

State Rehabilitation Council Meeting
June 6, 2003
Leavenworth SRS Area Office

Present: Council Members: Dale Barnum, Barbara Crooks, Wendy Blaauw, Marvin Kuehn, Sharon Kearse, Sanford Alexander, Ron Pasmore, Pat Terick, Anita Trainer, Deb Wheaton, Cindy Jackson, Suzanne Evans, David Rosenthal
Staff: Peg Spencer, Jerry Leonard, Dianne Hemphill, Connie Daggett (Recorder)

- Welcome & Introductions - Pat Terick

Pat thanked the Leavenworth Office staff for hosting the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.

- Additions to the agenda - Pat Terick

Sanford asked that the voting act, legislative bills, and general observations about SRS functioning be added. Sharon Kearse asked for a case scenario, and Marvin asked for HIPAA to be added.

- Public Comment - none

- Review of the Public Forum: there was a great turnout with good representation from consumers, providers and Rehab Services staff. Dale sent letters to the legislators in the Overland Park area and Rep. Huff attended as a result. Sanford stated this was something that has not happened in the past, but was successful and encouraged Dale that it be done for future meetings. Ron felt it was a good way to educate legislators and teach them about VR.

Marvin noticed a lot of service providers from the Leavenworth area and that they seemed to be supportive of KRS. Service providers seemed to have a good understanding of KRS's mission. Counselors have done a good job and communicating the purpose of what KRS is all about. Pat stated the coordination amongst various service providers was evident; they seemed to be a cohesive group. Barriers have been broken down in terms of providing services for different individuals. Jerry stated it was not just in Leavenworth, but has been an effort to become more community oriented.

Transportation seems to be an issue of individuals for employment and costs of transportation in the odd hours. Sanford stated this was an old issue and one that may need to be revisited given a new administration. This Council has discussed a more coherent strategy to get the Governor involved. Pat asked if a statewide task force was needed and there was discussion of how to bring these issues to the attention of the legislators. Throughout the state the funding for transportation is different for each community. In Wichita it goes from the federal level directly to the city. In Hutchinson, it is funneled as a match: federal, to state, and local. Pat stated he would like to draft a letter to the Governor to state our concerns and follow up at the next meeting. It was decided this may not be soon enough and Ron agreed to head up a committee to draft a letter, along with Sanford, Anita and Cindy. The draft can be sent to Peg Spencer or Connie Daggett to finalize. Ron moved that Cindy write a letter to the Governor with copy to the Budget Director advocating that public transportation be more of a priority in

the upcoming budget. Sanford seconded and the motion carried. Cindy felt we couldn't advertise enough and whatever route we go, it needs to have a strong impact to the Governor because it is a long term problem. Sanford added that the Dept. of Aging is equally affected. Working with the Governor allows us to bring these issues together. Cindy felt drafting the letter was a first step, but as Council members we need to have a greater impact by being visible and participate through writing and activities. Pat asked that the letter be done by July 15 and if a conference call is needed, let her know and she'll coordinate it.

Sanford stated there seemed to be two issues raised at the Public Forum: (1) disparity between the way things used to be perceived as opposed to the way they are now as far as expectations clients have when entering the VR system and problems they can expect in getting where they want to be; and (2) there seemed to be a total lack, or any appreciation, for the serious financial situation the state is in and the impact that has. No money talked about other than need more positions. With regard to #1, Sanford felt we needed to look at how counselors explain services when they meet with the client. Peg was asked if there is a list of what the counselor talks about when the client comes in for the first time in terms of telling the person what KRS is all about? Peg stated they are given a copy of the Handbook of Services. She will see if it's possible to have a couple counselors at the September Council Meeting and talk about their Handbook and see how the counselors go through that process. Everyone agreed this would be a good idea.

We have a group, Field Advisory Council, that is made up of counselor representatives throughout the state. It may be helpful for them to attend the September SRC meeting if travel funds allow.

