

PITTSBURGH BBVS 08-12-16 CAC Meeting Minutes

Hello CAC members,

Below are the minutes from the August CAC meeting. Note that there are a few members who will be removed from the CAC due to lack of attendance at meetings. I'm sending the minutes out to everyone for now, just in case there are any corrections. Please review these minutes carefully and note whether you are on the list of members scheduled to be removed from the CAC list. If there are any changes/corrections, please let me know. Thank you to Tom for putting these together.

The CAC meeting was convened at the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services, Pittsburgh District Office located at 531 Penn Avenue on August 12, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.

In person attendees were: Catherine Getchell, Tom Burgunder, Robert Nagy, Christine Hunsinger, Joe Wassermann, Markeyla Robinson (student intern), Barb Peterson (who got to the office but mistakenly was directed to the wrong room), and Rich Fischer.

Telephone attendees were: Emily Angelcyk, Sandra Morris, Angela Hadbavny, Michael Stoehr, Carla Hayes, and Michael Zaken.

The minutes from the May 2016 meeting were unanimously accepted as previously distributed.

The first agenda item was to list those people who have not attended three consecutive meetings including this one. After the meeting, Catherine sent me her list of CAC members of record. From that and the record of attendees who attended the meetings in February, May, and August 2016, I determine the following individuals should be removed from the list of members: Becky Camp, Beth Benton, Erika Arbogast, George Zimmerman, Jennifer Bindernagel and Theresa White.

White Cane Day: Blind And Vision Rehab Services of Pittsburgh has scheduled White Cane Day for October 14 from 11a.m. until 2p.m in Market Square. Blind And Vision will celebrate the official opening of its new building during that week. A representative from the agency will be interviewed on channel 2 at 9a.m. Among other things White Cane Day will be discussed and the public will be invited to visit Market Square beginning at 11a.m. The format will be the same as last year with the music, the chocolate canes, equipment demonstrations and pamphlets. Blind And Vision Services will be

there to describe services available for people with vision loss. G.T.C.B. will have at least four participants in Market Square. Catherine's office will have four sighted volunteers. Laws have been passed throughout the country that require motor vehicle operators to respect the rights of visually impaired pedestrians. Among other things, cars must yield to individuals who carry a white cane or who use a guide dog. There are penalties if a blind person is hit.

Vision For Work Expo: Catherine is working to host an event at Rodef Shalom on October 28, 2016. The location is between Craig and Morewood in Oakland. Registration will begin at 8:30a.m. The event will close at 3:30p.m. During the morning the intent is to bring in 20 to 25 blind working individuals along with their employer representative to staff their own exhibit table. The individuals can bring assistive technology to demonstrate how they use it at work. The purpose is to give those blind or visually impaired individuals who are not yet working an opportunity to interact with the employees and employers. The event may attract members of the public including perspective employers and professionals in the blindness field parents, teachers, health care professionals, and older adults who face decreasing vision. A separate room will be used for resume preparation and mock interviews.

A box lunch will be provided. Catherine is hoping to secure as the keynote speaker a lady who is a blind recruiter.

The afternoon would be devoted to an assistive technology/low vision aids and devices expo. Initially Catherine hoped to stage the event at a downtown hotel but the costs were too high. There will be a preregistration process. Michael Stoehr volunteered to encourage students to attend. Financial assistance may be available to perspective job seekers and exhibitors to cover transportation costs.

Joe mentioned The Pennsylvania Counsel Of The Blind will be hosting its 2017 state convention in Pittsburgh. The organization is very interested in conducting an employment expo which can be tied into what is being done this year. The hotel space can be used.

Catherine scheduled a teleconference on September 1 at 10 A.M. to finalize the program's details.

The STEM Event: Catherine hopes to conduct the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math career expo (STEM) event again on March 4 2017. Legal and administrative hurdles have been resolved.

