



State Rehabilitation Council
to the
Bureau of Rehabilitation Services



Minutes
July 18, 2012
CT Hospital Association
Wallingford, CT

Attendance

Present

SRC Members: Jan Hasenjager, Jerry Moran, James Quick, Janette Williams & Victor Xavier

Ex-officio: Amy Porter

BRS Staff: Evelyn Oliver Knight & Warren Stamp

Volunteers: Gladys Brooks

Excused

SRC Members: Sharon Denson, Michele Fontaine, Roberta Hurley, Mary Pierson Keating, Larry Robinson, & John F. Sims

Volunteers: Jennifer Held, Ellen Econs

Absent

SRC Members: Tanisha Minnis & George Narvaez

**Volunteers – Persons interested in the SRC, but not appointed as Members are considered Volunteers. Volunteers may attend meetings and work on committees, but may not vote on any action. When new members are sought for the SRC, Volunteers can be considered for membership.*

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The meeting was called to order about 1:10 PM. Due to Mary's absence, Victor Xavier chaired the meeting. Introductions included new member, Jerry Moran.

Minutes:

As there was no meeting in May, the March minutes had previously been sent for review. The minutes were approved with no changes.

SRC Chairperson Update:

Mary will send an e-mail to members of her topics for discussion. She wants to develop plans to invite the Governor to a SRC meeting. Amy shared that the new chair of the National Governor's Association (NGA), Delaware Governor Jack Markell (D), is promoting the hiring of persons with disabilities as a focus for the NGA. She stated that a meeting would be timely, given this new focus from the NGA and she would support a meeting with the Governor. *[After the meeting, Amy gave this link to info regarding Governor Markell: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/07/15/jack-markell-nga_n_1673611.html?utm_hp_ref=mostpopular.]*

Treasurer Report

In Michele's absence, Evelyn shared the Treasurer's Report. The Out-of-State Travel line item is over budget by \$1,141.02 due to expenses incurred when the Chair attended the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) and the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) national meetings in Bethesda, MD. Those in attendance desired to wait until Michele is present before deciding how to adjust the line items. As the SRC has only spent nearly 30% of its total budget, there is no danger to making this adjustment at the next meeting.

BRS Update: Amy Porter

Amy explained the changes in the law from the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (effective July 2, 2011) to the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) effective July 1, 2012. Amy is now the Commissioner of DORS with some 400 employees implementing several programs that serve people with disabilities. She is also serving as the Acting Director for BRS. This transition may take several changes in the next year and she doesn't want to fill the position of BRS Director until she is sure how things will develop.

- BRS

- Within BRS is the vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, Disability Determination Services (DDS) and the Driver Training Program for Persons with Disabilities (the only program acquired from DMV to BRS) and the counselors located at the former Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired (CDHI).
- BESB
 - The former Board of Education and Services for the Blind is now the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind. It also includes the Workers Compensation Program.
 - Business Services Bureau now includes fiscal, contracts, and interpreting services.
 - There will also be a Human Resources/Affirmative Action unit and a Legal/Legislative unit that report to Amy.

The vocational rehabilitation programs and services will continue; the new parent agency is DORS. New staff will be hired in human resources, payroll, and fiscal. The Departments of Social Services and Administrative Services (DSS and DAS, respectively) will continue to provide support to DORS until June 30, 2012, as needed.

This reorganization splits the staff of CDHI so that counselors are in BRS with VR counselors and the interpreting services are now in the Business Services Bureau. While the name CDHI no longer exists, the program and services are being supported to continue to serve persons who are deaf or hearing impaired with the resources currently available.

Amy shared that establishing a new agency is difficult and time-consuming, but DORS is moving in the right direction. Current changes will remain in effect for at least a year. At some point, Amy will consider whether or not to combine the VR program in BRS with the VR program in BESB. She will also consider whether or not to combine the two SRCs of VR and BESB as well. Ultimately, she wants to respond to employers staffing needs with the best candidate without focusing on whether the candidate comes from BRS or BESB. Amy's goal is that all programs and services will continue to provide quality at the same level. A preliminary organizational chart of the new DORS structure was included in the SRC packets.

SRC Update: Evelyn Oliver Knight

- Evelyn thanked the SRC members who participated in the BRS Public Meetings and for the SRC's review of and contributions to the BRS State Plan.

