

Volume 3, Issue 2 May 2010

Rehab Council Connection a quarterly e-newsletter

From left to right and top to bottom page 1:

Masthead: "Our Volunteer Members; Jeffry Abe-Gunter, Spokane; Valerie Arnold, Elma; Don Brandon, Mountlake Terrace; Sandra Carr, Spokane; Sharey Cleveland, Nespalem; Vickie Foster, Seattle; Rudy Hernandez, Burien; Mike Hudson ,Bellingham; Jerry Johnsen, Seattle; Susan Kautzman, Grand View; Jim Larson, Olympia; Vanessa Lewis, Tacoma; Martin McCallum, Olympia; R.L. Roberts, Spokane; Andres Aguirre, Olympia, ex-officio"

DVR Seeking Comment on State Plan Update

DVR is drafting a State Plan Update. The plan is required by the Rehabilitation Services Administration of all publicly funded Vocational Rehabilitation programs as a condition of receiving federal funding. The planning process requires DVR to identify the goals and priorities that will guide its approach to service delivery through Federal Fiscal Year 2013. The document also includes information about how DVR intends to use funding to innovate or expand services. The plan will be only as strong as the quality of the ideas it contains and DVR's commitment to implement it. Together members of the WSRC and DVR are co-sponsoring three forums this month to gather input on the draft. We are seeking insight from a cross section of informed stakeholders about how to position DVR and the customers it serves to succeed.

Review the DRAFT State Plan Update at:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dvr/About/DraftStatePlan.aspx> or send comment to Phyllis Hansen at hanse@dshs.wa.gov by June 15th

Right side bar: “Save the Dates: Please join us at the State Plan Forum nearest you. SHARE YOUR INPUT: May 7^h Lacey 1:30-3:30pm 640 Woodland Square Loop SE Lacey, WA 98503 1st Floor Conference Room May 14th Spokane 9:00-11:00am Spokane DVR Office Rockpoint Conference Room 1313 N Atlantic, Suite 1000

May 21st Lynwood 1:00-3:00pm 20311 52nd Avenue W, Suite 200 Lynnwood, WA 98036 DVR conference room ASL interpretation provided. To request reasonable accommodation contact krulik@dshs.wa.gov”

Council Recommends Changes to State Plan Update

Urged that DVR to add a goal about increasing effective communication and collaboration with Community Rehabilitation Program partners. Suggested that strategies to support the attainment of the goal should align with the actions DVR agreed to take following the last RSA monitoring visit.

Requested that DVR strike mention of implementing Project HIRE broadly. Phase one results did not meet contract expectations. Comprehensive evaluation is needed before further actions identified.

Objected to the approach DVR took to framing innovation and expansion. There is always room for innovation, even when discussing existing program activities.

Encouraged DVR to explain with greater clarity and specificity, how the strategies, will support the attainment of goals. The Council also suggested that DVR incorporate more outcome-based measures for several strategies so that progress can be tracked.

Lower right contents box: “Inside this Issue DVR Seeking Comment page 1 Council Recommends Changes page 1 Open Door page 2 WSRC Brings Partners Together page 2 April Forum Feedback page 3”

Rehab Council Connection Page 2 of 3

Senior Leaders Open Door to WSRC

Keeping lines of communication open between DVR and the WSRC is essential to sustaining an effective policy partnership. Andres Aguirre and the Senior Leadership Team have signaled a greater openness by inviting us to their team meetings. We appreciate the gesture and the access to decision makers.

The dialogue is just beginning. This is a positive development.

We recognize the necessary role of in-depth discussions on issues and challenges facing the system and the customers it serves.

During our most recent meeting we asked questions DVR’s approach to customer relations and complaint resolution. We highlighted the persistent feedback the Council has received from customers seeking timely responses to telephone calls and emails. The Council appreciates the increased transparency of the Senior Leadership Team and looks forward to continued constructive dialogue.

Upper right hand box: “The WSRC is recruiting a member representing Business & Industry from Central or Eastern Washington. Have a prospect in mind? Please email Rudy today at: hernar@dshs.wa.gov”

Upper left hand bar: "ACTIONS FROM LEGISLATIVE SESSION TO IMPACT DVR AND ITS CUSTOMERS"

DVR secured the necessary \$4 million State General funds to maximize the federal grant funds it brings to Washington State through FFY 2012.

