

Berks-Schuylkill CAC Meeting

October 21, 2019

Attendees: Angel Torres, Carol Riley, Sally Kneipp, Helen Denker, Judy Yeasted and Yvelisse Gonzalez. Sarita Battish and Andrew Pennington by teleconference.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Discussion on the need for formal minutes that should be posted on the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council website. This has not been done for several months. Ms. Gonzalez will research how to accomplish this. June and August meeting minutes have not been approved.

OVR Report:

- Because of budget constraints, new customers are going onto a waiting list. Quarterly funding (October) has covered services to applicants already in plan status. Customers are encouraged to communicate with their counselor and if the customer cannot reach their counselor, ask to speak to the supervisor.
- Nine vacancies exist in the Reading office; there is only one adult counselor and one transition counselor serving Schuylkill county. Changes in the hiring system has made filling vacancies a problem. Some cases are being covered with overtime. Some counselors are finishing their training program and will be able to accept more cases.
- Transition services - needs assessments are being done for all school districts to develop a framework for what is needed/ ensure no overlap with services already provided by the school. Most schools have been very cooperative.

Sarita Battish's presentation on Medicare health care coverage and marketplace: Open enrollment for Medicare is October 15 - December 7, 2019 for policies that will go into effect on January 1, 2020. Medicare.gov & Healthcare.gov website enables you to compare plans. Marketplace open enrollment period is November 1 - December 15, 2019. Berks Encore can be contacted for information.

Discussion about providers: OVR counselors have lists of community services/ resources for referral purposes, especially with current funding restrictions; these lists could be updated. Some resources noted - Schuylkill Transportation System will begin running a bus 3 times a day from Pottsville to Cabela's; God's Helping hands (free clothing distribution; Hamburg Community Center; Salvation Army; Lion's Club and Good Shephard for medical equipment; MS

Society; Animal Rescue Centers (may hold animals for a few days if there is a health crisis for the owner), Merchandiser, Orwigsburg Happenings. Andrew Pennington volunteered to merge existing lists of community resources.

Other Business:

- Recruitment flyers have been updated but dates of upcoming meetings will be clarified. Flyers can be sent to colleges and other community organizations.
- Follow-up is continuing with individuals who have expressed interest in joining.
- A new picture is needed for the brochure; one was taken at the April meeting but another can be taken if the April one is not available.
- Co-chair and secretary positions need to be filled.
- Carol Riley reported on the local Epilepsy Support Group. Vagus Nerve Stimulator surgery is being used for control of epilepsy.

Agenda for next meeting: (Review mission statement/ purpose of CAC to ensure topics covered at meeting are relevant to this.)

Announcement for general good: The OVR State Forum will be held November 7 and 8, 2019.

Adjournment.

Next Meeting is December 9, 2019, at 4PM at PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation - Berks.