

NH State Rehabilitation Council

NH STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

MEETING MINTUES

April 28, 2022

21 South Fruit Street, Room 100, Concord, NH and

ZOOM Teleconference Meeting

Attendees: Christopher Purington, Chair, Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre, Vice-Chair, Lorrie Ripley, Holly Cadwallader, Dawn Breault, Courtney Lockwood, Brent Cote, Andrea Kaneb, Jessica Brennan, Brandy Pappas, Lisa Gerrard, Kimm Phillips, Carrie Dudley

Members Excused: Laurijean Pevear, Dawn Breault

Staff: Lisa Hinson-Hatz, Sue Roma Ella McAllister, Dan Frye, Jim Piet

Guest: Kelly Haines and Allison Taylor, Institute for Community Inclusion, U of Mass, Heidi Duprey, Parent Information Center,

Interpreters: Denise Garcia, CART

The meeting of the SRC was called to order by Chair Purington at 1:03 pm.

A roll call was made of those present, and the agenda was reviewed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the SRC meetings of January 27, 2022 and November 4, 2021 were approved with two abstentions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Kimm Phillips announced that she is leaving the Parent Information Center in late June. Kimm is recommending that Heidi Duprey, who has been hired to replace her at the PIC, also replace her on the SRC as their representative.

Lisa Hinson-Hatz is recommending Kelly Nye-Lengerman, Executive Director of the Institute on Disability at UNH for membership. Kelly has been in this position for the past one and ½ years and was also on the SRC in Minnesota. Lisa feels she will be a fabulous addition to this council.

A motion was made to accept both nominees and send the paperwork to the Governor's office for formal appointment. This motion passed unanimously.

Brent Cote announced that he is not seeking a second term on the council and will be terming off on May 1st. As this will be his last meeting, the SRC will need a new chair for the State Plan committee. Brent was thanked for his service to the council for the past three years.

Lisa Hinson-Hatz will be reaching out to two businesses in an effort to increase representation from employers on the SRC. Smith Medical in Keene and CVS, both past winners of the Employment Leadership Awards may have staff who would be willing to serve.

Report of the Director:

- **Marketing Update:** All approved changes have been made to our marketing materials and they are on order from Graphic Services. They are expected to be printed in the coming weeks.

NH State Rehabilitation Council

Our Facebook page is active and is being managed by Terri Tedeschi of the Business Relations Unit. SRC members are encouraged to check it out and follow our page.

- **Financial Update:** Our financials are looking good. We have 8.1 million remaining in our FY-21 grant. These funds will expire in September of 2022 and will be spent first. The new grant of 4.6 million comes in October. In addition, there is 2.3 million in state funds. Looking at the Policy Memo on OOS, we have enough to fund our customers. We are about one year behind in spending but are spending more on customer services as we are fully staffed, having hired 12 new staff since October and promoting 2 within. Several contracts are also in place to spend down the money. Once summer arrives, we are looking to do a pilot with Wisconsin-Stout for eligibility determinations, freeing up the counselling staff. Even with all this in place, if the government does not grant states a waiver, we may have to send some money back. Lisa will keep the SRC informed as this plays out.
- **Transition** – Our transition RFP went out twice. The responses received on the first round were not what the agency was looking for as a project. The RFP was sent out again and we received no responses. Lisa believes it is because of staffing shortages in outside agencies who would have submitted a proposal. We are contemplating looking nationally for upcoming transition projects and using our STS counselors to connect with more students.

We recently negotiated levels of performance with RSA on all our performance indicators. RSA would not accept any rate below our PY-20 levels. This is concerning for Lisa as PY-21 is almost over and she is not sure how staff will fare given the COVID slowdown over the past year. Looking at the statistics throughout the country, intakes and eligibilities are down 16% and IPEs are down 13% due to lockdowns.

