

**State Rehabilitation Council Meeting
December 12, 2003
Emporia SRS Area Office**

Present: Council Members: Dale Barnum, Marvin Kuehn, Sanford Alexander, Anita Trainer, Tami Schwindt, Marie Mareda, Julia Fonseca, Sharon Kearse, Barbara Crooks, Wendy Blaauw, Suzanne Evans, Patrick Terick, Debra Wheaton
Staff: Peg Spencer, Dianne Hemphill, Jaryl Perkins, Connie Daggett (Recorder)

- Pat **welcomed** everyone and members introduced themselves
- **Minutes** from the previous meeting were approved.
- **Public Comments**: none.
- **Additions to the agenda**: Sanford wanted to give an update on the Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired Advisory Committee.
- **Report on RS Operations and activities in the Emporia area - Jaryl Perkins, RS Chief**

Jaryl relayed recognitions various staff have recently received:

- ▶ Susan Johnson, Program Support Worker, was recognized as Secretary of the Year by the KRA.
- ▶ Shiela Golden, Vocational Evaluator, received the Outstanding Service to KRA award.
- ▶ Caryn Kennedy had a consumer who received Consumer of the Year by the KRA.
- ▶ Will Etzbach was recognized for being accepted into the Leadership of SRS series.

Jaryl has been at Emporia for two years, but has been with RS for about 20 years, previously at Central Office in Topeka. The Emporia unit ended the year at 150% of the goal, which was the second year in a row they had been second. They are fully staff which makes a difference. He shared expenditures from FY03 at \$685,000 and listed the top five areas including job placement, training, assistive technology, transportation and maintenance. Reasons for job placement being the highest were given. Employment is their goal, which has been successful. Payment for performance changes may make them more successful. He explained they no longer require each client to have a physical and psychological evaluation. Staff are using the information that is at hand now instead of duplicating.

At the end of November the unit was at 52% of their goal. Closures thus far this year included a variety of occupations: an auditor, school bus driver, balloon maker, medical lab tech, truck driver, and glass blower, just to name a few.

Average caseloads are smaller, being the 3rd smallest in the state with about 80 per counselor. The geographic area Emporia covers was listed. How they are finding jobs was listed which included relocating a client out of state on one occasion.

Office consolidation: Emporia was one of three areas that closed offices this past year: Cottonwood Falls and Burlington. How this was accomplished with redesign teams was relayed, going into the communities and having public meetings. Reactions from those communities were mentioned, along with cooperation Emporia has received including brochure racks having been provided at libraries, and notary public services offered by a local banker.

Future changes that they anticipate are going from 11 SRS areas to seven statewide and the Emporia Area combining with the Hutchinson area. Staff are trying to keep focused on the consumer. Jaryl was asked how VR compares to other services in SRS with consolidation and he felt Economic & Employment Support (EES) was affected more than VR; going from 11 offices to four affected only one counselor as they didn't have staff in a lot of the areas that were closed, as opposed to EES who did. More people need our service than they have the capacity to serve.

- **Report from State Director - Dale Barnum**

- ▶ Dale shared the good news that Kansas applied to RSA for a literacy grant and is one of only five states that received it for \$1 million over five years, to study the effect of literacy on employment outcomes. This will be done in the Kansas City Metro area, along with the University of Kansas. Dale will keep the Council updated on this project.
- ▶ We have been working with community mental health centers in an effort to find employment for consumers with severe and persistent mental illness since more than a third of our consumers have some type of mental illness. We had an opportunity to expand that project to include Dartmouth University and the University of Kansas. This included grant monies from Johnson & Johnson. With that project we have provided training and assistive tech for three mental health centers in the state. Since it was so successful, we are expanding it statewide. Last month at the CSAVR Conference, Kansas Rehabilitation Services received an award for that project, which Dale shared with SRC members. The award will be taken to show to staff in those offices that helped with this project.
- ▶ We continue to maintain a 12% vacancy rate, but have been able to fill a number of field positions, as well as one at Central Office.
- ▶ Dale passed around printed copies of the article "United We Ride." He has forwarded it to the Secretary, asking that it be taken to the Governor's Office since she is very interested in grant funding, which the transportation project provides.
- ▶ Copies of the Transition Services Position Paper from CSAVR were distributed. It shows how, on a national level, we support the provision of transition services to students with disabilities.
- ▶ Dale asked if any Council members had any influence with Senators or Representatives in Washington, D.C. to relay concerns for the Workforce Investment Act as the House and Senate are at opposite sides of the spectrum right now. He would encourage everyone to see what impact they can make.

