

CAC MEETING – May 3, 2024

The CAC meeting for the Pittsburgh BBVS office was held on Friday, May 3, 2024 beginning at 10:00 AM. Some attendees were virtual and some in person at the BBVS office, 531 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

In Attendance:

Tom Burgunder (GTCB President and CAC co-Chair); Danielle Dawgiello (District Administrator, Pittsburgh BBVS Office); Jeffrey Durmis (Assistant District Administrator, Pittsburgh BBVS); Emily Gindlesperger (NFBP Vice President); Carla Hayes (WCCB President); Chris Hunsinger (Secretary and Immediate Past President PCB); Tim Knight (PaTTAN rep); Greg Lazzur (PaTTAN rep); Harold Longmore (VR Supervisor, Pittsburgh BBVS office); Andrew Pennington (CAP representative); Barb Peterson with Dora Petrosyan (BVRSP staff); Sherri Rodgers (CAC co-Chair); Michael Zaken.

Approval of February 2, 2024 Meeting Minutes:

Michael motioned and Sherri seconded that the Minutes be approved, and that motion carried.

Staff Updates:

The BBVS Pgh office will be fully staffed on May 13, as a new, final CA2 is added on that date. No additional hiring is expected.

Statistics Update:

VR have 356 cases, ILOB has 279. In Specialized Services there are cases for Children 52, and Adult cases 23. O&M cases 109, VRT cases 143.

Closures:

VR: The current number is 37 for this year - 57 is the goal. The Social Worker goal has been met - they have 137 closures. VRT has 148 closures which means that they have met the goal. O&M has not yet met the goal but has 72 closures. I didn't write down the goals for these three items for the fiscal year which ends on June 30, 2024.

Pre-ETS Programming Updates:

ARC of Butler working on MY Work, 4 students at Cranberry Municipal Building this summer.

ARC came to a program at the BBVS office in October 2023 to better familiarize providers of services with considerations for working with clients with vision loss.

There will be a My Work student using Educational Partnership, working at City Connections in Pittsburgh this summer.

Would like to work out something with BVRSP next summer.

Summer camps:

Some students will be going to Carroll Center. BVRSP is working with students as a provider for students.

Envision camp at Penn State Barron, Also Keystone PAB has summer programs, Envision has programs for students from age 7 to 18. The activities of these programs include Recreation, O&M, daily living activities.

Carroll Center has two summer programs. Summer Kids is for students ages 7 to 14. The older students ages 14 to 21 is a different program with other expectations.

No Summer Academy people this year from Pittsburgh. No Helen Keller students this year.

Tom asked about Lamp and Summer Reading, and Danielle said that staff is aware of the program and encourage students to take advantage. Danielle said that NFB is doing Summer Braille.

BVRSP Programming – Updates on Staff and Programs:

Dora gave first part of the report:

Art is full time in Assistive Technology, Bruce used to just do tablets and phones, but will be doing ZoomText once Tracy Morsek gets his training done at the beginning of June.

The agency Still has the Personal Adjustment to Blindness program, a 2-week program. If participants choose to be residential, they stay at Cambria Suites, with breakfast and dinner at hotel and lunch at the BVRSP facility. They have a community-based program at home where staff comes to the individual.

They also offer Rehab at the Low Vision Clinic, with Dr. Fazio and an Occupational Therapist.

Chris asked the question of how Occupational Therapy (OT) could give a person adequate skills since there are so few OTs who have those blindness Rehab skills. We were told that the OT got training in Oklahoma and at UPMC to do the low vision or Rehab therapist kind of work. One of the OTs is about ready to take the Low Vision Certification. One OT is able to bill medically because she works in the Low Vision Clinic.

No Summer program for kids this year; hoping for more interest in the future. Doing My Work in Uniontown; hoping for more interest in future years. Also, Greg suggested that BVRSP give PaTTAN info about the ongoing programs for the PaTTAN Newsletter. Barb talked about getting Duquesne Pharmacy to be a part of White Cane Day.

White Cane Day Committee:

The White Cane Committee met on April 30, 2024. Chris and Tom will look at the documents Mike sent the Committee which are the Law and also how to conduct a White Cane program. Spero talked to Michelle Walker, the City ADA Coordinator, about the City of Pittsburgh being a part of the day. The Committee had several suggestions about the location for the event: Steel Plaza, possibly Market Square, City-County Building. As a result of the discussion with Michelle Walker, Rush Blady will be at a City program for

White Cane emersion for employees. The next White Cane meeting is June 11, 2024.

Tom asked that we get in touch with UPMC to see what they might want to do, and Danielle will give him the contact information. Harold mentioned T-shirts - Would we give them away or wear them?

