

**WV Developmental Disabilities Council
Erickson Alumni Center
Institute, WV
January 28, 2003**

Members Present: Laura Helems, Robin Ayers, Dee Braley, Karen Davis, Jeannie Elkins, Jeanne Grubb, John Hunneshagen, Debrin Jenkins, Ken Kennedy, Kelly Kirk, Frank Kirkland, Jane McCallister, Richard Merryman, Pat Moss, Libby Nester, Jim Plitt, James Qualls, Bobby Reynolds, Michael Sharley, Kevin Smith, Cheryl Vega

Members Absent: Ophelia Coats, Luann Decker, Rosanna Hohman, Bob Peck, Jerri Stephens, Andrea Workman, Mary Ellen Zeppuhar

Guest: Dr. John David Smith, Director of Social Work Department, Concord College

Staff Present: Steve Wiseman, Jan Lilly Stewart, Jim Cremeans, Betsy Southall

Welcome, Introduction and Announcements

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 am by Laura Helems, Chairperson.

Laura introduced new Council member Jane McCallister, Director of the Office of Social Services.

Laura showed members the new Council display and recognized Matt Higgs and Marsha Southall for their help in building the display.

Debrin Jenkins offered the Council a table for the display at Hospice of Southern WV's upcoming conference if one is available.

James Qualls read the Mission Statement.

Critical Issues (A/D Waiver, MR/DD Waiver, State Budget, Person Centered Initiatives):

Steve gave an overview of the critical issues facing people with disabilities and others who are dependent on human service programs. These were highlighted in the *Review and Analysis of WV DD Service System Narrative* (Council handout). This information was reported to the Administration on Developmental Disabilities in the FFY 2002 Council Program Performance Report (12/02).

Steve gave a brief status report on the **use of facilities** by people with developmental disabilities. He raised concerns that we need to continue to push for appropriate supports for people to live, work and play in communities v. facilities. He stated that there needs to be tight State control to not allow the building of more facilities. During a discussion on the pro's and con's of a "free market" where in people would be able to choose whatever type of settings they wanted, it was discussed that while people need choice,

institutional options should not be available in our state. This includes new, private facilities that are aggressively marketed in other states.

Council members and staff expressed concern that a recent suggestion has been made in DHHR to use empty beds at Pinecrest Hospital in Beckley for persons with mental health disorders. Concerns were also raised about children being placed in the Pinecrest, and a discussion ensued. It was stated that there is a legislative push to bring children back from out-of-state placements, and the result has been a resurgence of licensing of in state facilities to accommodate these children. Grave concerns were expressed about some of the options being considered.

Steve began a discussion regarding the safety of individuals who are in nursing homes and state run hospitals. People perceive these institutions as being more “safe” when, in actuality, they can be very unsafe for people. DHHR licensure reports point to the high risk for injury and abuse in nursing homes. Karen stated that she could write a book on the injustice she saw while living in a nursing home. Steve stated that empty space in government and private facilities will continue to be filled with people who are devalued in society and therefore, is dangerous to people with disabilities.

Dee stated that the OSE is monitoring the educational portion of out of state facilities in which WV children are being placed. She stated that her office is working closely with the DHHR to find better solutions such as a joint pilot project in Region II to better serve WV children.

Steve gave an overview of the cost comparisons between housing people in State run hospitals and ICF/MR group homes versus community based settings and services for people. He urged members to be diligent in advocating for person-centered community supports and full community integration for people with developmental disabilities.

He stated that institutional settings such as Colin Anderson and Spencer State Hospital are not a “choice” for people. He asked the Council to remember the words of Wolf Wolfensberger (the “Father” of the Normalization concept in North America), “Smaller isn’t always good, but big is always bad.”

Steve gave a brief overview on **education** and **employment** issues critical to the Council as outlined in the Council handout. He urged the Council to be diligent in advocating for supported employment rather than workshop settings. He said that people with developmental disabilities want to work, but they are frequently unable to get the supports they need.

Jeannie Elkins shared her son’s experience with his school to work program which she hopes will become a permanent job after graduation. She said that his DRS counselor stated that they would be unable to provide support (i.e. job coach), thus jeopardizing her son’s position at a local hospital. Ken Kennedy stated that people needed to call him when they experience difficulty with supported employment.

Ken asked to be invited to the next Employment Committee meeting. He said that the Council handout did not tell the whole story about employment and the progress being made by DRS. A discussion ensued.

Jan addressed concern that while the Governor's proposed budget retains facility based funding levels it cuts supported employment.

Libby stated she feels that the people who make decisions affecting peoples' lives forget that everyone is different and they try to pigeon-hole everyone into strict categories, which often don't work for people. Steve reiterated the need to place the control of services in the hands of those who rely on them, their families and friends.

Steve raised a concern that future Council funding could be based on the number of people in competitive employment and community housing. He said that funding could be jeopardized if we do not make significant strides in these crucial areas. A discussion ensued.

Steve stated that there currently is a freeze on new recipients for the **Aged/Disabled and MR/DD Waiver Programs**. Jim P. stated that additional MR/DD Waiver slots are highly dependent on the proposed cigarette tax.

Linda gave an overview of the Council comments on the **Medicaid Aged and Disabled Waiver Draft Manual** (see handout). She also shared the comments provided by the Real Choice Partnership. A discussion ensued. Linda asked members to get back to her before January 30th if they had any additional comments.

