

Rhodes to Independence Steering Committee

Summary Minutes

September 20, 2005

In Attendance: Kathleen Burrell, Joan D'Agostino, Susan De Sack, Aleatha Dickerson, Steve Florio, Tim Flynn, Elaina Goldstein, Dianne Kayala, Steve Kitchin, Anne LeClerc, Michelle Malloy, Eileen Naughton, Arthur Plitt, Chris Rancourt, Susan Shapiro, Lauren Slocum, Michael Spoerri.

Guest: Paul Choquette

Staff: Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Valerie Shore, Nancy Wooten, Dana Wright

- The minutes from the 5/17/05 meeting were approved.**

- As a means to optimize staff time for the multiple activities planned for 2006, it was proposed that in 2006 Rhodes' Workgroups meet quarterly (as opposed to monthly) and the Steering Committee meet bi-monthly. More work may thus be done with existing staff; planning, implementation and follow-up for monthly meetings is time and work intensive. This may also have the effect of increasing attendance at**

meetings. New workgroups will meet monthly until they are well established.

- The Steering Committee agreed that this should be put into effect. This new time schedule should be discussed at the next workgroup meetings and any input brought to the next Steering Committee meeting.**

Youth in Transition Workgroup

- The Workgroup met once since the last Steering Committee meeting.**
- The final draft of the youth interview tool has been completed; it is in the design and layout phase.**

Transportation Workgroup

- The Workgroup met once since the last Steering Committee meeting.**
- The Independence Transportation Network of American was highlighted. It is a non-profit volunteer driver organization started in Maine that will be expanding to other locations.**
- A representative of the Trudeau Center provided an overview of internal and external transportation costs.**

Housing Workgroup

- The Workgroup has met once since the last Steering Committee meeting.**
- A survey to gather information on the accessibility of temporary**

shelters has been completed.

Diversity Workgroup

- **The Workgroup met once since the last Steering Committee meeting.**
- **The workgroup is continuing its environmental scan of traditionally underserved communities and challenges, gaps and barriers for people with disabilities. The last meeting featured a presentation by Dennis Langley, Executive Director of the Urban League, on the African-American community in Rhode Island. This year's presentations will be summarized in a document; strategies for optimum format and dissemination will be the focus of an upcoming meeting.**
- **All Workgroups have presentation sessions at the upcoming DHS Community Living Conference (September 26 & 27).**

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Resource Directory Subcommittee

- **The subcommittee has not met since the last Steering Committee meeting. There will be a meeting in October.**

Business Leadership Network: Update

- **The BLN Steering Committee meets once a month (usually the first Tuesday from 8:30 – 10 am) and is working toward establishing a RI**

BLN.

- **A survey is being sent to employers to gather feedback.**
- **BLN breakfast meetings have been well attended.**
- **The September meeting featured the BLN leaders from Massachusetts and Louisiana.**
- **A question was asked concerning participation in the BLN by small businesses. Because small businesses rarely have human resources departments they are more difficult to reach. The current BLN leadership consists of large employers. BLN members are planning to attend Chamber of Commerce meetings to do outreach and hope this will become a link to small businesses. In addition, the BLN is purchasing the Chamber's mailing list as another means of reaching small and medium-sized businesses.**
- **It was suggested that Steering Committee members assist in outreach to small businesses.**
- **There was an additional suggestion that perhaps a representative of the Governor's Commission might speak at a future BLN breakfast concerning the ADA.**
- **The BLN is hoping to have a website sometime next year. It was pointed out that the Rhodes to Independence Employer packet is a very useful tool for employers and is on the Rhodes' website.**

2006 Rhodes to Independence Continuation Grant: Overview

- **In January Rhodes / College of Pharmacy, URI was awarded a second basic Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) from the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to fund Rhodes' activities**

through 2008. As with the first four year grant, a continuation application must be completed each year to receive that year's grant amounts.

