

CAC MINUTES
Friday, April 14, 2023
10:00 a.m. Dickinson Center, Inc. Ridgway

In Attendance: Bob Mecca, LIFT; Adam Bell, PA Link; Andrew Pennington, CAP; Chris Palmer, OVR; Diana Kreydt, PSU DuBois; Christina Delaney, PSU DuBois Student; Marsha Dippold, Dickinson Center Inc; Jim Prosper, Dickinson Center Inc; Bryan Linton, Dickinson Center Inc; Jim Whitonis, OVR Central Office.

Welcome & Introductions: Bob Mecca opened the meeting. There were no questions or changes to January 2023 meeting notes.

OVR Updates

Chris P. shared that the DuBois DO recently had two new staff come onboard. Nicole Gump, VRC, will be serving Elk and Cameron adult populations soon, and Sue Moore, CA2 is our new receptionist. We are still in the process of hiring a new LOFA.

Rapid Engagement Initiative continues – providing timely services, getting and keeping people engaged.

Lean initiative has begun. This process makes sure open cases stay engaged.

All staff at OVR are participating in monthly 3 hour in-service training sessions to make sure everyone has accurate and current information.

On May 9th, the DuBois DO is having an all staff meeting. Brant's Driving will be presenting. Also, Workforce Development Board staff are coming to training and demonstrate virtual reality devices where people can experience various jobs/tasks.

Ongoing outreach efforts are happening. DuBois DO just visited Penn State DuBois. IUP Punxsutawney was done recently as well. If anyone knows of anywhere we should be going, please reach out and let Chris Palmer know.

Jim Whitonis, OVR, shared that Reading DO has been looking at getting more customers into their CAC meetings. They are going to start announcing the upcoming meetings through Connie Moonen on OVR's Facebook page. If the DuBois DO CAC has any interest in doing this as well, Chris can reach out to Connie and discuss. Jim advised that the Reading DO CAC Chairperson, Angel Torres, would like to have a chairperson meeting. Since Covid, only about 6 CACs have an active chair – a lot of CACs are struggling, and they are looking for ways to strengthen the committees. Reading is going to post their agenda a head of time on the Rehab Council's website. Harrisburg CAC is interested in doing these things as well. Jim stated that DuBois CAC is doing well but is welcome to post their agenda on the Rehab Council website ahead of time. It does take a couple of weeks so he would need the information 2-3 weeks in advance. Chris Palmer indicated that our location and topic does change, but the agenda is pretty standard. Jim suggested a contact person's name be added to the agenda for individuals to reach out to for the zoom address. Andrew Pennington asked Jim if he could get someone to notify him of upcoming meetings for the Harrisburg CAC. He has requested being put on their email list previously but has not gotten any information yet.

Member Updates

PSU DuBois: Diana Kreydt stated that graduation is May 5th. The semester is winding up and everything is going well.

LIFT: Bob Mecca updated that LIFT's annual youth conference will be held on May 3rd. He noted that Diana Kreydt of PSU is one of the presenters. The conference will be held virtually. 100 kids have signed up so far, and they are anticipating more due to the virtual platform.

May 9th is their Wine Walk in St. Marys. They are anticipating another successful event.

July 25th is the annual expo. This year it will be held at Elk County Catholic in St. Marys. If anyone wants to be a vendor, reach out to Cindy at LIFT. Last year they had over 40 vendors and this year they are expecting around 60. Bob will provide a flyer to go out with CAC minutes.

PA Link: Adam Bell informed that the Link is in partnership with Cameron/Elk Veteran's Suicide Task Force for an event at the library in St. Marys on April 22nd.

CAP: Andrew Pennington stated having no new updates at this time. He did ask Chris if OVR is providing numbers and goals. Chris advised that she just looked at stats earlier this week. OVR DuBois has 887 open cases; our numbers have been growing. The DO is at about 60% of our successful closure goal for the year. With vacancies filled, she is looking for that percentage to go up. With the hiring of Nicole Gump, caseload OT will be wrapping up and done soon. Andrew stated being glad to hear that – a lot of other DOs are having trouble filling positions and are doing a lot of caseload OT.

Guest Speaker

Dickinson Center: Executive Director Jim Prosper presented to the CAC. He went over a brief history of Dickinson which was established in 1958. Dickinson provides mental health, prevention and IDD services. They joined Journey Health Systems. Dickinson has over 200 staff while Journey Health Systems employs over 1,000 individuals. Dickinson is in 8 counties – Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Forrest, Jefferson, McKean, Potter and Warren.

Dickinson has three main areas of services to include Children's Prevention, Behavioral Health, and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

Children's Prevention programs include:

- The Life/Incredible Years Program for elementary age students.
- Parents as Teachers covers parent education and family support programming (a Blue Ribbon affiliate).
- The Signs of Suicide teaches middle school and high school students the warning signs and symptoms of depression and suicide.
- The Triple P Program is positive parenting for parents of kids from birth to 12th grade.
- The Student Assistance Program covers prevention services for students experiencing any type of difficulty, concern and behavior that is interfering with school success.

Behavioral Health Services include:

- Crossroads which is a day treatment for adolescents struggling with symptoms associated with a mental health diagnosis.
- Outpatient Behavioral Health Counseling.

There are many other additional behavioral health services and intellectual and developmental disability services.

Dickinson is in the process of securing funding for a new building in St. Marys. The building will be 2 stories and approximately 12,000 square feet. Projected cost is \$8.4 million. They are currently conducting a capital campaign with a goal of at least \$1 million. Dickinson is hoping to break ground in the spring of 2024 and complete the project by the end of 2024 or early 2025.

Dickinson has received grants to provide some security upgrades to their IDD residential group homes and also got a grant to support a recruitment and retention position to help with hiring and maintaining staff. They have received recertification as a trauma informed care center. Marsha Dippold received her benefits counseling certification, and Employment Support continues to expand the pre-ETS program.

Because we are so rural, Dickinson has close to 30 programs to meet the area's needs. Chris Palmer stated that everything that OVR has asked for, they have stepped up and done. Marsha Dippold added that being a one-stop-shop allows them to coordinate services well; but with conflict of interest, it prevents them from employing their own individuals. They are one of the largest employers in the area and it just makes it difficult because it takes them out of it. Chris indicated that conflict of interest does impact in a lot of ways and is an issue for multiple providers. She added that we can use other providers for individuals who would want to work at Dickinson. It comes down to the VRC and the customer deciding whether they want Dickinson as an employer or as a provider.

Jim Prosper shared Dickinson's 2022 NDEAM video. Marsha noted that in the past for NDEAM, they held an event to highlight individuals they had placed; this was very impactful to those family and community members in attendance. After Covid, they had to change what they were doing for NDEAM. Their individuals are mainly essential employees working in the community throughout the pandemic and they wanted to highlight their hard work for NDEAM. They also highlight Inclusive Employers on their Facebook page every week or two to show appreciation for what these employers are doing.

Marsha was pleased to share that they have some new staff coming on board. One in Potter County has her ACRE. An individual will be starting in Ridgway within a week or two and they are interviewing others. They hope to be fully staffed in a month or two and they look forward to expanding even further.

Dickinson's latest brochure was passed out to the in-person attendees. A copy will be attached to the minutes along with a link to their 2022 NDEAM video.

Next Meeting

Next meeting will be held Friday, July 14, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. in Bradford. Possible locations and speakers were discussed. Chris will reach out to Beacon Light and/or McKean County Career Link. Meeting details will be provided in the near future.