

**BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
NOVEMBER 26-27, 2007
BEST WESTERN RAMKOTA – RAPID CITY**

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

New member orientation was held the morning of November 26th for new members and other members interested in attending. Elaine Roberts and Melissa Flor attended. Bernie Grimme, Colette Wagoner and Brady Kerkman provided portions of the overview.

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Grady Kickul, Beth Haug, Brady Kerkman, Shelly Schock, Dr. Jessie Easton, Kathy Hassebrook, Dan Rounds, Melissa Flor, and Elaine Roberts. MEMBERS ABSENT: Ron Ronshaugen, Thomas Kober, Larry Tolzin, Monte Tschetter, Mary l'atala, and Lyle Cook. OTHERS PRESENT: Bernie Grimme, Colette Wagoner, Sheryl Logan, Dr. Greg Cooch, Teryl Pickard and Ronda Williams.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Shelly Schock, Member-At-Large called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM and thanked everyone for coming. Introductions were provided. Staff explained the absences of those not in attendance to include Tom Kober as Chairperson and Monte Tschetter as Vice Chairperson. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS DRAFTED – MADE (M), SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C). APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The presiding chairperson asked for a motion to approve the Board's September 13/14 meeting minutes and the October 29th Executive Committee meeting minutes. One change was noted on page 9 of the September 13/14 minutes. MOTION TO APPROVE TWO SETS OF MEETING MINUTES WITH THE NOTED CHANGE - MSC.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Staff passed around a thank you card received from Kathy Hassebrook in her capacity as a member of the Aberdeen Area Human Resource Association. The card thanked the Board for their financial support of the October 18th seminar and luncheon held in conjunction with the Fall Conference. Staff announced that Laura White was hired with the Coalition and they would meet her at the next meeting, in her capacity as Board support staff. Brady Kerkman announced that Kyle Kircher has resigned from South Dakota Advocacy Services. A question was asked if Kyle served on the Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the response provided was he

did and their agency will need to consider recommendations for filling this vacancy.

DIVISION DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS: DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS – Grady Kickul referred to the new member orientation held this morning and mentioned something similar could be offered to the full Board, if members desired this. Grady acknowledged Dick Hicks, a former Board member, who passed away several weeks ago. He shared that Dick was one of the most dedicated and highly effective advocates on disability issues both in South Dakota and the nation. Through Dick's efforts, the South Dakota Youth Leadership Forum and the Sioux Falls Business Leadership Network were founded. Grady asked for feedback of how best to recognize Dick's contributions and invited members to be in touch with him with ideas or suggestions. Grady reported that the Division assisted the Department of Labor to provide training for the 'Navigator Training'. The Navigators will be housed in the following communities: 2 in Sioux Falls, 1 in Rapid City, 1 in Aberdeen and 1 in Yankton. These staff members will act as entry points for individuals coming into the labor system and Division staff will work closely with them as well as with the benefit specialists. Hoby Abernathy and Bernie Grimme provided training on the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) program to vocational rehabilitation staff and others across the state. Grady explained that MAWD allows individuals with significant disabilities to go to work and maintain health care coverage through Medicaid. The program is nearing the end of its first year and the Division projected that it would have 75 enrollees on the program, with 35 new recipients to Medicaid. As of November 7, there were 35 new individuals to Medicaid through the MAWD program. The Division will continue to "grow" this program slowly, which will allow time to resolve any issues that might arise. In conjunction with the Freedom to Work Project, Division staff conducted a survey with consumers served by the Activities of Daily Living Services (ADLS) program. In order to be eligible for the program consumers must have quadriplegia as their primary disability in order to receive personal attendant care services and other daily living activities, which enables them to live independently. This summer the Division renewed the Medicaid Waiver and they selected the option to remove the co-pay. Before the rewrite, any earned and unearned income over \$400 went to the cost of services, which limited the number of consumers who chose to work. Now the co-pay has been removed for earned income. Grady stated that the hope would be that consumers will see the benefit of working and more will explore employment options. Grady indicated that he would have Denise White come to the next meeting talk about the results of the survey. STATE PLAN APPROVAL: The Division received a letter from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) approving

