

**CAC MINUTES**  
**Friday, July 10, 2020**  
**10:00 a.m. Conference Call**

Welcome & Introductions: Bob Mecca, LIFT opened the meeting. Also, in attendance were Chris Palmer, OVR; Carma Horner, Pitt Bradford; and Kelly King, PEAL Center. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Skype meeting was held.

Review of Minutes: No questions or changes.

**OVR Updates**

**Chris Palmer, OVR** informed that all DuBois OVR staff are still available to serve customers and employers during ongoing telework. All field staff have laptops and cell phones with access to the internet and ability to communicate with everyone on their caseloads and referral sources. Our physical building is still closed to the public. Each district office facility, staff compliment and building look different. OVR is still taking referrals on a regular basis. The program year just wrapped up. The Department of Labor & Industry website, Disability Services, includes recent updates from Executive Director Shannon Austin. OA website has a lot of information on return to work and COVID mitigation as do the Department of Health and Governor's websites. OVR, for the time being, is continuing to telework and our services are still available.

The job retention exception to OOS was added to the state plan for 2020 and went into effect 7/1/20. Chris Palmer reviewed messaging from Ralph Roach. This exception is a valuable tool for a person in true job jeopardy and going to lose their job if they don't receive this particular service at this particular time.

Bob Mecca asked if the restrictions are going to get more stringent for an individual if they are already working. Chris explained that all the normal criteria are still in place. This just comes down to someone who is in imminent danger of job loss not having to go on the wait list before writing their plan. All criteria for eligibility are still the same -- they still must be found eligible, but it is on OVR to expedite application and eligibility to help them retain that job. We are also looking at our current open cases on wait list that are employed to see if any meet the criteria. More names came off the OOS wait list in May. Everyone who came off in February has been moved along. The next release of names is due soon.

Chris discussed that OVR is looking closely at period of performance to ensure services are authorized properly and providers have an invoice in their hands before services start.

**Agency Updates**

**Bob Mecca of LIFT** stated that LIFT is doing the same thing as OVR. Staff are coming in on different days of the week – all are coming in at different intervals, so they are not in the office together. Precautions are in place such as sanitizing, not sharing equipment and taking temperatures. Bob is in the office a half day on Thursdays each week, and the office is closed to outside appointments. The board has decided with masking and social distancing measures in place, they are going to continue working remotely at this time. The last quarter of the year since they have been contacting consumers by phone and zoom, stats have gone up which is great given the rural nature of the service area. They have adapted quite well. PA Council of Independent

Living and Elk county Foundation grants provided them the means to get equipment that they needed to work remotely.

Bob shared that he was recently asked to sit in on a call with Senator Casey. They asked him if he would be on a 3-person panel to speak with the senator. It will be an informal conversation with him to see how Covid has affected Bob as a person with a disability as well as LIFT's consumers. Bob stated that if anyone on the CAC call had something they wanted him to share, he will be glad to do so. He will only have a few minutes to talk but if anyone is aware of issues people with disabilities are having due to Covid, email Bob and he can share it with Senator Casey.

Chris Palmer noted that she feels contact with people will increase since staff are not spending time traveling. Good to see that is happening at LIFT. Chris is concerned about the loss of personal contact. Bob noted that a lot of their consumers ask when they will be able to do home visits again.

**Carma Horner of UPB** stated that they are preparing to reopen. The university as a whole has requirements. They will be using plexiglass, reducing classroom size, and faculty can choose to come back to campus or not. UPB is using a hotel in the area for housing shortages. They are hoping by spring semester to bring everyone back to university housing.

UPB now has an electronic media policy/plan – they have a 4 year compliance that everything needs to be accessible.

Carma spoke to Bob Mecca regarding his upcoming conversation with Senator Casey asking that he discuss higher ed students' isolation, technology needs, and connectivity issues with spotty service. She stated that a lot of students are making decisions to not return to campus because they are higher risk.

Carma indicates that the University is responding well to the pandemic and is sending hot spots and lap tops/tablets out for tech needs. There are so many parts and things are changing rapidly – everything is as of today.

Chris Palmer, OVR, asked if Carma has a copy of the new policy she can share. Carma stated that she will send it to Chris and Aimee to share. She feels the policy is great progress. She must submit an initial plan by July 20<sup>th</sup>. Chris noted to Carma that ODHHS and BBVS are available if Carma needs them to help with staff. Chris can send the information to Carma. Carma stated that she appreciates the information and being able to reach out to them. Carma also noted that Bob Mecca has been very helpful with campus issues which she really appreciates.

Bob Mecca stated that just this week, he got a call from a colleague that received a grant to get a bill passed. She wants to do advocacy training to teach people how to advocate. She hopes to work with LIFT and get 8-10 people to attend her workshops via zoom. If Chris or Carma know of individuals with disabilities who have the online capability, please share the information with Bob and he can reach out to see if they are interested. Bob feels this is a great opportunity for people with disabilities. Chris asked that if Bob has anything that covers the general details of it, to let the CAC know. Carma asked about time commitment. Bob believes it is a 9-month total commitment, but he is not sure about length of actual meetings.

**Kelly King, PEAL Center** indicated that she can eblast information out to relevant email groups if members provide her with information. She noted that Disability Pride sessions are also happening through the end of this month. If anyone wants that information, let Kelly know. Chris added that anytime that you have

resources to share, get the information to Chris at [chpalmer@pa.gov](mailto:chpalmer@pa.gov) or Aimee at [aiadamski@pa.gov](mailto:aiadamski@pa.gov) and mark it as CAC and we can share.

Kelly informed that the Transition conference is coming next Wednesday; it will be online this year. Other online conferences include Autism, Low Incidence, and Wellness for families with difficulties with nursing services and housing. Also, there is an early intervention tool kit online for families. No solid info yet on issues due to Covid with schools reopening and how to make things work.

Chris Palmer indicated that OVR has staff participating in transition conference online. An AT event is being planned for November. They are going to try to maybe plan for something virtual. It is just now in early discussions.

Bob Mecca stated that he was interested in the links for transition conference. Kelly King will forward information to Bob. There is no cost to participate.

**Next Meeting:** Our next quarterly CAC meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 9, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. Plan for a virtual meeting at this point. Chris Palmer noted that October is NDEAM and November is AT month.

Provided by Carma Horner of UPB after the meeting:

Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Policy  
<https://www.policy.pitt.edu/sites/default/files/Policies/05-Financial/Policy%20CS%2026%20%28official%29.%20EIT.pdf>

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