Anita stated from the consumers at the meeting last night, only one had communication problems, otherwise everything else was positive, so lack of funding was not an issue. Peg added there may be some issues related to a specific consumer that may not be appropriate to bring up at a Forum and the Forum is not an appropriate place for counselors to explain what is going on. There was a general feeling, however, of something good going on in Leavenworth and they may have some ideas that would be valuable for everyone.

- Report form the Overland Park Area - Jerry Leonard

Jerry provided statistics for the Overland Park area in terms of number of counselors and those that carry caseloads. They have three vacancies of the 15 caseload carrying positions. One of the things discussed last night was need to get the information out about KRS more to other individuals, however, the caseloads now are 140% according to the Shaening study. Hope to fill some positions after July 1. Have around 1300 consumers and process 92 applications in the area during May, having taken 182 so far this fiscal year. Have written about 550 plans in the area with the hope that these clients will become employed. 280 cases were closed this fiscal year. Job coaching is emphasized but can have Voc. Tech. and college plans. They have 960 so far this year on training plans. 185 clients have received help with books and supplies.

Caseload trends were reviewed. Some clients have lower paying jobs and need further services. Because of economic need, may be seeing future referrals from the schools.

In the past, students would be eligible for financial assistance with training even though parents were able to help but because of changes in economic need policies, some of those cases are not coming to us.

Jerry was asked how many placement providers they have to which he responded 10-12 in the Overland Park area so it is fairly competitive. One of the questions was about transactions with One-Stops; do not have staff co-located in Overland Park in the two One-Stops. They do have co-location here in Leavenworth. HR provides the services and we work with them, but not in a place where there are a lot of community partners in one area. They have a good relationship with the local SRS leadership team.

Jerry was asked to clarify the set-up in this building, with the receptionist at the front desk being able to provide information for clients for various concerns. Also, to clarify providing services for veterans and what percentage of the population is veterans. There are a number of meetings that are held at the VA with general discussion. If it looks like that person would benefit from rehab services, there would be another place for that person to go to receive more information and get services. Collaboration was discussed and being able to meet all individuals' needs.

David Rosenthal asked about VA clients that leave and come back, what type of service do they get when they return? Jerry stated they may not need additional services, but additional counseling. Peg stated a case may not need to be reopened, depending on the person's situation, as opposed to different services that may be needed. David asked about the average job experience when someone loses a job and comes back. Peg stated she did not have that information but could research it by checking with staff at the office to see if that type of information is available. The longitudinal study showed 76% of people who were employed were from VR and still employed three years later. Ron asked how realistic it was to see how long a person keeps a job as this changes everywhere.

- Report from the State Director - Dale Barnum
 - ✓ Dale thanked Jerry and his staff for hosting us last night and today.
 - ✓ Connie Daggett was introduced as clerical support for the Council.
 - ✓ Budget issues: Dale stated Rehab Services will end the year pretty well on target. This has been a challenging year to predict expenditures with allotments, allocations and a number of other terms used for budget cuts. The results of those cuts were grant reductions to our partners, waiting lists for services for our consumers and the unanticipated effect of many counselor positions being held open in the field. In preparing for next year we know that our funding will be about the same for FY04. We are in the planning process for FY05 and it is hoped the state revenues will remain steady.
 - ✓ Dale reviewed the Secretary's stakeholders meeting from Monday, June 2 with regard to service redesign and plans to continue to close 22 offices between now and 12/31/03. Access points may be used in counties without an operating office. This may be everything from a corner of a waiting room with a brochure rack to a location where another entity is allowing us to use office space.