the State Plan for three years and copies of the letter were handed out. Grady indicated the main focus was the statewide needs assessment and a thank you was provided to the Consumer Services Committee for their work on defining the strengths/weaknesses of the agency which were developed into goals, objectives and actions for the agency. Input was also obtained from the district offices on items outlined as goals and strategies. The committee will have the on-going task of evaluating progress towards these actions/strategies and goals – which assesses the statewide needs of the state. YEAR END RESULTS/PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: Grady explained that RSA establishes the benchmarks that the vocational rehabilitation agencies need to accomplish. Bernie was available for this report and had a PowerPoint presentation (see handout). Bernie explained that a year-end report would be available once the data is finalized. During the RSA onsite visit three goals were developed (i.e., increase hourly earnings, increase average hours worked per week, and increase the number of individuals with disabilities who are working). This information was outlined in the presentation and handout. The data reflected more consumers applying for services in FY2001 and it steadily rose until FY 2004. As consumers deemed eligible for services increased, expenditures also rose which caused the Division to enact the Order of Selection. Subsequently, the number of consumers coming into the system has been going down which has allowed the Division to open the waiting list and serve more consumers.

(Discussion was delayed with the arrival of Teryl Pickard)

Teryl Pickard, Behavior Management Systems (BMS), was invited to come and talk about “Employment Options”. Teryl addressed the annual vocational banquet, which is a major celebration for consumers and staff. Over two hundred and fifty invitations were disseminated and 130 individuals attended including consumers, employers and other dignitaries. She provided a handout that highlighted aspects of the banquet. She talked about serving individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, and how important this annual event has become for them. She stated that work is truly the best medicine for consumers, as well as for anyone. Her handout provided descriptions of some the awards that were provided. The major emphasis at BMS is working on the individuals’ self-worth. Teryl talked about when she first started working with BMS, she identified four major objectives in the area of pre-employment training: improve self-worth and confidence; identify and address the impediments to employment; teach consumers the tools of how to keep a job; and identify and provide tools to staff to ensure consumers were ready for employment. The pre-employment tools create the safety net – which helps address issues that arise for consumers (i.e., fear of rejection, peer support,

how to work with co-workers, how to deal with difficult situations). The pre-employment training provides twenty hours of observation/training over a two-week period, which identifies areas that consumers need to address. This all happens prior to the consumer applying for vocational rehabilitation services. In response to a question, Teryl stated that consumers find their own employment and they approach employers themselves. BMS helps consumers identify the hidden job market and they market themselves. Consumers do not apply through the application process – they utilize other techniques. Awards are given to consumers for attending the pre-employment training, being on the job for two weeks, 90 days, 90 days to 180 days, and 180 days plus. Other awards included: Make My Day, Strength of Spirit Award, and Ambassador Award. The commitment to employment is reflected in consumers served by the program. Grady thanked Teryl for coming and talking about the programs and related that vocational rehabilitation services is realizing the need for the pre-employment training aspect – and the need to put more resources up front at the beginning stages of working with consumers. A question was asked if there was a written curriculum for the two-week pre-employment training and the response was yes. A comment was made that teachers could utilize this working with students; mental health centers and other agencies could utilize it also. It's asking the consumer what they think they need to get ready for employment. Teryl stated, "every employer is hiring – if the right person walks through the door". The person needs to be prepared through practice and rehearsing, which raises their self-confidence.

OVERVIEW OF THE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION OUTCOMES SURVEY: Melissa Flor introduced Dr. Greg Cooch to members. Melissa explained that the Office of Special Education had twenty monitoring indicators that should lead to improved outcomes for students with disabilities. Dr. Cooch, Black Hills State University, assisted with the study of Indicator #14, which looked at youth who existed out of school in 2005-06 (as a drop out, graduated or they reached the age of 21). Dr. Cooch explained this is the first attempt in looking at the results after initiating this project almost two years ago and many partners were involved in creating this. The information wanted was the percent of youth who had IEPs, who are either employed are enrolled in post secondary school. A mailing was disseminated to a total of 650 kids across the state and then contact was attempted by making telephone calls. A letter was disseminated prior to the mailing to inform individuals of what would be taking place. Dr. Cooch provided a handout, which was a copy of the PowerPoint presentation (see attached). Some of the findings of those surveyed included:

