

**State Rehabilitation Council Meeting
December 2, 2005
Holiday Park Hotel, Chanute**

Present: Members: Dale Barnum, Barbara Crooks, Josie Torrez, Anita Trainer, David Rosenthal
Absent: Wendy Blaauw, Julia Fonsca, Christine Owens, Tami Schwindt, Morris Taylor
Staff: Peg Spencer, Dianne Hemphill, Ed Viers, Connie Daggett (Recorder)

Welcome & Introductions

Chairperson Barbara Crooks called the meeting to order and members introduced themselves to Ed Viers. Minutes of the previous meeting were reviewed. Motion made, seconded, and carried to accept the State Rehabilitation Council Meeting Minutes of September.

Public Comment

None.

Additions to the Agenda

Barbara asked to have membership of the Council added. Dale will also be addressing this during his report.

Discussion of the Employer and Public Forum

Barbara commented she was very impressed with the people who showed up last night, stating quality shouldn't be judged by quantity. There was good communication, and for the benefit of those who could not attend, she relayed the consumers' stories that were shared at the Forum. She told Ed he has a lot of caring staff in this area.

Peg mentioned she spent quite a bit of time talking afterwards with the lady from Flint Hills who had assessment concerns. They brainstormed some ideas and the Program Administrator for her area will get in touch with her.

Anita stated one of the ladies at her table from Class, LTD expressed a desire to be on the Council and asked the procedure to follow.

Barbara also thanked Peg and Frances for all the work they do to get ready for the Employer Forum.

Report on Rehabilitation Services Operations and Activities in the Southeast Region - Ed Viers, Program Administrator

Ed thanked Peg for the PowerPoint presentation she had to get together with about an hour's notice since the DVD wasn't available. He commented lack of attendance could be due to the time of year and many other things going on during this season. He received very good

cooperation from the Chamber and the Director is going to put an article in their newsletter about Rehabilitation Services.

Issues brought up last night in terms of staff response are concerns of his, but not unique to the Chanute office. The SRS Regional Director was present last night so he was able to hear some of the comments made about large counselor caseloads, but budget constraints in the area add to the problem. He cited he has lost 60% of the support positions they formerly had, as well as having a 25% vacancy rate, one position has been vacant for over two years, and the other since about a year ago. He will have another vacancy in March when Charley Johnston retires from Ft. Scott. He doesn't anticipate being able to fill that position so caseloads will be served out of the Chanute and Pittsburg offices. Staff have been very flexible and caseloads have changed significantly. He used to have two full-time counselors devoted only to transition, but with vacancies, they are now caseload carrying positions.

Even with the vacancy rate, however, Southeast Kansas has had the distinction of being second in percentage of their assigned goals achieved. At the present time they are running ahead of schedule.

Statistics included:

November 2004: (with 7 filled counselor positions they had)

- 206 applications processed
- 146 determined eligible
- 126 individual plans written
- 61 successful rehabs

November 2005:

- 215 applications processed
- 150 determined eligible
- 87 plans written before Order of Selection went into effect
- 66 successful rehabs

Caseloads:

- 575 last year distributed over seven positions
- 599 this year distributed over six positions

Rehab rate dropped some from last year

- 62% last year
- 58% this year

They have five mental health centers covering Southeast Kansas and all have converted to the payment-for-performance payment method. Approximately one-third of the caseloads statewide are related to mental health as a main disability. They have a positive working relationship with the mental health centers.

He relayed some of the types of positions and pay ranges they have placed consumers in: nurse at KU Medial Center making \$25.68 an hour; EES worker for SRS making \$13.81; welder \$18 an hour; research assistant \$17.50 an hour. They also have many in the minimum wage categories but the average wage in Southeast Kansas is rarely over \$10 an hour.

Updates from the State Director – Dale Barnum

Barbara stated she wished this wasn't the last report they would be receiving from Dale, but wished him well in his retirement.

