

Date: 7/13/2020

OVR, Erie BVRs Citizen Actions Committee

AGENDA

Erie District Office = (267) 332-8737, access code: 88493399)

1. 9:00 – 9:05
 - a. Call to Order
 - b. Roll Call
 - i. CAC Members Present: Passle Helminski; Michael Fiorelli; Andrew Pennington; Jill Hrinda-Patten
 - ii. CAC Members Absent: Chuck Giambrone; Jessica Molczan
 - iii. OVR District Administrator or Designee: Jack Hewitt (DA)
 - c. Guest Recognition:
 - i. Chris Gerhart, EMTA LIFT Manager/Operations Officer
 - ii. Kim Brown, EMTA Medical Assistant Manager
 - d. Approval of previous meeting minutes
2. 9:05 – 10:20 District Administrator's Report
 - a. Erie BVRs Numbers as of Friday, 7/10/2020
 - i. Waiting List (11) = 372
 - ii. Pre-App (-01) = 6
 - iii. Referrals (00) = 127
 - iv. App (02) = 146
 - v. Trial Work Exp. (06) = 55
 - vi. Plan status = 1,686
 - vii. Services interrupted = 21
 - viii. Post-Employment = 3
 - ix. Total for Erie BVRs DO = 2,416 customers.

- b. Andrew asked about Referrals and Job Retention.
 - i. Referrals: Erie BVRS is down 480 total customers since March 2020. Jack explained all District Offices have experienced a drop in referrals but there are several factors. OVR completed a 5S project to address cases with no activity, OVR's new on-line referral process, and OVR's need to re-connect with referral sources. I explained OVR has pulled together various Managers to begin addressing increasing referrals and that he is on this group.
 - ii. Job Retention: Jack explained that this service is available to all eligible customers in NSD; SD, and MSD categories. Jack explained they need to meet the criteria, state their job is at risk, and allow OVR to follow up with the employer to confirm.
- c. Passle asked about customers on the waiting list that needed transportation. She explained that students at Edinboro University (as well as others) are not able to use the LIFT Services at EMTA because due to COVID EMTA had to scale back their hours of operation.
 - i. Jack explained that US Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) that all State VR agencies are to follow regarding Comparable services and benefit (CFR 361.53). There was a long discussion regarding this because Passle informed us about EMTA's bus schedule changes and that is why EMTA was attending our CAC.
 - 1. Jack explained there is a federal program that supports individuals who need independent living support and that is more than just attendant care. Jack explained that there are two tracks. First the individual gets a Supports Coordinator services to help navigate that system. Then if attendant care is needed that is provided outside the Support Coordinator. Mike confirmed and stated the Supports Coordinator develops a plan of services which could include Medical and Non-Medical transportation. Jack went on to explain that OVR is required to follow the CFR and only if the services would be delayed could it be considered. However, Jack also

explained he felt that delay would not account for the student not planning accordingly. Jack also went on to explain the changes occurring in EMTA route schedule would be just like any other student who would take the bus service for an internship. They would need to work around the bus schedule. Passle stated COVID driving the change and not the student. Jack explained that all internships are affected because a lot of employers are not open or letting additional people in. Jack explained that all students will need to talk to the employer about adjustments which do not have anything to do with disabilities. Jack explained the student would need to use LIFT, the CIL, and community options before coming to OVR stating comparable benefits were tried.

2. Andrew asked about schools referring students to OVR with little or no follow up.
 - a. Jack explained how the Erie DO has liaison staff assigned to all 43 school districts as well as an Early Reach Coordinator. Jack explained the process to ensure we know the Pre-ETS services the school wants, what OVR can provide, what is the schools responsibility, and what is left we will purchase. Andrew explained this in not Erie however possibly in other District Offices. Jack stated he would pass this along to Central Office.

d. Teleworking

- i. Andrew asked about the status of Teleworking. Jack explained how the Erie BVRs District Office has been doing the paperless file, using email resources accounts for fax and clerical work, has clerical in the office 1-2 days a week for mailing, and have set up skype phone system to have receptionist and desk phone calls to ring at computers. Jack explained all Clerical computer ring when the switchboard is called so a call will not be missed. Andrew asked about customer interaction. Jack explained that District Offices follow a three step process. We attempt to have virtual meetings and exchange information virtually following all PII (Personal ID Information) security procedures. If that cannot

occur, we have phone meetings, then lastly, we use mail. Jack stated all OVR offices are still Teleworking and a date has not been determined. Jack explained that all offices must take the next steps together.

e. Compliment:

- i. Jack explained he has three vacant positions.
 - 1. CT3 – his secretary
 - 2. Two VRC positions.

f. Workforce / CareerLink:

- i. Jack explained that the Workforce is updating their 3-year MOU. Jack stated with the increase of electronic material he requested that both Northwest and West Central Workforce MOU add language regarding following Section 508 or the Rehab Act of 1973 that address virtual documents and websites be accessible. Jack was pleased to report that both Workforces have added language. Also added was that OVR will provide trainings and review any documents for accessibility.
- ii. Jack updated the group that the Erie CareerLink was moving, and he scheduled Passle, Mike (from CRI), and staff from VFI come for a walkthrough to make accessibility recommendations. This occurred and went well. Another walkthrough will be done when the final drawings are nearing completion.

- g. Period of Performance: Jack asked the CAC for assistance getting the word out to providers and customers as well as feedback. Jack explained that through an audit finding OVR needed to change our purchase order process to ensure that services begin after the purchase order has been created. Jack explained that two things must occur before a service can be provided. 1) the service must be on the plan (IPE) and 2) the purchase order must be created. Jack explained that providers and customers are being told that they cannot provide a service until the purchase order is in their hands and customers getting reimbursed for out of pocket expense cannot make that purchase

until the purchase order is in their hands. For example, reimbursement for clearances. Jack stated this is a violation and affects OVR federal funding. Jack also stated that cancelled services will be clearly explained to providers and documented. Providers will be told that if they provide the service after it has been cancelled, they will not get paid. Jack asked for their help in getting this information out and if they hear anything to please let me know.

3. 10:20-10:21 = Old Business
 - a. None
4. 10:21 - 10:25 = New Business
 - a. Passle discussed Chris and Kim (EMTA) being part of our CAC as a business. Jack stated they are welcome and in turn if they have an advisory group OVR would be happy to be a part of it.
 - b. Passle updated that Jessica may be stepping down as a CAC member. TBD.
 - c. Jack will email Chris and Kim a CAC membership application
5. 10:25 – 10:30 = Other / Member Updates
 - a. Passle updated the group that all OVR CAC will be reached out to and asked if anyone wants to be a part of the PA Rehab Council as they need 6 new members.
6. 10:30
 - a. Adjournment =
 - i. Next meeting Monday, 9/14/2020 from 9-10 a.m.
 1. 267-332-8737 / PIN: 88493399

7. **ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. Jack will email Chris and Kim a CAC membership application.
- b. Jack will send all CAC members the CRF 361.53
- c. Pass along Andrew's concern regarding school referrals to OVR District Offices.