- ❑ Over 80% of the respondents are competitively employed;
- ❑ Over 70% of the individuals work 30 hours or more;

- Employment settings included: retail, agriculture, food service, industry/business, motel/hotel and banking;
- Over 41% have enrolled in a post-secondary school (97 individuals are enrolled full time) and over 48% are enrolled in a vocational/technical school;
- 35% are covered by their families' insurance; 45% are covered by other insurance; and
- Over 50% of respondents had contact with a vocational rehabilitation agency

Dr. Cooch explained there were 25 questions on the survey and it took about 30-45 minutes to complete. There is no ability to compare data with students in regular education, because that information is not being collected at this time. The information gathered from this study will be submitted to the Office of Education at the federal level. Once the information is refined it can be shared with the Board and it will be posted on the Office of Special Education's website. A thank you was extended to Dr. Cooch for his presentation.

(Returned to earlier discussion) DIVISION DIRECTORS COMMENTS: YEAR END RESULTS - PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: Bernie took this time to go over the standards and indicators in more detail. He explained that the Division met the first indicator in closing the number of cases for consumers as successfully rehabilitated. In terms of success rate with another indicator, the Division serves a very high percentage of individuals with significant disabilities who are competitively employed. An area of concern that the Division is closely monitoring is the average hourly earnings for consumers as compared to the State's average hourly earnings. Serving transition age youth is a priority area that RSA is also watching closely, which is an area the Division has done well in serving. For example, earnings and hours of employment are higher at closure than the average of other consumers of vocational rehabilitation. However, the negative factors include a lower success rate and the average cost of rehabilitation is higher than average. ORDER OF SELECTION: Bernie reported that consumer services expenditures are down, therefore the Division is recommending that as of January 1st the waiting list will be opened up to all three categories. (The Division will be able to serve all consumers who are eligible.) Bernie provided the Order of Selection FFY 2007 handout. The handout outlined the number of eligibility decisions made for the three categories, as well and the number of those transferred to the waiting list. It also depicted all consumers in Category II have been moved back into the system to begin services and thirty seven cases in Category III remain on the waiting list. As of January 1st, the Division will remain on an Order of Selection but will serve all those coming into the system and deemed eligible. If the

situation arises where all consumers cannot be served, a letter will be issued that the Order of Selection will be applied to individuals applying for services from that date forward. The Division will continue to assign individuals who are applying for services to one of the three priority categories.

The meeting was suspended at this time.

The meeting reconvened at 8:30 AM. Presiding Chairperson, Shelly Schock welcomed everyone back to the meeting and asked for introductions.

DIVISION DIRECTORS REPORT (CONTINUED): REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF FINAL REPORT FROM RSA: Members were reminded that RSA staff were in South Dakota for the on site review of both vocational rehabilitation agencies as well as the programs for Independent Living and Independent Living for Older Blind. (The report was handed out at the previous meeting). There were no compliance issues noted for the Division of Rehabilitation Services and South Dakota shall not be reviewed again for another two years. This review also included stakeholder conference calls involving State Rehabilitation Council members (members of both the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired), staff of both Divisions, Centers for Independent Living and consumers. Grady highlighted the strengths and challenges noted on page four of the report. A comment was made in terms of the description of the state as rural/frontier and the response was it's a federal term used to describe our state as many other rural states. Grady highlighted the items noted on page 12 under "Leveraging Resources..." which were complimentary of the agency as well as the Office of Special Education. Pages 14-19 were described as pages, which could be utilized as the agencies road map – areas to address and work on in the future. One area noted during the fiscal review (page 24) referred to strengthening language utilized in cooperative agreements, which the Division has already addressed. Chapter 6 focused on the review of the Independent Living Program, which the Division will work with the Statewide Independent Living Council to address any noted concerns. Chapter 8 contains the summary conclusions, which outline the strengths, challenges and performance of the program reviewed, the goal and strategy for addressing noted areas as well as the technical assistance provided by RSA. A comment was raised about having jobs for individuals first, and then attempt to raise wages. It was also noted that the area of working with employers and addressing attitudes is still greatly needed and this report provides credibility of the ERN project. Grady offered that resources can be utilized in these areas and there are initiatives in place that can be built upon (i.e., ERN, Career Development Team, Business Leadership Network, and NDEAM efforts). It means understanding the needs of