- The 2013 State Plan has been approved by the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and is awaiting approval from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), usually done by September 30.
- Evelyn thanked the SRC members for reviewing drafts of surveys being conducted by UCONN Health Center for the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). Consumers whose cases were closed within the last six months without achieving an employment outcome will be surveyed in September for their feedback regarding the VR process and any problems they may have encountered. Key informants who are connected to our consumer populations will also be surveyed regarding their knowledge of the VR program and any barriers to services that may exist. BRS counselors who work directly with consumers will be surveyed in October to assess how well the VR program provides services and works with partners in the VR process. The draft of the CSNA is due January 2013; the final report is due March 2013. The CSNA Summary will be included as an attachment in the 2014 State Plan due July 1, 2013.
- The BRS Annual Meeting (an opportunity for all BRS staff to come together to share achievements, network, and receive updates/directives from Amy) is scheduled Tuesday, October 16, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM at the Crowne Plaza in Cromwell. This is the first year the SRC has been invited to attend. So far, five SRC members have accepted the invitation. In addition to the updates and staff presentations, motivational speaker Lois McElravy (www.LoisMcElravy.com) will help to reenergize staff. This is a great opportunity for SRC members to learn more about BRS and for BRS staff to see who members of the SRC are. You may bring your lunch or buy lunch from the hotel or restaurants in the area. If you have not yet confirmed your attendance, please contact Evelyn ASAP.
- Ms. McElravy serves on the Governor's Advisory Council for Vocational Rehabilitation in Montana and is interested in meeting with SRC members Monday, October 15, if anyone is interested. (Time to be determined.) Please let Evelyn know if you are interested in meeting with Ms. McElravy on Monday.
- The SRC Strategic Plan needs to be updated. Evelyn provided a copy of the last plan, written for FY 2011-2012. She also provided a copy of the 2013 State Plan attachment 4.11(d) – Strategies to Achieve the Goals and Priorities (how BRS plans to achieve the goals and priorities for the coming federal fiscal year (October 1, 2012 – September 30, 2013)). The SRC needs to review the last strategic plan,

assess what was accomplished, and match upcoming needs to the BRS goals and priorities. Under Mary's leadership, the SRC needs to pick a date to work solely on the strategic plan.

- Evelyn provided a redacted copy of an Administrative Hearing Decision for the SRC to review. **Decision: As BRS had not rejected the Appellant's request for assistance, BRS had not broken the law. The Parties were directed to continue meeting to develop more info about the Appellant's desired career and to assess the Appellant's assets and needs. This consumer has appealed the hearing decision with the DORS Commissioner.** As decisions are shared, SRC members are asked to look for recurring themes that may indicate issues in the VR process for which the SRC may suggest recommendations.
- BRS has opened a local office in Ansonia which will primarily serve consumers in Ansonia, Bethany, Derby, Seymour, and Shelton. The office is located at 158 Main Street, Suite 101 (parking and entrance in the rear), Ansonia, 06401. The phone number is 203-732-1667. Office hours are 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM Monday through Friday.
- The amount for mileage reimbursement has changed. Please use the new form effective May 15, 2012 to submit mileage.

Business Partnership Committee – Roberta Hurley

Jim reported that work had begun to explore the best ways to help consumers who need emergency services for their durable medical equipment.

Consumer Satisfaction Committee- Jim Quick

SRC members participated in the State Plan process and reviewed drafts for the CSNA. This committee is up-to-date on its activities. Recommendations for the State Plan were based on the work done under the leadership of this committee's assessment of the local offices: parking, signage, ease of access, and information shared with consumers applying for services. Jerry Moran congratulated the committee on the thoroughness of the survey they conducted. Jim shared that the State Independent Living Council (SILC) had begun some discussions with Donald DeFronzo, DAS Commissioner, regarding state agencies meeting the needs of consumers with disabilities. He'd be willing to work with Amy regarding new space needs for DORS. Amy indicated space needs take about three years to achieve.

Intercouncil Nomination – Victor Xavier

Victor welcomed Jerry Moran as a new member. Evelyn shared that the Department of Education had hired the person who would replace Sara Harvey on the SRC. Thomas Boudreau has been asked to complete the SRC application and to send a copy of his resume. He will still have to apply through the Governor's appointment process. He has been invited to attend, but his schedule is full until the November meeting. Pastor Janette Williams and John Sims have completed their second (final) terms of office. They are being asked to attend the September meeting as their last meeting.

Legislation Policy and Planning

Evelyn reported that draft posters recruiting new SRC members and delineating the rights and responsibilities of consumers had been shared, but the committee chair, George Narvaez, had not responded to attempts to contact him. As previous committee members are no longer on board, the committee needs to be revived. Evelyn will continue to reach out to George. All members are encouraged to seek potential new members. Evelyn will send recruitment materials.

Announcement

Congratulations to Pastor Williams as she obtained her BA in Human Services from Post University!!!!

Meeting adjourned about 2:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted: *Evelyn Oliver Knight*

The next SRC Meeting is September 19, 2012 at the Office of Protection and Advocacy (P&A), 60 B Weston Street, Hartford.