- Dale thanked Ed for the update and work he and his staff did last night and this morning.
- We have gotten the budget back, and even though it isn't the final one from the Governor, we continue to be fully matched in FY07, with no mention of self-sufficiency of the Blind Center.
- We continue to experience imposed vacancy rate agency-wide. This is imposed by the legislature, who approves the budget.
- Kansas was selected by the National Governor's Association for a grant to improve outcomes on transition of youth. The team spent three days in Denver in October and Dale commented how that went with Kansas being ahead of the game. This grant will focus on youth with mental health issues and minority backgrounds. Four members of the Council are on this team: Barbara, Julia, Tami and Morris.
- Reauthorization of the Rehab Act: he continues to send members of the Council e-mails to keep them informed.
- Order of Selection was started. From Category 1, which has approximately 80% of the consumers, we should be able to start rolling people off in January; Category 2 and 3, which is mainly people with less severe disabilities (20%) will not be open for the remainder of this year, and possibly not in fiscal year 2007. Staff continue to refer people to other resources in the meantime.
- We have been able to hire a training position at Cental Office, so anticipate having better staff training in the future. SRC members can also identify areas for us to concentrate on.
- SRC Membership: The governor's office is working on new appointments with an anticipated start date for everyone being January 1 on a calendar year. He would encourage SRC members to search for viable people to be on the Council, always needing business and industry representation. Peg talked with the lady from Class, LTD last night and Barbara knows of someone who will be completing the packet of information. Fourteen (14) names are being considered for appointment, representing various contituents and parts of the state.
- Dale highlighted some areas as to where Rehab Services stands in Kansas:
 - Leading the nation in cooperative work with the mental health system.
 - Due to work in the legislature, the Youth Empowerment Academy, which includes the Youth Leadership Forum, now receives VR funding.
 - We are seeing some successes in the Adult Literary Work in the Kansas City area
 - With significant help from Mike Ahlers, the agency is working towards outcome based contracts.
 - Changes at the Federal level are coming.
 - With his retirement, Dale expects Secretary Daniels to appoint an acting

- director of Rehab Services on December 19 so that things can carry on with the intent of having a Director appointed by the end of January.
- Dale thought we have been successful and done things in Kansas that stand out due to the State Rehab Council and the entire Rehab Services staff. Barbara added she thought it was also due in large part to Dale's leadership.

Update on Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired – Dianne Hemphill

- Greatest news is don't have to design a program for self-sufficiency.
- Notable challenges are staff who are ready to retire: Ann Byington, who has 18 years as a braille instructor; anticipate another staff person retiring in June or July.
- Order of Selection will have an impact at RCB with less attendance.
- Anita asked if the Center will continue to recruit for students out of state and Dianne stated they are meeting with Oklahoma and Missouri, submitting contracts to both.

Annual Report Letter - Peg Spencer

Key points the Council members want to include should be sent to Peg. She will draft a letter and e-mail it to Barbara for final approval and signature. A couple of ideas were mentioned today and Dale added the access to the mainframe where counselors in remote areas can have a laptop and have access to information.

Economic Need Update - Peg Spencer

Peg gave the SRC members an update on the economic need policy that a group is working on in an effort to make it easier for consumers to understand, streamlining the process. The Federal Poverty Levels will be used in determining how much a consumer should pay towards their plan.

Publishing Outcome Measures - Mike Ahlers

Mike explained he is a part of Central Office staff, working with contracts that are now called payment-for-performance. He distributed copies of a handout for SRC members' input. It described three services: supported employment, placement and work training with placement, and he explained each and how they would be posted on the Rehab Services internet website.

Round Robin Reports from Council Members

Anita Trainer - still working for Wichita Headstart, but looking for a full-time job. Her job responsibilities grow and she is doing a lot of research. She is waiting to hear the results of the first grant she wrote. She is looking at possibly going back to school and Dale gave her some leads of an on-line program through the University of Arkansas for VR counselors.

David Rosenthal - now works for AT&T, not SBC, due to the merger, so he doesn't know what the future holds, but everything else is status quo.

Josie Torrez - they are gearing up for the legislative session and working with them for the benefit of people with disabilities that they represent.

Barbara Crooks - from the people they received from the Katrina storm, some have remained in Manhattan. Their new superintendent is doing a good job. With the recent storms in their area, 30 homes at Ft. Riley were destroyed. Some troops may not have to go back to Iraq. They continue to be busy with serving youth and are having a good time.

Announcements

A thank-you card was given to Dale from the Council members. Barbara thanked him for his leadership and that she has learned a lot.

Peg invited members of the Council to a retirement reception we will be having for Dale on Thursday, December 15 from 2:00-4:00 pm at the Kaw Area Technical School on Huntoon in Topeka.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Connie Daggett, Recorder

Next meeting is March 2-3 in Hutchinson