- ✓ With regard to redesign there are discussions about how services are delivered (specialized vs. generalized) and this may have some effect on Rehab Services. On-line applications are being initiated soon after the first of July whereby individuals can apply for VR services via the Internet when this is implemented. Sanford asked about the client who applies via Internet as opposed to paper application and how this affects where they stand on the waiting list, what date is used. Peg stated this would be discussed later in the meeting when Policies are reviewed. Discussions are continuing about consolidating the 11 SRS areas into as few as five with access points in the smaller areas.
- ✓ Dale distributed copies of the Stakeholder Meeting Discussion Guide, as well as Agenda for Stakeholders briefing of June 2, 2003. The Secretary wants feedback on these issues by June 9, but expected we could have longer to respond.
- ✓ Federal Review: The final report on the federal review completed last summer has been received and copies of that are also available today. Due to running out of time today, this issue was not expounded on.
- ✓ A copy of a letter Dale sent to Gerri Harris at RSA was distributed. Proposed response was approved by RSA. One change that was proposed was to review expectations of RS Chiefs, as well as counselors. The changes deal with production, timeliness and costs. The minimum the Chief is to meet is 80% of performance standards set. Average cost for successful rehab will be looked at actively with employees by Chiefs and their staff.
- ✓ During a recent meeting with part of the Governor's BEST team, the purchase of services by SRS was discussed. Part of that discussion involved the fact that SRS outsources 80% of its total budget. As a result, we will begin training our staff on outsources, contract management, standards, that we are buying what we are paying for, and buying it at the best price we can.
- ✓ Placement Model: we are changing job placement grants, moving them to a contract basis - payment for success. We will be buying a service from our job placement people. We can negotiate service and know what the cost will be and what we can expect. When we have successful providers, we reward them by giving them business. We will pay some monies when the person is referred, some when they are on a job, and a lot at case closure in employment. We know if we have someone willing to take on the tough clients, we will probably pay more. In future months we will be working with all grantees to move them into a payment for success contract for purchase model rather than a grant model.
- ✓ Reauthorization of the Rehab Act: Dale has sent Council members a lot of information on this lately and there seems to be a big different between the Senate and House versions of the legislation.
- ✓ Dale has asked the Chiefs to start thinking about employer forums with SRC meetings since what happened in Hutchinson was so successful and need to do that elsewhere.

- ✓ The bill to create an independent Commission for Services for the Blind did not advance during the legislative session, but will probably be back next year. Dale has discussed our concerns and opinions with the Secretary.
- Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired - Dianne Hemphill: Dianne gave an update on projects they have completed or are underway.
 - ✓ Two O&M positions became vacant and one was recently filled with a person who relocated from Alabama. The other person is not certified so they are working to hire and offer to pay for the training for the person to become certified if they already have a bachelor's degree. Will use an on-line program and have had a lot of interest as a result. The positions closed for advertisement tonight at 5:00 P.M.
 - ✓ Advisory Committee for Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired will be held tomorrow.
 - ✓ Kan-SAIL lost three of their four instructors, two due to health reasons, one to retirement and the fourth was support staff.
 - ✓ They have received good reception from communities they have visited. Have gone to Baxter Springs and Leavenworth so far, in June will go to Derby and Goodland in July. Are ahead of our goal, however for our federal reports at 66% of the year already over our goal. What isn't getting done as a result of shortages is follow-up. Getting equipment to people takes longer.
 - ✓ Personnel changes: Joe Perez passed away and his wife, Carolyn, is now a computer instructor. We acquired a person who has an IT background and was going to be laid off and had good experience.
 - ✓ Media of Choice Services: converting materials to braille has doubled in the last year. Have only one person who does it so can't sometimes do it on short notice.
 - ✓ BEP program: there are concerns on both the state and federal level. State law passed last year makes some changes and have concerns. Must be legally blind to qualify for that program. BEP took in about \$2 million last year with only 14 vendors. The majority of the vendors are located in Kansas City, Topeka and Wichita.
 - ✓ Rehab Center initiatives: (1) evening program with volunteers to work with our clients in acceleration and acquisition of skills, particularly in braille and computer. All volunteers are blind and have been employed or maybe retired and have good skills in braille or technology; (2) on July 11 they will form a partnership with the medical schools of UMKC and KUMC where they will add to their educational curriculum, an area on blind services. KU and UMKC residents will come to the Center for a day for training and an overview of referral process; (3) In August program targeting transition youth and college bound. Have a week where kids who have about another year before they graduate come to the Center and do things they have not done before like being away from home and

do independent living skills, team building.