- Successive continuation applications generally push forward the grant's deliverables with changes as things evolve through a year.
- Historically the MIG application deadlines were sometime later in the fall. This gave the Steering Committee, staff and stakeholders time to work on workgroup activities, facilitate the process toward completing project products and deliverables, and hold a strategic planning process to review the year's progress and plan for next year. We have also been able to utilize the valuable input of the Governor's Commission Forums reports in that planning process.
- This year the application deadline was moved up to August 26th. We submitted the application with another requirement – the design of a logic model connecting activities to short and long range outputs. Essentially, the Rhodes' goals from this year were moved forward to 2006.
- Staff attended the Governor's Commission for Disabilities Forums and as a result – at the last moment – did add to the grant the formation of a new Workgroup on Chemical Sensitivity. Due to the tight timeline and deadline for the grant application, there was no time to check back with the Steering Committee.
- A copy of the section of the application dealing specifically with 2006 deliverables and the logic model will be emailed to the Steering Committee with the meeting reminder and will be reviewed during the October meeting.

RI Cash and Counseling Program: Overview

- **The RI Cash and Counseling Program is a demonstration project funded by Robert Wood Johnson and is a Medicaid waiver program that will replace the PARI waiver and expand the number of waiver slots. RI was one of 12 states to receive the grant in fall 2004. This is an option available for people requiring community-based care and is participant directed.**

- **Three states received the first demonstration grants – New Jersey, Florida and Arkansas – and the research results from these projects prove that participation works**

-  The program promotes independence and choice.**

-  It improves participant satisfaction.**

-  It improves informal caregiver satisfaction.**

-  It increases the amount of care received.**

-  There are few unmet needs.**

-  Physical, emotional and financial strain is reduced.**

-  People providing care are trained by the consumer – cannot be a spouse – but can be a neighbor, friend, etc. A criminal background check is required.**

- **The following are eligible to participate in the program:**

-  Adult Medicaid recipients requiring a personal care assistant and needing a nursing home level of care.**

-  Participants from the above group who want to direct their own services or have a designated representative who can direct services.**

 People providing care trained by the consumer cannot be a spouse – but can be a neighbor, friend, etc. A criminal background check is required.

- Support services in the program include service advisors and fiscal intermediaries.**
- The overall budget pays for case management. An individual can determine whether she/he pays the assistant(s) or an amount is set aside for relevant services not covered by Medicaid (e.g. could purchase a Microwave if the need for it is disability-related). Medicaid services under the waiver include some equipment.**
- Enrollment in the program is scheduled to begin in January 2006. Those already participating in the PARI waiver will be transitioned into it. Initially there will be up to 150 participants; the goal is 450.**
- The question was asked whether transportation would be included – the response was perhaps but it would be in lieu of something...a person might budget it in.**
- The great value of self-direction was discussed as well as the extent to which this increases involvement of people in the community with individual.**

Other Business / Next Steps

- The question was raised about whether - in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina – there is a coordinated plan to assist people with disabilities in an emergency.**
- There is an outdated plan with gaps, according to Michael Spoerri**

(Department of Health). It was pointed out that though employers are required to have evacuation plans, the medium and smaller sized business (lacking human resources staff) find it harder to implement.

- Elaina suggested that an ad hoc group come together to look at the existing plan as a greater collective to see if something can be done to update an effective evacuation plan for people with special needs.**

The Commission is currently looking at the plan. It was agreed that it would be useful to highlight the gaps in the system as well as find out what the state has so there is no duplication.

- It was agreed that Rhodes' staff would set up a meeting with EMA, DOH, the Governor's office and other relevant agencies for this discussion and review.**

- It was announced that Susan Shapiro will be retiring soon. The Steering Committee congratulated her on her retirement with gratitude for all of her services to Rhodes to Independence and people with disabilities in the state.**

- Due to scheduling conflicts, it was decided to change the October meeting date from the 18th to Thursday October 27.**