employers and addressing the needs from their perspective. Another concern raised was with language used within the report under a strategy that addressed increasing wages for people with disabilities who are on social security benefits and retaining benefits. A suggestion was made to modify the language to reflect the individual moving onto different benefits or programs (i.e., MAWD, or another type of insurance). He also suggested that the Consumer Services Committee re-look at the goals and strategies and the wording of similar items. Another concern was raised regarding individuals with disabilities and their perception of it being “all or nothing” (choose work, no benefits) and the need for further education and awareness (consideration of employment; group insurance with employment, maximizing earnings’ potential, consequences of those choices).

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (COUNCIL) UPDATE: Grady reported that the last meeting of the Council was cancelled due to the announcement of a company closing in eastern part of the state. The next meeting will be held January 3rd in Pierre. Grady reported that the Division is working well with DOL staff in other areas beyond the new navigator program. Staff of both agencies are looking at joint initiatives to better serve the needs of people with disabilities (i.e., pre-employment training for consumers). A question was asked if there was anything in the Individualized Plan for Employment that asks or addresses a need for pre-employment training. Grady offered that this might be the time to revisit these types of forms and see about incorporating different types of questions to prompt the consumer to consider different types of options.

FREEDOM TO WORK PROJECT UPDATE: Grady reported earlier in the meeting about the MAWD program. SOUTH DAKOTA FOCUS: Grady explained that he and several individuals participated on the SD Focus television program (Ryan Green/Paralyzed Veterans of America, Travis Arneson/PLANS and DD Council, Brooke Lusk/Freedom to Work Project). Discussion centered on the MAWD program, people with disabilities taking responsibility for their own lives, satisfaction with employment, and knowing about available services. The show also provided opportunity for individuals to call in and ask questions. The intent was to go into more detail about ERN, NDEAM events, and partnerships with employers, however with people calling in, time ran out. Comments were made that the television program was a good medium to raise awareness about available services and the programs across the state. Also, the FTW video was shown on the television program and Grady mentioned this might be something the Board might want to view again with having new members appointed.

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC) UPDATE: Grady mentioned that the SILC's upcoming meeting will focus on the Independent Living Program section of the RSA Final Report and areas of program improvement. The Council will meet in Sioux Falls on December 11th and 12th at the Prairie Freedom Center for Independent Living.

BVR COMMITTEE REPORTS: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Staff reported that this is the time of year when the Board prepares its' annual report for the Governor and Rehabilitation Services Administration. The first part of December will be spent in pulling information together and drafting the report. It will be disseminated to members for review, comment and editing by the middle of the month. Members will be asked to forward their comments with a quick turn around because the report must be submitted prior to the end of December.

CONSUMER SERVICES COMMITTEE: Brady reported that Bernie had disseminated the goals/strategies and action steps to the district offices. The offices' suggestions were incorporated into the document and the committee only received these recently. A committee meeting will be scheduled in the future, which will allow them to review the additions and continue working on it. It was stated that comments submitted by the field offices were very positive, practical and consumer driven.

PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMITTEE: GOVERNOR'S AWARDS LUNCHEON - Due to Larry's absence, staff reported that the nominations for the Governor's Awards were disseminated statewide early in November. The nomination forms are also available on the Division's website. Three nominations have been submitted and the due date is December 14th. Staff explained the need for three members to serve as nomination reviewers. It was explained that Bernie has assisted the members with this process. The reviewers receive copies of the nominations along with a rating sheet. A conference call is convened and the reviewer's talk through each category. Once their selections are made their recommendations are forwarded to the Governor's Office for his consideration and action. Melissa Flor and Dr. Easton volunteered to assist with the reviewing process. Some members suggested that staff visit with Larry about his interest in reviewing the nominations and Shelly Schock volunteered if he was unable to. It was reported that the ticket price (\$10.00 per person) has been consistent since the early 1990's and the actual cost of the meal ranges \$11.50 to \$12.00 depending on the menu choice. An email was distributed to several members regarding the luncheon and menu selection items. They voted on roast turkey, sage dressing and cheesecake. There was consensus among members with their choices and raising the ticket price to \$12.00 to cover the costs.