- ▶ Changes occurring in SRS
 - ▶ Restructuring of areas was reviewed listing the seven regions: SE which will retain the current Chanute area; Wichita will be Sedgwick County; West will currently have two areas - Garden City and Hays - and go to only one in 18 months; NE region will include Manhattan area, Salina, Topeka area, and some from the Lawrence area; Kansas City Metro area will be Kansas City, Overland Park and part of the current Lawrence area.
 - ▶ Access points: we may initially meet consumers in their homes due to not having offices.
 - ▶ Leadership Change: Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation (Federal) resigned which may not have an immediate effect on Kansas. This person sets a lot of policies for the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
 - ▶ Between now and July 2004 the current Employment and Training Division of the Kansas Department of Human Resources will move to the Department of Commerce. RS was also looked at, but at this time it is determined that our consumers are so much different from KDHR, that this did not need to occur.
 - ▶ State Personnel Division completed a personnel classification study this fall, which involved RS. Position changes were mentioned although it was pointed out there is no difference in the working classifications, and requiring the same qualifications and salary as before. Thirteen classes within SRS were affected, consolidating into five. This was seen as positive by giving divisions and supervisors more flexibility and requirements for success.
 - ▶ A screening tool will be developed to help identify youth who could benefit from VR. We are in the process of working with the University of Oklahoma on this project and hope to have a one-page screening tool that can be used by classroom teachers, or whoever else that can sit down with kids, to determine their need for VR. It is hoped to have it completed by next summer and Dale will keep Council members updated on its progress.
- ▶ Budget: we fully matched federal funds this past year and hope to do so in 2004. Have requested from SRS an enhancement to the 2005 budget with a 4% increase in federal funding expected, but don't have state funds to match that. Have made it through the SRS budget process with recommendations to the Governor to include that enhancement. Suzanne Evans asked if it would be helpful for the Council to send a letter to the Governor about considering the match. Dale thought it would be more effective if individual members of the Council did that. Sanford made a motion that we write a letter, and it was seconded, no discussion, and approved. Sanford will do the letter.
- Order of Selection: Category 1 is not closed, however 2 and 3 are, but with very few on the waiting list.
- The payment for performance model is off to a good start with job placement services. Other states are starting this also.

- **KSBVI Report - Dianne Hemphill**

- A 9-day summer transition program is in development in cooperation with Kansas School for the Blind.
- As a result of a one-day training in July for UMKC ophthalmology residents, KSBVI is integrated into their program for next year, conducting their second training in February.
- Beginning in January, the Rehabilitation Teacher program will be dually supervised between Blind Services and the RS Chiefs.
- Outcome numbers for RCBVI were given, compared to last year, with the average age of the client being 37.
- They have hired an individual who was a VR counselor, as well as a certified deaf/blind specialist.

- **Recognition - Dale Barnum**

Several members of the Council are ending their terms this year. Those left have a challenge as the Council has made an impact on what is going on in RS in Kansas. On behalf of the Governor, Secretary and everyone in RS, Dale presented certificates to Debra Wheaton and Patrick Terick who also served as SRC Vice Chair and Chair respectively this past year. Certificates for Nancy Blake, Cindy Jackson and Ron Pasmore will be mailed to them. Anita Trainer's term is expiring, but have asked for a reappointment and are awaiting the Governor's acceptance.

- **Annual Report Update - Peg Spencer**

Peg read the letter which was drafted to send to the Governor regarding the Council's annual report. Upon approval, the letter was signed by Pat Terick.

- **Policy Update - Peg Spencer**

Peg can provide an update at the March Council Meeting as some of the issues are still pending. Peg gave a brief overview of the medication policy which is modeled after the workers comp system. Orthotic policy was also reviewed.

Wendy asked about a transition situation. Implemented a new policy on October 13. Was revised because of a resource issue. We don't have a lot of transition staff to attend IPEs. New policy was also based on feedback from consumers and families. Policy indicates we want to begin working with secondary students and those in special ed. Process of working with transition students was relayed. Peg stated Stacie Martin at Central Office is working on a communication plan regarding transition that she will be traveling around the state to inform people. Peg will discuss with Stacie some specific concerns raised today.

Marvin asked why has the perception arisen that Wendy raised about whether we have a transition program or not? Peg stated she just finished meeting with all 11 area

teams to discuss this, and feels all counselors understood now. Trying to get more players involved. Is a big change. There was some general discussion on this issue today. Peg stated everything in Rehab Services is open to an exception, and this is no different. If a student could benefit from VR sooner, an exception can be made. Marvin stated the perception from special ed that it won't do any good to refer to VR, necessitates a meeting be held to eliminate that perception.

