



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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Legislative & Public Awareness Committee Minutes for September 4, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Christie Cyktor (P)
Passle Helminski (P)

Lynn Heitz (P)
Julianna Rodrigues (P)

Julia Barol (NP)
Michelle Mitchell (P)

PaRC Staff Present: Chris Todd

OVR Staff Present: Chris Harbert

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Christie Cyktor called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM once quorum was established.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Ms. Passle Helminski suggested the addition of a discussion regarding the letter that was previously approved to be sent to the Governor so that the agency is copied as a courtesy when it is sent.

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. Passle Helminski seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

Preparation for October 2025 Meetings with Legislators and / or their Staff

Confirm meeting dates/times

Legislative Offices

Talking Points

Pre-meeting Materials

- Ms. Passle Helminski explained that a letter from the Council that was approved to

be sent to the Governor regarding transportation should also have the state agency mentioned in the letter be copied as a common courtesy.

MOTION was made by Ms. Lynn Heitz to copy the Auditor General in the letter being provided to the Governor regarding transportation and that future letters that go to the Governor also be sent to the agency mentioned in the letter. Ms. Passle Helminski seconded the motion. All were in favor.

- Members held discussion regarding meetings with Legislators planned for late-October. Members confirmed the meeting dates of October 24 and 30, 2025. Members agreed talking points should focus on the impacts of the state budget, advocacy for funding of the Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Direct Care Workers (DCW) Crisis, Subminimum Wage 14c Certificates, and transportation. Members agreed to have PaRC personnel provide invitations to Legislators and/or their staff in relation to the talking points which include Committee Chairs and members of the Labor & Industry, Appropriations, and Transportation Committees. Members requested personnel create a document that specifies the Legislators' areas of expertise to focus the meeting on talking points most relevant to each Legislator.
- Mr. Chris Harbert, OVR provided updates on OVR and Board activities including Community Advisory Committees, stakeholder groups, DCW Crisis, transportation, importance of PaRC and Board advocacy efforts, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) outreach project 100 successes in 100 days, customer satisfaction, and subminimum wage. Information regarding the Support Service Provider (SSP) Program will be forthcoming.

Review State and Federal Legislative Watchlists

- Ms. Passle Helminski informed the Committee of Senate Bill 575 An Act amending Titles 18 (Crimes and Offenses) and 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in assault, further providing for the offense of ethnic intimidation; and making an editorial change.

Schedule next meeting

- Members agreed to hold the next Committee meeting on October 9, 2025, at 10:00 AM.

Public Comment

- Ms. Christie Cyktor provided comment as a member of the public and informed attendees of the events being held in Harrisburg in late September regarding Medicaid and the Family Care Act which will include meeting with Legislators to inform and educate about Medicaid and general issues affecting people with disabilities.
- Ms. Julianna Rodrigues provided comment as a member of the public and informed

attendees of an event that she is attending in Washington D.C. on the week of September 8, 2025, regarding advocacy for Rare Diseases Awareness and funding for disability-related organizations.

Adjourn

MOTION was made by Ms. Passle Helminski to adjourn. Ms. Lynn Heitz seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.