



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 February 26, 2025, 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Lynn Heitz (P)	Julia Barol (P)	Christie Cyktor (P)
Sylenthia Dent-Siebenlist (P)	Cindy Duch (P)	Twana Jones (NP)
Julianna Rodrigues (P)	Susan Tomasic (P)	William Paz De Melo (NP)

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

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 10:00 AM after quorum was established.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

OVR Updates

Audiological Services Update

2026 State Plan Two-year Modification

- Mr. Russ Goddard shared procedural changes being made to the Audiological Services policy which include clarifications to counselor observations regarding eligibility determination, coding for 15-minute units have been changed to a procession of any amount of time for that code, and changes to the OVR form for medical clearance for hearing aids. Currently medical clearance is required from

either an Ear, Nose, and Throat (ENT) doctor or a Primary Care Physician (PCP). It is easier to receive a determination of whether a medical clearance is needed from an Audiologist than an ENT doctor. There is an average wait of 2 to 3 weeks for an Audiologist appointment and an average wait of 3 to 4 months for an appointment with an ENT doctor or PCP that may or may not be necessary for OVR customers. The proposed change would be for an Audiologist to decide first if a medical clearance would be required and then the procedure would go immediately to planning and purchasing process without needing to go to an ENT doctor or PCP. If the Audiologist determines that a medical clearance is needed the standard procedure will apply and the customer will need to receive clearance from an ENT doctor or PCP for hearing aids.

MOTION was made by Ms. Julia Barol to approve and forward the procedural changes to the OVR Audiological Services policy to the Executive Committee. Ms. Julianna Rodrigues seconded the motion. All were in favor.

- Mr. Jim Whitonis provided an update regarding the State Plan. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) approved the changes to the State Plan on February 20, 2025. Based upon OVR's timeline, the work required to make changes for the 2-year modification for Description A of the State Plan should begin between March and May 2025. OVR Leadership team should begin working on changes made to Description C of the State Plan in March 2025 unless notified otherwise by RSA. The commendation language of Description A includes information about the Order of Selection (OOS) and the Financial Needs Test (FNT) policy which will need to be updated.
- Ms. Heitz requested that Description A be shared with the Committee for review and be discussed during the March or April 2025 Policy Committee meeting.

Continued Discussion of Bender Consulting Project Regarding Customer Satisfaction Surveys Goal and Objectives

- Members reviewed the objectives that no longer align with the revised motion that was made in November 2024 for approval of Bender Consulting project with a budget not to exceed \$4,000 to develop a Statement of Work for OVR Customer Satisfaction Surveys focusing on improving customer engagement and survey accessibility. Members recommended the following updated objectives for the goal of Implementation of OVR Customer Satisfaction Surveys that improve customer engagement and that are accessible to all customers:

Objectives:

1. **Create a Statement of Work (SOW) for Accessibility Requirements:** The vendor shall ensure that all survey formats are accessible to customers. This includes but not limited to:
 - Telephone surveys
 - Braille surveys
 - Digital surveys delivered via email

- Printable forms
 - Any other formats necessary
2. **Multilingual Availability:** The vendor must provide all Customer Satisfaction Surveys in multiple languages, ensuring inclusivity and understanding for customers from diverse linguistic backgrounds.
 3. **Simplified Language in Survey Questions:** All survey questions must be crafted using clear and simple language that is easily understood by all customers.
 4. **Return Format Accessibility:** The vendor must ensure that customers can return surveys in various formats to accommodate individual preferences. These formats include but are not limited to:
 - Electronic submission
 - Telephone (verbal responses)
 - Audio submissions
 - USPS (via traditional mail)
 - Any other accommodations necessary to complete and return surveys
 5. **Counselor Training:** Recommend to OVR leadership to develop training for counselors focusing on:
 - Informing customers at case closure about the upcoming survey
 - Inquiring about customer's preferred format for receiving the survey
 - Emphasizing the importance of both positive and negative feedback on the surveys
- Mr. Chris Harbert provided input regarding the project objectives and agreed it would be consistent practice to provide the survey questions within the statement of work document and include research on how the results can be delivered.
 - Members agreed to include all accommodations needed for customers to complete and return surveys within the project objectives.
 - Ms. Barol inquired if customers are informed of being provided the survey and if they are asked about their preferred method to receive the surveys during their final meeting with OVR at the end of their services. Mr. Ralph Roach, OVR explained that he does not know if counselors routinely, because of closing a case, inform the customer that a survey will follow but they should. OVR will follow up with more information about this practice. Ms. Barol explained that collecting a signature that the survey information has been provided may be beneficial and informing customers about the surveys would help to increase engagement. Attendees agreed that a checklist and training for counselors to include information about a forthcoming survey would be beneficial in receiving responses to surveys.
 - A member shared that they were not informed about the survey when their case was closed, they were confused upon receiving the survey, and they did not know if participation was required. Members explained that providing notification to the customer about a survey and offering support to complete it would be helpful.

- Ms. Audrey O'Connor explained that a CWDS update for the case closure form may take several months to be implemented. It may be best practice to inform OVR leadership of the recommendation to update the case closure form for the VRC being trained to inform the customer that they will be receiving a survey.

MOTION was made by Ms. Christie Cyktor to forward the revised project objectives to the Executive Committee. Ms. Julianna Rodrigues seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Schedule next meeting

- Members agreed to hold the next Committee meeting on March 25, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Sylenthia Dent-Siebenlist to adjourn. Ms. Julia Barol seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.