



# RHODES to INDEPENDENCE

Creating Pathways to Work

## Steering Committee

Summary Notes  
December 20, 2004

**In Attendance:** Aleatha Dickerson, Steve Florio, Elaina Goldstein, Steve Kitchin, Thomas Martin, Arthur Plitt, Christine Rancourt, Susan Shapiro,

**Staff:** Natanya Szendro, Devorah Weiner, Nancy Wooten

Topic	Discussion	Action / Lead Person	Target Date
Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was insufficient attendance to reach a quorum (50.1% of Steering Committee membership presence is required). While no decisions requiring voting could be made, discussion did take place. These notes detail that discussion; without a quorum there can be no official minutes of this meeting.</li> <li>• Without a quorum, the minutes of the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting could not be approved. Motion to approve is postponed until the January meeting.</li> <li>• Steve reported that the BLN breakfast meeting held on Tuesday December 7<sup>th</sup> was very successful; over 50 businesses participated. Special outreach needs to be made to small companies; their CEOs are more difficult to engage. Chambers of Commerce and small business associations are good ways to reach these employers.</li> <li>• In 2005, a RTI Speakers Bureau will be formed and serve as a major outreach vehicle. Staff will go out to any group or entity in the state and communicate RTI activities and issues, as well as distribute resources such as the Employer</li> </ul>	Steve Kitchin	

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	<p>Packet and RTI brochures. It is hoped that Steering Committee members will go along with the staff and be “ambassadors” for this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A staff retreat is scheduled for January 10<sup>th</sup> to look at proposed MIG activities and determine what is realistically possible to accomplish in 2005, given staff size and resources.</li> <li>• Steering Committee appreciation gifts of RTI portfolios and pens were distributed.</li> </ul>		
<p>Current Workgroup Updates / 2004 Accomplishments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were many significant RTI accomplishments this year. The Steering Committee and key stakeholders were responsible for the passage of the Medicaid Buy-In.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Youth In Transition</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Train-the-Trainer manual draft was produced and pilot training will begin soon.</li> <li>• The Workgroup will be focusing further on health care barriers and issues in 2005.</li> <li>• The 1619a / b report will be completed by January.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Housing</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Workgroup was formed this year and has a diverse membership. The goal is to address housing barriers and gaps over the continuum of homelessness through home ownership for people with disabilities</li> <li>• There are a number of related activities planned for 2005.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Employee Retention Workgroup</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Workgroup’s Goals and Activities were parallel to those of the Business Leadership Network’s Steering Committee and thus subsumed the functions of the ER Workgroup. In 2005, the BLN Steering Committee will take the lead on employer-driven activities.</li> </ul>	<p>Steve Kitchin and Elaina Goldstein</p>	

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Medicaid Buy-In Legislation Update	<p><b><u>Transportation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anne LeClerc and the Transportation Workgroup are looking for some new members.</li> <li>• RIPTA is facing a major budget deficit; this has an impact on the extent to which there can be route enhancement / expansion.</li> <li>• RIPTA has scheduled more public hearings concerning the budget shortfalls. These hearings will take place December 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Medicaid Buy-In Legislation Update</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are problems with the language of the legislation and regulation.</li> <li>• CMS is concerned with the Buy-In in terms of meeting Medicaid regulation guidelines regarding eligibility limitations (currently too restrictive). DHS, Elaina and legislators had developed the language with the assistance of a national expert – Allen Jensen – based on the Buy-In legislation for Michigan and Maine that had been approved by CMS. This is an interpretive issue. Elaina is in communication with CMS (where there appears to be a “disconnect” between the regional and central offices) to determine what changes need to be made with the legislation (if any) and is currently waiting to hear back from CMS on this (by the end of December).</li> <li>• DHS is also concerned about the language pertaining to eligibility. DHS had been involved in drafting the legislation, but now is worried that too many people not yet on Medicaid but eligible under this category will move onto the Buy-In (come “out of the woodwork”) which would be too expensive for the state, comparing it to the RIte Share experience (many working poor switched from employer coverage with high co-pays / deductibles onto Medicaid). It is the definition of disability that is a problem and DHS is suggesting amending the language of the legislation to</li> </ul>	Elaina Goldstein	

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<p>January 2005 Steering Committee meeting</p>	<p>make the Buy-In more restrictive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Susan Shapiro noted that there are people working who meet Medicaid’s disability definition but are making \$35,000+ who could opt to move to Medicaid.</li> <li>• Ultimately it is the decision of the General Assembly whether to amend the legislation. Making the language too restrictive could result in the Buy-In becoming too expensive an option for people considering employment. Representative Naughton (who introduced the Buy-In in the House in February ’04) has been apprised of these issues and concerns.</li> </ul> <p><b>Steering Committee January Meeting - Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 8:30 am starting time for the Steering Committee meeting is a problem for some consumers who want to be involved but cannot due transportation difficulties and the need for personal assistance services in the morning. The RTI Steering Committee and Workgroups would benefit from greater consumer participation.</li> <li>• It was speculated as well that the early hour may be a problem for some employers, another group that should have greater representation on the Steering Committee.</li> <li>• The discussion that followed included the following observations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Most business leaders schedule their meetings for the early morning.</li> <li>❖ Several SC members stated that there was a problem with the middle of the day regarding RId transportation for people with disabilities (defined as noon to around 2 pm).</li> <li>❖ It was generally accepted that after 4 pm is too late in the day, and if 8:30 was a problem for some consumers that must be taken into consideration.</li> <li>❖ It was decided that 2:30 pm might be the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Steve Kitchin and Elaina Goldstein</p>	
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Other Business/ Next Steps	<p>optimum starting time. There was discussion regarding whether members should be polled first or to set a date for January. The decision was made to email an announcement concerning the change ASAP to the full Steering Committee, and see if objections arise.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Having established the 2:30 starting time, members decided that the third week of the month (as it currently stands) should be kept and that Tuesday or Wednesday would be good choices based on the standing schedules of SC members in attendance.</li> <li>❖ It was agreed that the next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 pm and, barring objections, in 2005 all Steering Committee meetings would be scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month at 2:30 pm, locations to be announced.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An email will be sent ASAP by Devorah Weiner to announce this new meeting time and date. In the same email, it will be asked whether they still want to be on the Steering Committee, emphasizing that all are welcome to continue to serve.</li> <li>• At the January meeting, the meeting date and time will be revisited. Also, it is hope that three or more consumers and additional employers will join the Steering Committee.</li> <li>• It was reiterated that due to the lack of a quorum, this December meeting is not official, so no motions could be made. Motion to approve the November meeting minutes will be made in January.</li> </ul>	Email to all Steering Committee members announcing date of January meeting with inquiry concerning whether individual members choose to continue serving on the SC / Devorah Weiner	ASAP