

**CAC MINUTES**  
**Friday, January 14, 2022**  
**10:00 a.m. Conference Call**

Chris Palmer, OVR, opened the meeting by sharing that DuBois OVR has experienced a huge loss – VRC Beth Rogers (our Elk County VRC) passed away over the weekend.

Others in attendance for this virtual meeting included Bob Mecca, Andrew Pennington and Kelly King.

Discussion was held whether to have Andrew Pennington share his CAP presentation at this meeting or wait until next quarter in the hopes more members will be available to attend. Decision was made for Andrew to share the formal presentation at a future meeting.

Kelly King of the PEAL Center asked Andrew what volume of calls CAP is receiving and whether it has changed during Covid. Andrew advised that the volume changed significantly during lockdown. After lockdown ended it started to pick up. September to summer is their main volume of calls; caseloads have been affected as well. He advised that as of today, OSHA mandates are now no longer in play due to the Supreme Court ruling - although still in play for healthcare workers due to Medicare and Medicaid. Otherwise, they are leaving it up to the companies.

Chris Palmer of OVR informed the group that Andrew had presented on CAP to DuBois OVR staff on Wednesday and there was discussion about employers who serve some of our customers that would have fallen under those pending OSHA mandates; we had discussed how it would have affected OVR customers, providers services, etc. Andrew noted that it is a very complex issue and will be really interesting.

Kelly King asked given the unemployment numbers, what are our numbers looking like and the unemployment situation where people aren't doing jobs, how has that impacted us? Bob Mecca of LIFT stated that their numbers really haven't dipped like they thought they would. LIFT's year statistics are close to pre-covid. Chris noted that with OVR there has been many variables. Order of Selection being open has been great, the beginning of the school year brings a lot of student referrals, the types of opportunities available have changed. Working from home has been more of an option for people. However, a lot of businesses have closed. It really is a time for counselors to be as creative and thorough with our customers to find something that fits. Even something like changing a major at school, they need to go back to C/G and make sure that it is compatible for the individual. Andrew Pennington added that with CAP, if there is an amendment to an IPE, the customer thinks it is going to be immediate and CAP has to explain that it has to be examined from the customer's choice, but it also has to be compatible. And sometimes it is not correct for the individual. They must understand that it's not just as easy as following through. It will take a while and take some investigation and research whether it is the appropriate path to take.

Kelly King asked Andrew whether CAP supports Early Reach. Andrew noted that if an individual is receiving Pre-ETS they can serve them. If they are not involved with OVR, they would not be working with Early Reach. The guidance comes from the Rehab Act. Chris Palmer added that Early Reach is a part of OVR and is unique to Pennsylvania. Every Early Reach staff is OVR staff, so they could potentially need CAP. Andrew added that in that case, CAP could assist. CAP could get involved, but it is on the basis of what the customer needs. It requires the individual to reach out to CAP. They can help if the person has an issue with the ERC.

Andrew added that what OVR can do to get people into employment is incredible in his eyes - what counselors are tasked to do with taking the wants of the customer in mind. PA does a great job with serving individuals, and it is too bad that more people don't know it is available. Kelly noted that OVR is a rich program designed to move people into employment, and it is a shame if people don't know it is available. She asked what we are missing in educating families and individuals about this valuable service. Bob Mecca stated that LIFT always makes referrals to OVR when they can – when folks are ready for employment. LIFT gets over 1,000 referrals a year in any area of IL, and some are employment related; they do their best to make the referral to appropriate agencies like OVR. Kelly King added that The PEAL Center refers to other agencies as well, and that we all need to work together. Andrew stated that we do all need to work together to provide referrals for whatever goal they are trying to work. We need to work as a team because these groups all provide great services – in addition to OVR, there is ODP and DHS as well. He feels it is incredible to be able to help people navigate, and we all have an important job to help in that. He has been with CAP for three years and is familiar with providers, but not every single service that each provider does. He is very familiar with OVR, but not all the others.

Kelly King stated that it would be great to have a tip sheet for individuals and families. Who to contact when they need a particular type of service. Chris Palmer noted that is why these conversations are so valuable, and that kind of information is part of our new counselor training.

Bob Mecca informed the group that LIFT is having their annual youth conference on 5/3/22 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. virtually. Ryan Gill of IU10 and Brett Lasko of IU9 are involved as well. It will cover all six of LIFT's counties. Missy Franklin of OVR is participating on the committee to put things together. Andrew Pennington added that he would love for CAP to get involved on the day of the conference. Bob advised that they could fit him in for a 5-10 minute time slot. Andrew stated that would be great to just let people know what CAP does and when it is appropriate for them to reach out to CAP.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Andrew wanted all to know that he found today to be a really good meeting and discussion.

### Next Meeting

Next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 8, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. with a virtual format. Invitation will be sent to CAC members. Andrew Pennington is scheduled to give a presentation on CAP.