SARA, a virtual assistant program for counselors, is on track for installation this summer pending approval of Governor and Council. SARA will assist our regional office staff working like a dedicated assistant following up with customers, gathering crucial information and scheduling appointments. This will free up counseling and Rehab Tech staff to focus more on getting customers into program.

Update on the Customer Satisfaction Survey – ICI Kelly Haines and Allison Taylor were present today to update the Council on both the Customer Satisfaction Survey and CSNA. ICI reached out to 4,184 customers during a 12-week period, wrapping up in March. 470, or 11.23% responded. The overall responses were positive. Customer service indicators (courtesy, respect, etc.), were highly rated. On the negative side, customers stated that they were impacted by both the OOS and Covid 19, citing delays in service and reduced communication with their counselors.

Under Module 1, General Services, responses were consistent for both customers and family members regarding access and timeliness of service delivery. Consistency was also true for questions around goal development and attainment. Overall, 67% of customers and 62% of family members said that VRNH helped them to achieve the goals that were set.

Module 2 measured the overall satisfaction index from 0 to 100. 85% of customers and 75% of family members were satisfied with the services they received from VR. For those who expressed mixed experiences with VRNH, counselor turnover was cited as an issue.

For the Older Blind Program, all active 352 program recipients were contacted by telephone. 40 or 11.36 % participated in the survey. 87% were satisfied overall; 86% said services met expectations and 76% compared what they received to “ideal” services.

NH State Rehabilitation Council

- **Next Steps:** The final report is expected to be completed by June. Round Two, or those served in 2020-2021 has begun with 100 responses received thus far. ICI will continue to update the SRC as the process moves along.

CSNA: Allison Taylor, Senior Research Associate with ICI indicated that the hope is to interview 20 to 30 individuals with disabilities to learn about their needs and experiences when seeking services from VR. They are looking for assistance in getting the word out to populations who may want to participate. They are able to give \$50 gift cards for active participation.

Policy Implementation: Ella McAllister announced that 9 new policies went live on April 1st. Several are new procedures and 2 are policy updates from last July's launch. They are:

- General Provisions for All VR Services
- Prior Approval
- Supportive Services
- Computer Purchase
- Guidance & Counseling
- Comparable Benefits
- Financial Participant in Cost
- Waiver (Exemption)
- Vehicle Mod

The next set will be going out shortly and will be shared with the SRC Policy Committee in order that they have an opportunity to get early comments in before the public comment in late May. The goal is to have the remaining policies in the current manual updated by the end of July.

REPORT OUT FROM COMMITTEES:

Membership - Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre reported that the committee last met earlier in the week where they reviewed membership expiration dates to get an idea of who is terming out and which seats need to be filled. According to the bylaws, this task needs to be done each April, so the committee is on target with this task.

The bylaws were also opened and reviewed to see if anything needed to be added. As it looks like the agency will be continuing with a hybrid model of full SRC meetings, the bylaws need to be updated to reflect this to make it clear that virtual participation is counted as a quorum during voting. A statement on term lengths that mimic the federal regs needs to be added to make it clear that members can serve up to two 3-year terms.

Noting that Kimm Phillips is leaving the Council and Membership committee, the committee needs additional members.

Policy – Courtney Lockwood reported that the committee met just prior to this meeting and reviewed policies on Assessment Services and Physical and Mental Restoration Services. She will be putting the comments together and sending them to Ella. They have 4 more policies to look at for a total of six. Expect another policy meeting in about 4 weeks to review the remaining four.

State Plan: As mentioned earlier this is Brent's last meeting so a new chair will need to be appointed as well as new members. It was mentioned that it might be helpful to put together an informational session on the

NH State Rehabilitation Council

State Plan process to familiarize folks who might be interested in learning more before joining the state plan committee. Ella will set something up before the June meeting.

Time constraints dictated that the meeting today end on time. A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 pm. Unfinished agenda items will be part of the next meeting.

The next meeting of the SRC will be:

June 23, 2022

1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Room 100 Walker Building & ZOOM option

21 South Fruit Street, Concord, NH, 03301