SUMMARY OF NDEAM ACTIVITIES – staff handed out a NDEAM packet, which had copies of the eleven communities that held events. The events varied from luncheons, trainings, exhibits, Chamber of Commerce mixers, and employer appreciation

banquets. Over 1,300 people participated in these events across the state. The evaluations reflect the number of organizations collaborating to host the events and what could be done in the future to improve events. Grady had a copy of the Executive Proclamation available for members (see handout).

EMPLOYER RESOURCE NETWORK (ERN): Kathy Hassebrook talked about how strong the ERN project has become in the Aberdeen area since it started in 2006 and how to create something similar in other communities across the state. To be more specific, the ERN project is a partnership of vocational rehabilitation providers and employers. She spoke of October 18th event, a one-day employer seminar that was held in conjunction with the Fall Conference. They were able to bring in a national speaker by collaborating with the Board, RehabACTION, and Freedom to Work Project and pooling resources together. Over two hundred and fifty individuals attended the luncheon. Kathy spoke of having the ability to offer continuing education credits to conference attendees will make the draw larger. The day offered a variety of sessions for employers, vocational rehabilitation counselors and other service providers. The ultimate factor for success was because of the strong relationships. One individual who attended from the Sioux Falls area who is the diversity chairperson approached her about the ERN group and initiating this there. She talked about not winning the Pinnacle Award, national recognition for a local SHRM group for doing something new and exciting. She stated this was probably best, because now its time to step back and reexamine what is being done. After some reevaluating and rethinking, she is now communicating with the person who is the national diversity chairperson and work is being done in different areas (i.e., website development, step by step information available in a three ring binder). To obtain the buy in, a person needs it accepted from the top down at a national level. Kathy stated that she felt to obtain employer buy-in; it needs to be a SHRM member talking to another SHRM member.

BUSINESS CONSULTANT OUTREACH: Ronda Williams and Dan Rounds were available to co-present. They spoke about their trip to Utah to learn about their program "Choose to Work". This is a collaborative effort between the vocational rehabilitation and labor agencies. Staff from both agencies work with employers and with individuals with disabilities who are ready, willing and able to work. They provided a PowerPoint presentation, which outlined the goal to expand and strengthen partnerships with businesses, service providers, and service organizations in communities across the state. Some of the activities they are working on to address this goal include: creating partnerships and opportunities; employment services outreach committee; district office staff becoming members of economic development organizations; identify and support employers initiatives; and supporting internships and job shadowing

opportunities. Discussion items included publicize the monies the Board has available for organizations for training; participate in job fairs; collaborate with organizations to promote these types of efforts; Division staff becoming more involved in employer contacts; and preparing consumers to be job ready. Grady spoke of employer buy-in and finding out from them what skills they need. Elaine talked about a grant that was submitted which had several of the pieces that were talked about. She stated that there could be areas of training that could be extracted from this grant that the Board might want to take a look at (parent training, student training). There are entities that should be connected, the different pieces need to be put together, and once these are known, there should be no reason to reinvent anything. A comment was made about partnering with the Department of Labor and developing short-term training programs for individuals in the areas that employers need. Discussion involved what was happening with this area, the ERN project, and the Career Development Team. The comment was made again that whatever idea, approach or project it is, it has to work for the community, it has to be the right fit, which calls for trying new things.

OTHER BUSINESS: There was none.

CLOSING ACTIONS: FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: Have Denise White come and provide the results of the ADLS survey; Mike Ryan talk about the technical programs and the alternative schools. Perhaps at a future meeting have someone provide an overview of the Job Corp Program (new structure/new programs). Grady asked if the Board would be interested in meeting jointly with the Freedom to Work Leadership Council sometime and members were in favor of this. Grady would visit with the Leadership Council about the possibility of sharing some meeting time. SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING: Members decided to meet on March 10 and 11th in Pierre. ADJOURNMENT: **MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 11:40 AM – MSC.**