

**Commission on Community-Based Alternatives for Persons with Disabilities
Direct Workforce Subcommittee**

July 11, 2006
10:00 AM - 12:00 noon
Center for Disabilities Studies, University of Delaware
461 Wyoming Ave., Newark, DE

Meeting Minutes

I. Introductions

In attendance: Miranda Marquez, Penny Chelucci, Renee Bean, Jamie Wolfe, Tony Horstman, Eve Austin, John Reiff, Michael Gamel-McCormick, Michelle Hess, Becca Dougherty. Michael Gamel-McCormick introduced Michelle Hess who will be taking over the Workforce Committee staff duties. Michelle Hess said she has a background in legislative and public relations duties.

II. Credentialing/Career Lattice Subgroup Update

A. Workforce development contract management update

Michael reported that the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) will manage the contract for curriculum development. Renee Bean reported that she met with two DSAMH staff members to discuss this initiative. Michael Gamel-McCormick explained that the Committee will have input in this process by way of Renee's position.

Jamie Wolfe asked if the training will be cross-disability. Michael Gamel-McCormick explained that Renate Henry of DSAMH was very clear that it will be cross-disability. Renee Bean said she was assured that all divisions would be included as well. Renee Bean explained that the current funds do not provide funding to institutionalize the training as a pilot project. She is looking onto piloting the training in several different ways including in an institution and with providers that serve intellectual and developmental disabilities. Michael Gamel-McCormick asked if the Committee members were interested in pursuing this plan. Jamie Wolfe suggested that a physical disability-specific provider through the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD).

Michael Gamel-McCormick expressed concern that this project was becoming too large in scope; maybe the group should start with a small pilot. Tony Horstman suggested looking at U.S. Census data about disability-type to determine which group is most prevalent and begin a pilot that represents that largest group(s). Penny Chelucci agreed that the project should start "small and good." Eve Austin asked where the control group would be and asked whether it might be the institutional group. Renee Bean responded that since a community

agency-based training is the ultimate goal, the project might focus there, even though the Stockley Center is very interested in the project. Michael Gamel-McCormick emphasized the need to include the consumer/family piece in the training.

B. Subcommittee member input and feedback opportunities

Renee Bean also presented information about a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grant that CSD did not receive. Even though CDS did not receive the grant, she would still like to use the information collected. She suggested that the group offer feedback on these plans at the next meeting. Jamie Wolfe suggested that the group look into Money Follows the Person (MFP) grants, which focus on cross-disability services.

Michael Gamel-McCormick suggested that the August 8th meeting be cancelled. The group agreed. The next meeting was set for September 12th, in which feedback on the Robert Wood Johnson grant can be offered.

III. Direct Support Workforce Strategic Planning rubric

Michael Gamel-McCormick reported that Vince Meconi and Rita Landgraf, Co-chairs of the Governor's Commission, want to see a visionary path forward for community-based services, conceptualized in the planning rubric. The group is charged with filling out the rubric, without much concern for funding. The Committee Chairs and staff now meet every month to discuss progress on these rubrics. A discussion about the priorities followed.

Tony Horstman wanted pay equity to remain the top priority. Penny Chelucci agreed that it is an ongoing effort. Pay equity appeared to be a consensus priority. Tony Horstman responded that advocating for H.R. 1264 could be a part of this. Penny Chelucci said the group should also be concerned with regional equity. Movements within the region might inform goals and objectives, specifically the New York State wage pass-through in which funds go directly to front-line workers. Penny said she was concerned that funding increases to agencies go toward overhead costs. Last year, agencies did not even get increased funding for overhead, according to Eve Austin and John Reiff.

The group discussed whether these wage increases should include worker compensation, medical insurance, and overhead costs for agencies. Penny Chelucci thought advocacy should focus on pay increases. John Reiff said the need for funding is directed by the ICAP and cost data. Increases for state services include cost-of-living allowances and energy transportation funding. With these added costs, it is difficult for community-based providers to ensure wage parity. Michael Gamel-McCormick asked whether this issue could fall under other Committee charges as well. Tony Horstman said it also falls under Transportation, Healthcare, and Housing. Michael Gamel-McCormick said he would bring it up to other committees as well.

Eve Austin said that community-based agencies need to rebase these costs every year. Jamie Wolfe added that rebasing costs for ICAP and the Division of

Development Disabilities Services (DDDS) is not enough. Jamie Wolfe expressed concern about increases going to providers, instead of workers. She said that the Committee's efforts should fall in line with MFP efforts. Penny Chelucci agreed. Jamie Wolfe added that MFP issues affect a wider range of people than those who are coming out of an institution. They also affect anyone who is "at risk" for institutionalization. Penny Chelucci added that in the mental health/substance abuse community, MFP issues are based on a continuum of services, from most to least restrictive. Delaware is not set up to smoothly transition people from one part of the continuum to another.

Michael Gamel-McCormick acknowledged that this was true, but that this may not fit under Workforce Development issues at this time. Eve Austin said that this certainly is the overarching goal of the Full Commission. Renee Bean added that the immediate question for this group revolves around how to support or transition the current Delaware structures toward a MFP system. She agreed that Delaware might not be at that point yet, but wanted to tackle the question about how we get closer to that point. Michael Gamel-McCormick explained that the MFP Committee is not a formal group. A cost-benefit study was commissioned and DDDS is bringing people together to discuss the initiative at this time.

