



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

Legislative & Public Awareness Committee Minutes for September 13, 2024, from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Passle Helminski (P)

Lynn Heitz (P)

Christie Cyktor (P)

Sylenthia Dent (NP)

Joan Goodman (P)

Jessica Keogh (NP)

Michele Leahy (NP)

Michelle Mitchell (P)

William Paz De Melo (P)

Ex-officio Member Present: Julia Barol, Association for People Supporting Employment First

PaRC Staff Present: Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Passle Helminski called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM once quorum was established.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Members discussed additions to the agenda including adding Service Dog law language to the Federal Position Paper and the provision of reports during Full Council meetings.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

MOTION was made by Ms. Lynn Heitz to approve the agenda with additions and past meeting minutes. Ms. Joan Goodman seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Preparation for October Meetings with Legislators

Reminders / Background for New Members, Legislative Offices, Talking Points, Pre-meeting Materials

- Members reviewed the reminders / background for meetings with Legislators and / or their staff. Members shared the importance of sharing personal stories regarding the PaRC mission, OVR mission and employment of people with disabilities. Members explained that they were available for additional dates/times

requested by Legislators due to scheduling conflicts. Members requested polling for meetings with Federal Legislators in late-February 2025 when Congress is not in session. Members requested extending an invitation to a State Board of VR member for the scheduled meetings with Legislators in October.

- Members suggested that talking points for the meetings with Legislators include the Direct Care Workers Crisis, access to transportation, Schedule A at the State level, Employment First Oversight Commission (EFOC) recommendations, OVR flat funding, and Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)/inclusion that covers the topic of 14c Certificates. Members agreed the first talking point should be OVR flat funding followed by legislation targeted at ending state contracts that implement 14c Certificates.

Preparation for PaRC Meeting with Representative Dawkins and PA Department of Labor and Industry

- Members reviewed preparation for the meeting which included the explanation that after a follow up Legislative meeting with Johnathan Detrick, Senior Legislative Assistant for State Representative Jason Dawkins, Labor and Industry Chair, Democrat, serving Philadelphia County (Part), members requested a meeting with the Representative and PA Department of Labor and Industry to provide further education and information regarding potential hearings on the barriers to employment, access to transportation and the Direct Care Worker Crisis. Full Council was provided invitation to the meeting and staff from Representative Dawkins office has forwarded the invitation to PA Department of Labor and Industry staff.

Review of condensed version of PaRC Position Papers

- Members did not have any changes or additions to the condensed versions of the PaRC Position Papers. The summarized papers do not require Full Council approval as the content has been previously approved.

Discussion for in-person meetings with Legislators

- Ms. Passle Helminski suggested having in-person meetings with Legislators once a year or every other year as meeting face to face provides more of a connection with Legislators. Ms. Joan Goodman agreed and shared her positive experiences meeting with her local Legislators during in-person events held in her location. Ms. Julia Barol explained that she feels it is more effective to meet virtually due to being able to meet with more Legislators in a short amount of time. Ms. Helminski recommended holding in-person meetings with Legislators on a day prior to an in-person Full Council meeting annually or bi-annually. Mr. William Paz De Melo explained that in-person meetings would most likely not be scheduled for one to two years from now and suggested tabling the conversation until closer to the time in-person meetings would be considered. Ms. Lynn Heitz explained that there are 19 Federal Legislators from the Commonwealth, that it would be important to

meet with them in-person, and potentially meeting with a group from the state every other year. Ms. Helminski encouraged members to see their local Representatives in-person locally.

MOTION was made by Ms. Joan Goodman to table the discussion of in-person meetings with Legislators. Ms. Lynn Heitz seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Schedule next meetings

- Members requested staff poll for a Committee meeting to be held on October 17th or 24th from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Adjourn

MOTION to adjourn was made by Ms. Goodman. Ms. Heitz seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.