- ✓ Since the end of April they have had 205 successful closures of people who were found eligible on the basis of being blind and visually impaired.
- ✓ Diabetic program: 25% or more are blind due to diabetes. Last year's closures who did not have restoration, 65% had diabetes.
- ✓ They are ordering some new exercise equipment. This particular health issue needs monitoring. Someone going blind doesn't move around enough because they don't feel safe so strive to promote a healthier lifestyle. In July menus served will have nutritional value available to those concerned about their diet in order to make better choices. Those will also be available in braille, large print and on the computer.
- ✓ They served about three individuals who were significantly deaf/blind who are working but need additional services. We are not prepared to work with that population so will work on that.

Dale added that the O&M instructors that we are going to train will be required to work for a certain length of time in exchange for the training. Blind Services will be looking at moving home teachers that are now in the area offices, into the KanSAIL program and become more centralized, but this is not definite, need to figure out how to pay for it.

- Staff report - Peg Spencer

- ✓ Ticket to Work: a draft MOU was distributed. Everyone was asked to e-mail Peg comments or questions by the end of next week. The draft is a proposed MOU to offer to employment networks when a mutual client is being served and Rehab Services is asked to assist in providing services. It would be the same agreement for all employment networks. Consumers' experiences with Maximus were shared with non-productive results. If people call us at Central Office we talk you through possibilities of what is available to them. We have two contact people in our office who talk with the consumers. Benefits counseling is discussed with them. Maximus has 15 in-state and 14 out-of-state networks listed. Did they say they would work with the blind or what services that are willing to offer? The employment networks can choose to work with someone or not. That is different for consumers. Can a person with any disability use their Ticket with KRS? Yes. We are asking people to assign their Ticket to us. We do not have to have the Ticket in order for us to work with them. How it works with people are still in school was explained. Ron stated he has been reluctant to become an Employment Network because up front you have to meet every federal provision. Peg stated we help people think through major choices. 34 Tickets are currently assigned to Rehab Services in Kansas; 41 Tickets assigned in the entire state of Kansas. Anita stated she received a Ticket and asked who she should talk to about the best deal? Peg stated a lot of people: Employment Networks, benefits counselors, this puts a lot of responsibility on the individuals to do that information seeking. At Central Office, Mary Kay Hirsch and Lauren Todd can answer some of the questions and the toll free number is 1-866-213-9079.

- ✓ Policy Updates: She asked for input on two ideas: (1) application process and when we should have considered to receive the application. When only a paper application that process was fairly simple. But on-line you can answer the questions and e-mail it to an area office. When should we consider when we have received the application? Federal regs allow an individual to apply or otherwise request services, then we have 60 days to determine eligibility starts. There was much input from Council members and equal access issues were mentioned, whether this poses a problem to ADA State Coordinator, Anthony Fadale. Peg will check with Anthony for clarification. There was no decision made today and due to lack of time.
- Additional Agenda Items: due to lack of time, requested additional items could not be discussed with the exception of Barbara's question about notifying VR 18 months out as opposed to the age. Barbara stated that case managers are very much in favor of that. VR counselor comes to the IPE meetings but we don't know what happens after that but it is getting better. With the new policy, what if it still doesn't happen, they still don't get the application filled out before they graduate? What is the responsibility of the school? If we feel the student will qualify for services? Shift in policy would put a lot of responsibility on the student and family to make the contacts. When we receive referrals from the school we will have a way that they will get a letter from us about if you are within 18 months or three semesters from leaving school, contact us now. But if you are more then three semesters or 18 months form leaving school to wait. We will offer to send them a reminder. Those letters will be copied to the referral source. As a school person you can re-refer.
- Agenda format was discussed, putting in time frames in order to keep on schedule, putting "action" items first, starting earlier.
- Peg added that it is time for SRC nominations for Fall appointments. These are needed by July 7 with resumes. These are nominations, which do not guarantee appointment. We have six terms that expire this fall. Terms were discussed, whether two or three years, but it is up to the Governor to determine as we are a Council appointed by the Governor. She asked for assistance in finding people who could fill a similar capacity to the members going off the Council.

**Next meeting will be in Colby September 19, 2003
starting at 8:30 a.m. rather than the usual 9:30 a.m.**

Minutes submitted by Connie Daggett