DDD secured necessary funding to support some of the young people it serves to transition from high school to work.

DSHS is making a plan in response to the furlough bill. The bill requires that Washington State employees take ten specific days off without pay. This will likely impact service delivery to DVR customers.

The program formerly known as "General Assistance Unemployable" has been retooled. Beginning in January 2011, it will be the "Disability Lifeline." The program provides resources including, (but not limited to) a housing voucher, food stamps, substance abuse treatment for 2 years only. The legislation requires recipients to participate in the VR process. DVR leaders are working with colleagues at the Economic Services Administration to develop a referral assessment tool."

WSRC Brings Partners Together

41.8 percent of DVR's current customer base experience 4 or more functional limitations that create barriers to employment. Customers with multiple barriers to employment, frequently require extended supports and services to secure and retain work. DVR purchases extended supports and services from the Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) with whom it contracts. The effectiveness of the partnership between DVR and CRPs impacts the likelihood of customer success, and in turn, the rehabilitation rate DVR achieves. This is why the WSRC invited

DVR and representatives of a new CRP member organization called the Community Employment Alliance to our April quarterly meeting. We asked DVR and representatives from the Community Employment Alliance for specific actions they could take to communicate and collaborate more effectively. To learn more about the content of the discussion you can review draft minutes of the April quarterly meeting on our website. www.wastrehabcouncil.org after May 17th. To learn more about the Community Employment Alliance, visit: www.communityemploymentalliance.org.

Middle right box: "UPDATE: Status of the hiring process for the next DVR Director Position posted in February, Position closed in March, Hiring process suspended, News about next steps expected in June. STAY TUNED..."

Bottom Center: "THESE DVR COUNSELORS & REHAB TECHS WERE COMMENDED FOR THEIR EXCELLENCE BY CUSTOMERS AT THE APRIL CUSTOMER FORUM

Karen Clack, Laurel Walden, Trish Hines, Christina Martinez, Megan Grudbrecher, Christopher Spenser, Melissa Holton, Adriana Tossani, Francis Gathenya"

Need for Stronger Communication During VR Process Stressed at April Customer Forum

The WSRC hosted the second quarterly forum of 2010 in SeaTac on April 15th. We sent invitations to the 3, 459 customers with open cases in King County. It felt as though all of them accepted our invitation but according to the record, sixty-eight customers signed in. Some wished to comment, others preferred to listen. One customer dialed in by phone to offer comment. In addition

the Council received 21 written comments before or during the meeting and approximately 40 telephone calls to the Council office. We do not know what accounts for the level of response.

We were moved by the numbers of customers who shared positive feedback. The following VRCs or RTs were singled out for praise: Karen Clack, Laurel Walden, Trish Hines, Christina Martinez Megan Grundbrecher, Christopher Spenser, Melissa Holton, Adriana Tossani, and Francis Gathenya. Three customers submitted written commendations but did not name their Counselors. Some present were less satisfied. The themes in the comments were: frustration due to untimely responses to phone calls or e-mail inquiries; and, desire of customers and families for DVR to make the process easier to navigate by: Providing clear and comprehensive information up front about how the process, “is supposed to work.” Speakers also suggested that DVR furnish examples of the spectrum of services it provides.

On April 30th the WSRC furnished a summary of the comments to all Supervisors of DVR offices in King County, and the cadre Area Managers and State Office leaders. The summary included the following recommendations: Reinforce that maintaining communication with customers is not an additional responsibility, but an inherent part of caseload management; Emphasize DSHS policy requiring calls to be returned in 24 hours; Recognize those who prioritize keeping lines of communication with customers open; Examine, evaluate, and strengthen the approaches taken to customer orientation, and; Develop and implement a “re-orientation to the VR process” for customers who either possess disability characteristics which requires that they review information repeatedly before it can be understood or retained, or long-term customers who are not making progress in the VR process.

We look forward to receiving feedback from DVR colleagues on these recommendations.

Leftside Bar: “The WSRC View our 2009 Annual Report and to visit us on the web go to www.wastrehabcouncil.org

4565-7th Ave SE, 1st floor, P.O. Box 45343, Olympia, WA 98504-5343 PHONE: 1 (866) 252-2939 FAX: (360) 407-3899.”

“COMING STRAIGHT TO YOU
QUARTERLY FROM CYBERSPACE”