Peg relayed the process that will be used in informing students, who are 18 months or three semesters before leaving school, about VR services and a tracking system Stacie is using in order for the student to have a plan with us that coordinates with their IEP.

- **SRC Appointments - Peg Spencer**

Peg reviewed the background of new members suggested to the Governor for approval to replace out-going State Rehabilitation Council Members: CDDO community representative; an individual who uses a wheelchair and has a lot of experience with Social Security; an individual who has a head injury and serves on the State Wide Head Injury Council; an individual who is a former VR consumer who is hearing impaired and employed by a bank; an individual who is an advocate for people with multiple sclerosis. These people (2 men and 3 women) represent NE, NW, Wichita, and SE Kansas areas.

- **Youth Leadership Forum - Julia Fonseca**

Julia explained their Youth Leadership Forum June 22-24, 2004 that will be at Washburn University. Applications were sent out through VR and other resources. She encouraged everyone who receives an application and knows of a student who has leadership potential, to please pass it along to them. It is a competitive process with two references, taking 30-40 applicants with varying types of disabilities from different geographic areas in Kansas. There is no cost to the student. They provide transportation and the student stays on the campus all week. PCA service is provided, as well as interpreters. Funding is through state grants and donations. For more information you can access their website at www.KSYLF.org.

- **Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired Advisory Committee Update - Sanford Alexander**

Sanford gave the history of the Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired Advisory Committee of which he is chairman. At their latest meeting in November four resolutions were presented by two consumer organizations, three of which were supported in Committee. He presented them verbally to the State Rehabilitation Council today for support. He reviewed those resolutions and made a motion for the Council to second and approve. Marvin Kuehn suggested not acting on the report and amended the motion, suggesting we change the language that we accept the report of the Advisory Committee and that the State Rehabilitation Council will respond to the report at a future time. This gives SRC time to consider all of the resolutions. Sanford withdrew his motion and all approved Marvin's motion.

- **Election of Council Chair & Vice-Chair - Peg Spencer**

Peg distributed copies of the Bylaws Excerpt regarding Council Officer duties. Nominations were taken for 2004 SRC Chair and Co-Chair: Marvin nominated Sanford

for Chair, seconded by Marie, no other nominations; unanimous agreement. Anita nominated Marvin as Vice-Chair, Marie seconded by acclamation, approved.

- **Report from Client Assistance Program - Sharon Kearse**

Sharon listed some of their office's new initiatives as well as highlights:

- In May 2003 the CAP Director was nominated and selected to serve on NAPAS Board of Directors. The first meeting was held in September in Montana.
- In August 2003 she participated in the NatCAP 2003 CAP Summit.
- An individual received dental services and car repairs to maintain employment.
- The needed assistive technology was provided to allow one client to pursue training and employment.

Client Assistance Program Data by county for FY 2003 was distributed.

- **Public Forum Discussion**

Some of the comments made regarding last night's Public Forum were:

- ▶ Pleased with the response, especially from the smaller areas.
- ▶ A number of clients were there that had head injuries, dealing with coordination of services.
- ▶ Last individual who presented testimony made a fantastic statement on how misunderstood the program can be. She had a lot of needs that needed to be met, but not all in the VR sphere.
- ▶ A need for a specific person to direct people to the right agency so someone doesn't fall through the cracks.
- ▶ Area director's comment about spending six hours that day discussing development of services to try to make things seamless, the no-wrong door theory. People thinking that SRS is one, but each division has a separate budget and governed by different guidelines, such as federal.
- ▶ Peg will seek clarification on the head injury client - why on a waiting list.

- **Miscellaneous Announcements & Wrap-Up**

- ▶ Our next meeting will probably be in Salina on March 4-5; other selected sites are south-central Kansas, Southeast Kansas and Northeast Kansas. **(Editor's Note: Since this meeting, the March events have been scheduled for Holton, not Salina).** Dale commented the new Regional Commissioner of RSA wants to visit Kansas so he may be invited to the March meeting.
- ▶ Marie Mareda expressed concerns about staying at Candlewood Suites with a recent lawsuit involving them and Goodwill Industries. Pat asked if there are issues such as this, to contact Peg so alternate arrangements can be made. Anita relayed her experience in Colby with her room being on the second floor, no elevator and needing to be relocated to the first floor. Council members are encouraged to inform the hotels of special accommodations that are needed when they make reservations also.
- ▶ Pat thanked everyone who has served with him this past year and he stated he has enjoyed his tenure as Council Chair. He thanked Dale and Peg for the good job they are doing in making the Council run smoothly and wished everyone Happy Holidays.