dan has volunteered to be a part of the subcommittee that will work to develop the 501c3 documents. Dan stated that his primary

motivation for doing this is to make sure that the Council's governance, if it is going to assume a more formal role, is reflective of what SRCs look like. The composition of the NCSRC needs to reflect the disabled people and the community that these Councils represent. It is my intent to make this a disabled majority controlled organization.

- 2013 National State Rehabilitation Council Forum, June 2013 – Dan Frye will be attending the National State Rehabilitation Council Forum in June 2013.
- DORS Planning Meeting, April 17, 2013 – Josie Thomas and Dan Frye participated in the DORS Planning Meeting.
- The MSRC full Council meeting date has been changed to November 6, 2013.
- Discussion of Future DORS/MSRC Public Meeting Format – The public meeting format in the last few years have been very labor intensive. Sometimes people are concerned that the return has not been as much as you hope for the effort put into it. DORS is going to consider how they can continue to have a public meeting presence but in a way that is not as labor intensive, but will capture more feedback from the community.
- Day on the Hill Legislative Visits, April 23, 2013 - Dan Frye, Sue Page and Sue Schaffer spent a day on the hill during the CSAVR Conference. Had a chance to briefly meet with Representative Van Hollen staff, along with Senator Cardin's staff and had effective conversations with both those members of Congress. They were also able to meet with a representative of Senator Mikulski's Office and a representative of Senator Sarbanes' Office.

**Director's Report** (Sue Page, Director of DORS)

- State Fiscal 2014 Budget – The Governor has fully funded DORS and is safe in match and maintenance of effort which are important to maintain the federal dollars, but we do not know what the impact of sequestration on tax revenues in Maryland will have.
- National Governor's Conference (NGA) – Sue Page is attending the NGA Conference in Pittsburgh today. Sue Schaffer stated that the goal of this conference is to leave with concrete ideas which can be used in their states

to increase the employment of individuals with disabilities. A panel was put together with five key areas: (1) the way states can support businesses in employing people with disabilities, (2) making employment of persons with disabilities part of your overall workforce strategy, (3) the State as a model employer of people with disabilities (4) leveraging federal resources, and (5) preparing youth with disabilities for the workforce.

- 2013 Legislative Wrap-up – This legislative session DORS did well in the budget process. DORS did not have any specific legislation.
- DORS Waiting List Update/DORS Staff Capacity – The waiting list as of today was 3,543 which is about an eighteen month waiting period.

The state hiring freeze continues which creates about a 6 month vacancy for any position. Despite all these challenges, as of April 30, 2013 DORS has had 1,429 people in successful employment outcomes which exceeds the number from last year.

- DORS Quality Assurance Program – DORS has developed a committee looking at the quality of services being provided.
- DORS Residential Architectural Modifications Workgroup – This is a group out of our Rehabilitation Services Department at WTC. They are looking at issues around procurement for the architectural modification.
- Statewide RFP for Interpreters – The Department of Budget and Management has put out an RFP for interpreter services and have been having pre-bid meetings. Looking at everything from ASL interpreting, CART, and tactile interpreting for the deaf/blind.
- Governor's Internship QUEST for Persons with Disabilities – QUEST is now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year and stands for Quality Understanding Excellence Support and Training. This is where State Agencies put out offers for interns and the interns must be active DORS consumers. Over the years 253 individuals have participated in the QUEST Program. Over 140 of these interns are employed, mainly with the State, while the others are continuing their job search. This year there are 40 internships that are being offered through 6 departments.

- MD School for the Deaf Work to Learn Program Pilot – Ms. Materkowski stated that DORS was awarded a grant to the MD School for the Deaf. The program was designed to provide work experiences for those who were not moving on to college or at risk of graduating from high school. The grant money has run out and DORS has continued the program with fee-for-service.

Jo Anne Materkowski had a meeting last week with the DORS staff of Western, Maryland and are in the process of scheduling a meeting with MD School for the Deaf with Hank Passi, DORS Staff Specialist, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services. Since 2009 until the end of 2012, 27 students did successfully graduate. Four have become successfully employed, 5 have moved onto college, 5 still in training programs and 4 we have lost contact.

- Contractual DORS Business Specialists – Jo Ann Materkowski reported that each Region will have a business representative. They will not carry a caseload but will be out in the community connecting with businesses, community colleges for the Skills to Compete project training, and being aware of training programs where individuals are moving into jobs quickly. They will also provide technical assistance to our counselors.

### **Committee Reports**

- Policy and Planning Committee, Tom Laverty – The DORS Policy Review Committee is looking at the agency’s policy regarding post-secondary education and considering changes. As those recommendations are made they will be shared with the Council.
- Public Relations and Quality Assurance, Mary Manzoni – The Committee has not met since January. Mary Manzoni is planning for the committee to meet with the DORS Committee on Quality Assurance.

At a previous Council, Dan Frye had discussed putting together a committee to talk about social media. Dan Frye stated that it was determined that we would not pursue any formalized Council policy at this time because of the time involved and sensitive nature of the work. Since then, DORS has been given greater exploration with social media and that we would work with DORS to make reference to our entities.



Donna Lettow announced that the State of Maryland is about to issue a new template for MD state agency websites which means the DORS will have a new website and we can then create a website for the MSRC using this same template.

- Membership, Josie Thomas – Appointments/Reappointments are pending: reappointments of Laurie Elinoff and Paulette Epps, and the new appointments of Jeffrey Moran, Mary O'Connor and Christopher Conklin.

Four priority areas for membership over the next year or so:

- People with disabilities
- Business and Industry
- Hispanic background/African American/Asian
- Younger – people at earlier stages of their career

Mary Manzoni completes her second full term on the Council in September. We recognize and appreciate the fantastic contributions Mary has made to the Council and people with disabilities in Maryland.

**ACTION: Josie Thomas commented that the Governor's Appointment Office has revised its "Biographical Information Form" which may contain questions for Council members not relevant to membership on the Council. The Council will investigate this issue at a later date and may consider writing a letter to the Governor's Office regarding this issue.**

- Blindness and Vision Services Committee, Michael Bullis – Mike Bullis stated that the Committee met in April 2013 and received several reports from various programs. The next meeting we will have a presentation on post-secondary education.

#### Update on Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council (Laurie Elinoff)

- Laurie Elinoff stated that the IL Partners of Maryland, Centers for Independent Living Directors, members of the MD Statewide Independent Living Council and DORS have been working collaboratively since last December on developing a draft State Plan for Independent Living for the next three years.

- Mike Bullis commented that CILS are focusing on helping people get out of nursing facilities and back into the community. In Baltimore County alone there are 2,500 people under the age of 65 in nursing facilities. We want to get to those individuals and find out how many can be moved back home so that they can live in a community where they belong. We will be trying to find ways to include those folks in DORS for employment opportunities.

### **Council Sharing**

- Zosia Zaks stated that the Maryland Commission on Autism's work has been done and the report has been given to the Governor. Zosia will send the report to Donna to share with the Council. Josie Thomas reported that she understands that the Secretary of Health has sent the report out and has narrowed the scope of the report.

The meeting concluded at 7:00 p.m. The next full Council meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 11, 2013 at the Workforce & Technology Center, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m., Room T-130.

Respectfully submitted.

Donna Lippa  
MSRC Staff Support

