



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

55 Utley Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011

Voice: (717) 975-2004 or (888) 250-5175 TTY: (717) 737-0158 Fax: (888) 524-9282

Email: parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org Website: parehabilitationcouncil.org

OVR Policy & State Plan / Customer Satisfaction Committee Minutes for May 23, from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Lynn Heitz (P)
Susan Tomasic (P)
Twana Jones (P)

Julia Barol (P)
Jessica Keogh (NP)
Sylenthia Dent (NP)

Michelle Paonessa (NP)
Paul Fogle (P)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present: James Whitonis, Chris Harbert, Audrey O'Connor, Cheryl Novak

Project Staff Present: Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Lynn Heitz called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

MOTION was made by Ms. Julia Barol to approve today's agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Twana Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

OVR Updates

- Mr. Chris Harbert reported that he continues to hold discussion with Mr. Ryan Hyde regarding Customer Satisfaction Surveys. They are looking for more feasible ways to complete surveys, there are different considerations being explored for the survey process including an OVR owned process, distribution vendor to avoid delivery problems, updated technology and accessibility considerations are still being

researched, and they are able to receive recommendations from the Council at this time.

- Ms. Lynn Heitz stated that she feels OVR completing the survey process is a conflict of interest to some degree. As previously discussed, the Council is looking at receiving surveys from customers with closed cases and not all of what the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) reported doing for their survey collection. Stated that limiting the survey responses to technology would be a bad thing to do as there needs to be multiple ways for a customer to complete their surveys including phone interviews and emails. MRC makes 7 attempts to contact their customers. Ms. Heitz stated that it would be important for OVR to make at least 3 documented attempts to contact customers using 3 different modes of communication to get a response.
- Members explained that OVR conducting the survey process may be a conflict of interest due to their providing the services and customers potentially feeling the need to watch what they are saying and customers having a potential fear of being denied services if they feel they may need to reapply for services, all of which may result in OVR not receiving valid feedback. The Council has established an Ad Hoc Committee to provide further discussion and recommendations regarding the survey process.
- Ms. Audrey O'Connor reported that the OVR Audiological Services policy will be reviewed in June by the State Board of VR.
- Mr. James Whitonis reported that the VR portion of the State Plan has been approved by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) after receiving feedback to revise 6 descriptions including Description (a) State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) in which RSA required OVR to clearly state if they accepted or rejected the SRC recommendations. OVR added a sentence to each of their responses to clearly state if OVR accepted or rejected each recommendation. Nearly all were accepted, one recommendation was listed as accepted with amendments which were listed in detail. One recommendation was considered rejected which was, OVR will provide separate lists of employers for each Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (BVRS) and Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) because they don't have the ability to do that. Once available a final accessible version of the State Plan will be provided to the PaRC and posted online for the public to access.
- Ms. Heitz explained that she has concerns with the recommendation that was rejected under Description (a) and inquired why BBVS and BVRS cannot provide separate lists of employers. Mr. Whitonis explained that the issue was that they can provide one list of employers but do not have the ability to provide separate lists but will check to see if he can get clarification on that.
- Ms. Heitz explained that she feels there should be separate lists to show funding as there is legislation requiring a certain amount of funds be spent on BBVS customers. Mr. Whitonis explained there is a second response that OVR will provide a fiscal report regarding expenditures of services for BVRS and BBVS.
- Ms. Heitz explained that there is no reason counselors of BBVS can't provide a list of employers to their District Administrators on a quarterly basis to be reviewed by the BBVS Director to identify employers. Mr. Whitonis will follow up with Mr. Ryan Hyde to inquire if something could be done regarding this issue.

Annual Review of Committee Goals for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

- Members reviewed their current goals. Members recommended that Goal #2 Support the development of the Plan, be struck for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 as this will not need to be revisited for 2 years when the 2-year modification is reviewed by OVR and PaRC.
- Members recommended that Goal #4 Partner with OVR to review, evaluate and make recommendations based on results on the combined Customer Satisfaction Survey, be reworded to reflect FY 2024-2025 efforts. Members agreed to reword Goal #4 as Work with OVR and the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) Ad Hoc Committee to significantly increase information received from the CSS.
Steps to achieve the goal:
 - 1.) Propose methods to increase response rates from customers.
 - 2.) In partnership with OVR implement procedures for the creation of a new CSS mechanism.
- Members requested the other objectives for Goal #4 be removed and inquired about the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) report. Mr. Whitonis reported the CSNA year 1 summary will be provided prior to the next Policy Committee meeting and shared with the PaRC. An interim report for the CSNA is provided at the end of year 1 and year 2. At the end of year 3 a draft review and a finalized report are provided. Members requested holding discussion and review of the CSNA interim report for either the June or July Committee meeting depending upon the timing of its being received.

MOTION was made by Ms. Julia Barol to submit the Committee goals for FY 2024-2025 to the Executive Committee. Ms. Twana Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Committee Chair / Vice Chair for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

- Ms. Tomasic nominated Ms. Heitz to serve as Committee Chair for FY 2024-2025. Ms. Heitz accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations.

MOTION was made by Ms. Tomasic to accept Ms. Heitz as Policy Committee Chair for FY 2024-2025. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor.

- Ms. Heitz nominated Ms. Barol for Committee Vice Chair. Ms. Barol accepted the nomination. There were no other nominations.

MOTION was made by Ms. Tomasic to accept Ms. Barol as Policy Committee Vice Chair for FY 2024-2025. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Schedule next meeting

- Members requested that staff poll for the next Committee meeting for June 26, 2024, from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Tomasic to adjourn. Ms. Barol seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.