Bobby Reynolds stated that the Bureau of Senior Services has received numerous comments on the draft A/D Manual. She stated that she will extend the comment period to February 8. Members can access the draft on the BoSS website.

Jan gave an overview of **current issues at the WV Legislature** (see handout) and discussed strategies for being an effective advocate when dealing with lawmakers.

At this point members split into three small discussion groups

Notes from each group's discussions are attached. Included in the discussions were the new Federal/State education "No Child Left Behind Act", the current MR/DD Waiver slot status and strategies on addressing several systems change issues.

Approval of the October 22, 2002 Minutes:

Kevin made and Karen seconded a motion to accept the Minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

New Business:

Inclusion Awards

Jeannie Elkins gave an update on the Inclusion Awards. Sherman Jr. High, Ripley High, and Arthur I. Boreman Elementary won awards for inclusive programs at their schools. Nancy Monroe and Joyce Walsh won individual teacher awards. Awards are being made at Board of Education meetings in the home counties of the winning schools.

Awards were presented to the individual winners at the January 21, 2003 Kanawha Co. School Board Meeting. Steve, Laura, Cheryl, Linda and Betsy attended. Ripley High School was given their award at the January 24, 2003 Jackson County Board Meeting. Jerri and Steve attended that one. Jim showed the plaques and inclusion posters that are being presented to the winners.

Jeannie thanked Cheryl Vega for the original idea and Dee for her assistance and financial contributions. Frank pointed out that A.I. Boreman was a grant recipient from the Council when he worked at the Council. He was pleased that they had used it to begin an award winning program.

Laura recognized the schools which received a Certificate of Appreciation. The runner up schools are: Bradley Elementary (Raleigh), Eastern Greenbrier Junior High (Greenbrier), Bridgeview Elementary (Kanawha), Pikeview High (Mercer), Winfield High (Putnam) and Glenville Elementary (Braxton).

Laura also recognized Betsy for the fine work she did in making the Council's new inclusion poster, "**Every Child Belongs.**" Copies were provided to Council members.

Nomination Committee Report

Laura introduced Dr. John David Smith, Director of Social Work Department, Concord College and candidate for Council membership

Jeanne Grubb, Chair of the Nomination Committee, recommended Dr. John David Smith to fill the Higher Education vacancy on the Council.

Dr. Smith introduced himself and gave an overview of his background and reviewed his personal philosophies regarding inclusion and other issues relevant to the Council. He excused himself from the room for the Council vote.

Steve and Debrin gave an overview of their impressions of Dr. Smith and relayed his enthusiasm for the Council and its mission.

John Hunneshagen made and Kevin seconded a motion to elect Dr. John David Smith to fill the Higher Education vacancy.

Motion carried. Debrin abstained.

Laura welcomed John David to the Council as the new Higher Education representative.

Other Business:

Laura gave an overview of the handouts contained in the Council packets.

Jan gave an overview of the *ADA Watch* found in the Council packets. She stated that the disability community opposes the judicial nomination of Jeffery Sutton to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Jeannie stated that there is a website in the publication where advocates can access a petition.

Jim and Frank gave an overview of the *National Core Indicators Project* and the newly released national report. Frank suggested that members review the information and come to the next meeting with questions. He also suggested inviting Cindy Beane, of the BHHF DD Division, to the next meeting to provide more detailed information about the project.

Debrin suggested that the Core Indicators report indicate whether the individual with a developmental disability answered personally or whether a question was answered by a representative or other person. Laura suggested that there could be significant differences in reports made in a face to face interview versus those answered by a service provider. She expressed concern that people might not feel that they could be honest about quality of services because of fear of reprisal and loss of services.

Kevin stated that he would be interviewed as part of the project.

Proposed By Law Changes

Laura reviewed the proposed changes to the By-Laws:

- change the Council size from 34 to 32;
- change the Higher Education position to a two-year renewable term;
- change the number of at-large members from 3 to 2.

These changes will be reflected in the related policy as well.

Debrin made and Robin seconded a motion to accept the proposed changes to the By-Laws.

Motion carried. John David abstained.

Announcements

Richard announced that he and Kevin will attend the *Shifting the Power* conference on self-advocacy. Steve announced that the Council is sponsoring them plus two other self-advocates. He asked Kevin and Richard to discuss the training at the next Council meeting.

Laura announced that the Council received a letter of thanks from Helen Panzironi, WVCED, for sponsoring four individuals for the conference. The Council is the only group which sponsored more than one individual.

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Laura announced that Debrin, Rosanna and Michael are at the end of their second term. After a year, they may re-apply. Their terms officially expire when the Governor re-appoints new members.

Laura appointed Libby, Kevin and Pat to serve as the new Nomination Committee. It will bring forth nominations for new members at the next Council meeting.

Laura announced that staff is working with Mary Ellen Zeppuhar to get college credits from WVU for participation in the Council's future Program Analysis of Service Systems (PASS) workshops.

Christy announced that the Health Committee will be meeting at the Council office at 6:00 pm on February 12, 2003.

Adjournment

James made and Kevin seconded a motion to adjourn.

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm

**Next Meeting: April 22, 2003
 Comfort Inn & Suites
 Mineral Wells, WV**