Joe asked about the Work Force Innovation and Opportunities Act. The regs became final on June 30, 2016. The Act was passed in July 2014. All of the regs with a few exceptions are effective retroactively to when the law became effective. The homemaker program has been terminated. Active cases can remain open through June 30, 2017 (Corrected date). Section 511 of the act has a two year delayed implementation. It talks about sub-minimum wage employment. To be considered competitive employment, a person must work where they are paid at least minimum wage and they need to work in an integrated setting. Integrated setting means there must be people without disabilities working in those same classifications. This conflicts with a federal law where 75% of the workers in a sheltered work shop must be disabled. The other part of section 511 is that for people who are in designated sheltered employment settings, OVR must be doing outreach with them every six months for the first year and once a year thereafter to make sure they know they can pursue competitive employment and know about OVR services. OVR can keep people in status 06 (Trial Work Experience) for 24 months provided they are doing a work trial which means they are trying to work in a competitive setting. If they certify they cannot work successfully in that setting, then they can return to a sheltered workshop. If an individual is 24 years of age, they do not have to sign up for OVR to remain in a sheltered work setting. If they are under 24 and are working in a sheltered setting, they do need to be referred to VR. They do not have to file an application. If they refuse to be evaluated by VR, their local office of developmental programs could say you will lose your Medicaid waiver funding. Individuals who have an intellectual disability may apply for and be granted a Medicaid Waiver. The individual is waiving his/her right to be in a nursing home. The individual lives in the community and receives services that will support him/her. The services can vary from person to person. For intellectual disabilities, there is the consolidated waiver. It is comprehensive with no cap and the P.F.D.S. waiver that does have a cap and is for persons with less intellectual disability. There are other waivers that apply to persons with different disabilities. Rich explained this new legislation promotes a work first concept whereas presently the programs maintain individuals.

Catherine described a new program that is being aggressively implemented called customized employment. This program seeks to match individuals having certain skills with particular employer needs.

The Mentorship Program: No new developments. Catherine plans to invite mentors to participate in the Vision For Work Expo.

Joe focused the discussion on CAC's from around the state. The leaders of district CAC's have conducted conference calls. They discuss problems in

their districts and what things they would like to see happen better through the state. Among other things they have wondered how they can get employers to join and participate in district CAC meetings. Catherine believes the invitation would be most attractive to an employer who has hired multiple blind employees. The predominant sentiment at the table was employers would not be interested in joining the CAC and attending the meetings as they are presently structured.

Summer Academy: It ran from July 17 to August 5. It is BVS's big program to help college-bound high school students to prepare for college. It lasts for three weeks. The students reside on the Pen State campus. It is like living away from home at college. One college credit was given to the students who completed the program.

The students do vocational development, orientation and mobility, vision rehab therapy, independent living skills such as cooking and laundry. Catherine was in the assistive technology class teaching jaws and iPhone/iPad skills.

The goal is to enroll students into summer academy when they are younger (9th or 10th grade). This was the ninth year of summer academy. In the early years, juniors and seniors were enrolled. The focus has shifted to enrolling younger students because students need more time to address their deficits before they go to college. BVS does not generally take repeats because the demand is so high. Twenty-five students are accepted each year. The recommendations that come out of summer academy are pretty direct. Skill deficiencies are noted and it states they must be addressed. The IEP is expected to intervene and address their needs.

This summer they started a summer academy student association. Former students who are nearing completion of high school or are in college can serve as mentors to the current students. They had a summer academy student association meeting during the second weekend. This can motivate students to follow through on their individual recommendations.

Each of the students receives an iPad which they keep if they complete the program. The iPads are preloaded with many apps. Carla asked about a survey that appeared on lists three or four months ago. Sandra from Fayette Blind Association said the Pennsylvania Association For The Blind as part of the statewide needs assessment sent out surveys to local agencies to ask their clients to complete the surveys and return it as part of the overall needs assessment for the Pennsylvania Blind Association. Catherine said every three years OVR is required to complete a comprehensive statewide needs assessment as part of the state plan. OVR has been contracting with

Temple University to help to complete the survey. In conjunction with this project, representatives from Temple met with Pittsburgh staff this past June.

Staff Update. Catherine provided a Pittsburgh District staff update. The Office is very close to offering a job to someone who will replace Stef McNeil. James McNeil, a counselor resigned in June to move to South Carolina where his wife's family is from. They had child care issues in Pittsburgh. Aaron Kelly, a social worker got a great opportunity at the Pittsburgh Public Schools. She left on August 2. Bernie Zelik retired. Harold Longmore has been shifted over to the Vocational Rehabilitation unit. He is supervising the VR counselors as well as the Orientation And Mobility instructors. The other supervisor position has been reclassified to Social Work Supervisor Position. The two VRT and one O&M positions continue to be vacant. It is not unusual to take four months to fill a position. The office is not ready to fill the assistive Technology Specialist position at this time. It is difficult to get the civil service commission to add a new classification. The new classification also requires the development of a new test. There is an existing classification called employment facilitator and they have decided to use that classification to get people who have assistive technology skills to take the test and be on the list. Catherine believes the test is accessible but she encouraged the committee to encourage qualified people to take the test and offer feedback. Central office will tell the offices when to fill the position. It will be an extra position open in all six BVS Offices.

Budget. Catherine does not have official word the new budget includes an additional \$2 million dollars.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 4 beginning at 10 a.m. at the Pittsburgh District Office.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted Tom Burgunder Secretary

Tom Burgunder