Tim mentioned using South Stadium or Couples Field, which might be its real name. That might work for some other kind of event, but the Committee felt that it is most important to reach the general public where they actually are walking and driving on the streets.

May 2024 Outreach Events for BBVS Pgh:

From the BBVS Pgh from survey results, there will be three events in May 2024: Westmoreland, Allegheny, and Butler Counties.

Westmoreland County - May 9; Allegheny County, Pittsburgh (BBVS Office) - May 16; and Butler County - two events on May 22. There are 61 RSVP: 24 in Westmoreland, 24 in Butler and 13 in Allegheny. Will have a separate event for students in Westmoreland in the future. Several vendors, and the BBVS office is bringing O&M as well as other tech vendors to the events.

These Minutes don't list all of the vendors because the CAC was furnished with the flyers for each event. GTCB will have Tom, Sherri and Susan at the May 16 event. Butler will have two programs: Students and ILOB. HGAC center for Assistance and Rehab Tech. BBVS Pgh office personnel will be at all events. This is the start of a program which currently has just these events for all nine counties in the service area. It is hoped that in the future each of the nine counties will get its own Outreach events.

Tom suggested Access and PRT for traveling to and from the Allegheny County event. Tim sent the contact information for the newly hired accessibility person for PRT, and Tom is sending the BBVS office information for an Access contact.

October 2024 NDEAM:

NDEAM (National Disability Employment Awareness Month) plans on this employment issue not yet firmed up. The office is no longer required to have a combined event with the upstairs BVRS office.

Bring your child to work day - April 25, 2024:

Summary of Outcome:

BVRS and BBVS combined their programs for this day. 18 kids from ages 6 to 14. Theme of what do your parents do at OVR or BBVS? The kids did a Jeopardy game, did some O&M, sign language and hand dexterity. Then they went to the Pirate game.

WPSBC – Outcome of Meeting:

Had a meeting on 2/07/2024. What kinds of assessments by BBVS can be done or would be helpful. Competitive Integrated employment. Can partner with ODP or larger employers, customizing the position for a particular person. Not just an accommodation, but going that extra step to create a job that fits the employee's abilities, not just finding a job that is a close match without adaptations.

BSR Update – Spero Pipakis - Training Programs and Employers:

APEX learning management system - one is doing well and ready to take certification test. It was pointed out that this 10-week program is quite rigorous. There were several other clients who were to start the program.

His report pointed out that there are 3 clients in the BOS class at BVRSP. Insight is doing Cisco certified network. No Pittsburgh BBVS customers in that class. There is one client in a program from World Services, learning how to be an Assistive Technology instructor.

There is a client who is doing dollar energy OJT.

Spero expanded his search for possible employment positions. He gets Pittsburgh area State and Federal Job listings daily. He has located a program from the Polus Foundation, which is called "Trades win". This is a 14-week internship programs. Could be media production, writing, project management, leadership skills, soft skills for students. They have one student enrolled. Spero is also reaching out to Senior employment programs.

The office is creating a Hybrid Work Readiness program. It would teach resume writing, learning job interview skills, learning how to present yourself well virtually.

Chris asked question about how to adapt CareerLink materials so that the office wouldn't have to reinvent the lesson plan or other material, but rather only have to adapt it to some degree. Jeff mentioned that they would want to work to make the hybrid programs more accessible for virtual interviews.

The Driver Issue:

Mark from Health Ride is hiring at least one driver in Armstrong County for this office to use. The contracted rate is \$35.00 an hour. The company pays the driver \$13.00 an hour.

Where do the funds for the Drivers come from? Prior to 2010 the drivers were paid by the employee who then sought reimbursement from the agency as travel.

Now it is procurement paying the money for the contracted work. Where does it come from, that is which agency's budget does the money come from to pay the drivers who assist the visually impaired employees when they are on the road?

Mike mentioned that his State Senator Devlin Robinson is the Chair of the Labor and Industry Committee. Tom and Mike suggested that Committee could make inquiries about this contracting method. Andrew asked about whether we could make an inquiry of the Rehab Board about this item. It seems to be fairly controversial all over the state.

ILOB program:

Nothing to report.

Accessibility:

Nothing to report.

Bylaws:

Since we have not been following much of this set of Bylaws, might we want to rewrite them and figure out which Bylaws need to be amended? We decided to create a committee to do that which would report back at the CAC meeting on 8/02/2024. The members of this Committee are Chris Hunsinger, Sherri Rodgers and Emily Gindlesperger.

No New Business

Next CAC Meeting – August 2, 2024

Mike motioned to adjourn and Sherri seconded.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Hunsinger