Tony Horstman reiterated the importance for him that the Workforce Committee focus on pay equity and pay increases for the direct support workforce. Penny Chelucci suggested goals include pay and benefit equity since, according to the Federal Labor Standards Act, home health agencies do not have to provide benefits to their employees. The group was in consensus that Workforce Committee plans should address benefits as well as pay. John Reiff advised that the group must better define these issues.

The Committee members revisited their original goals. All members agreed that pay and benefit equity would remain the priority. The next task should be to define the problem in quantitative ways. John Reiff suggested that the group compare state and community-based worker pay. He said that state workers are compensated twice what community-based workers are. He also said that the state attracts workers from community-based settings. The group should express the effects of this quantitatively. In the past, community-based agencies have lobbied for buy-in to the state for benefits without success. The group agreed that the second original goal concerning benefits can be collapsed into one goal. One goal now should include wage and benefit parity between state and community-based workers and across contracts.

The group decided the third goal should be part of a MFP initiative. The fourth goal states a need to provide flexible, diverse, competitive community services with market competitive compensated staff. Eve Austin expressed concern about the fourth goal because funding for this initiative must first come from the state. Michael Gamel-McCormick added that he struggles with how to best improve services as well. The question revolves around whether to promote and improve the system, as is, or to construct a new system of service delivery. Michael Gamel-McCormick asked the group members how much independence over community-based agencies they felt the Workforce Committee should

advocate. John Reiff explained that both small and large provider agencies take issue with state mandates. Large agencies want the smaller agencies that provide specialized services to succeed because larger agencies can not provide those specialized services. Smaller agencies, however, have a harder time meeting state regulations. In turn, larger agencies find that they need to meet more specialized needs and they do not have the experience to meet these needs. John Reiff suggested the group look into outsourcing human resource needs for smaller agencies. Michael added that for state-run programs and employees, data management is pooled. John Reiff added that because direct support work is so reliant on human capital, community-based agencies are constantly looking for ways to decrease the costs of overhead and back-end issues. Another goal should include identifying ways in which the market for direct support could be more productive and efficient, including ways to pool resources. This would promote a competitive market with diverse services.

The group decided that the fifth goal also should become part of the MFP initiative. The sixth goal listed states a need to increase the status and awareness of the profession. This was discussed in conjunction with the seventh goal to increase the value of the profession and the eighth goal to increase career awareness and disabilities awareness for middle and high school students. Group discussion revolved around recruitment and retention issues. Penny Chelucci explained that DSAMH includes plans to attend to these issues in their strategic plan. The group agreed that one goal should include the development of supportive leadership. Another goal should include public education and training.

Jamie Wolfe suggested another goal should include education of consumers. This would be in line with a MFP element. Jamie Wolfe explained that the attendant services training programs currently fall under DSAAPD programs because there is an assumption that other groups receiving services are unable to control their own services. These programs should be expanded to include other disability groups. John Reiff added that this is the direction that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) are going with increased aging and foster care programs.

Renee Bean thought that the goals were fragmented and saw several different themes appearing at this time. Michael Gamel-McCormick thought that the group might be best served with several larger goals, broken down to objectives. John Reiff saw themes that relate to wage and benefit parity, professionalism of the field, curriculum and education development, and consolidation of services based on specialized supports. Renee Bean saw at least four components including worker training, consumer-based service advocacy, provider quality control, and one other one.

Michael suggested that a longer September meeting focus on strategic planning. During this meeting, the group should plan on identifying three or four major goals in the first hour and identify sub goals and objectives in the following two hours. Renee would also have time following this planning meeting to get feedback on the Robert Wood Johnson grant. The group agreed to a September meeting from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM with lunch provided.

IV. Full Commission update

Michael reported that the Governor's Commission plan will be published next October 2007, marking the third anniversary of the Governor's Commission and the fifth anniversary of the Olmstead Report. Co-chair Rita Landgraf wants a substantial plan to serve as a road map for the next five years.

V. Letter to Rep. Castle and Senators Biden and Carper concerning H.B. 1264 (Jamie Wolfe)

Jamie Wolfe drafted a letter to Representative Castle and Senators Biden and Carper asking for sponsorship or continued support of H.R. 1264. Tony Horstman recommended that the State Council's Policy and Law Committee look at the letter. The group discussed visiting Carper at this Wilmington office. John Reiff suggested that DelARF be included in this visit. Members of the Workforce Committee decided to request a visit to Castle's office in a letter along with the PowerPoint slides. The group will also provide a blurb listing the 3 main goals of H.R. 1264 on the Committee's website for use by other community organizations.

VI. Other Items

John Reiff said he wanted someone from the Governor's office to visit with the Workforce Committee to explain the state budget process and the budget's effect on the disabilities community. Jamie Wolfe reported that she is working on this and is working on the best timing for a visit. Vince Meconi receives budget drafts in early September. Jamie will try to schedule someone for the October meeting.

VII. Next Meeting

The next Workforce Subcommittee meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 12th, 2006, at the new CDS offices at 461 Wyoming Ave. from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM. Lunch will be provided.

VIII. Next Steps

Renee Bean will distribute information on the Robert Wood Johnson grant that will be discussed at the next meeting.

Michael will discuss the original workforce goals that might overlap with or fall to other committee work with the Chairs and staff of other subcommittees.

Jamie Wolfe will finalize plans to visit Representative Castle. Michelle Hess will assist with this project and make sure all the information is distributed.

Jamie Wolfe will schedule someone from the Governor's offices to discuss the budget during the October meeting.