

**CITY OF PITTSBURGH/ALLEGHENY COUNTY
TASK FORCE ON DISABILITIES**

March 21, 2005

MINUTES

Location: First Floor Conference Room
Civic Building, 200 Ross Street
Pittsburgh, PA

Members Present: John Tague, Chairperson, Paul O'Hanlon, Co-chair, Aurelia Carter, Liz Healey, Milton Henderson, Jeff Parker, Penny Perlman, Katherine D. Seelman

Members Absent: Ruth Walter Brenyo, Linda Dickerson, Rich McGann

Others Present: Judy Barricella, Darlene Barton, Eugene Barton, Jennifer Behun, Adolphine Birescik, Brenda Dare, Amie Downs, Janet Evans, Rachael Gunde, Rosanne Jones, Chuck Keenan, Rob A. Kohlmeyer, Jerry Laychak, Arnetta F. McCoy, Richard Meritzer, Viswa P. Mohanty, Lisa Moses, David Rosenblatt, Carolyn Vidt

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Tague at 1:15 PM.

Approval of the agenda:

It was decided that Children Issues would be removed and Advanced Directives would be added.

Introductions:

All members and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of February 2005 Minutes:

Dr. Seelman moved that THE MINUTES BE APPROVED AS SUBMITTED. Mr. Henderson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Financial Report:

Mr. Parker reported that the only expense since the last meeting was in Fiscal / Operations support for Jan Mathers. \$10,500 has been set aside in our budget for Disability Connection. With the other items encumbered for fiscal, travel, materials and interpreters, \$9,559.72 remains unencumbered.

Dr. Seelman asked about the updating of the mailing list. Mr. Parker reported that Suzie Chase of Working Order said they hired a disabled person to update the list. They are on hold until a work plan is developed. Mr. Tague and Ms. Moses reviewed the data base and are ready to make calls to get the missing Emails.

It was pointed out that the Task Force must submit quarterly reports on its accomplishments. Two quarters are now due. The report will be summarized. We are now finishing the third quarter. Ms. Healy asked for clarification that the first quarter was July through September of last year. It was. Mr. Parker suggested that we should put in the report the results of the Strategic Planning process. Dr. Seelman said that Mr. Tague serves on an employment oriented committee. Representative form the Task Force should be included in the report. Mr. Tague added that Mr. O'Hanlon served on the Consolidated Plan Committee.

Ms. Healy said we should continue to work on the follow up of the "Small Differences" video. She requested that the Task Force direct those members working on that project (Ms. Healy, Dr. Seelman and Mr. Parker) to proceed.

Nominating Committee:

Both Applicants were in attendance at the meeting and were introduced. Mr. Meritzer explained the process. Dr. Seelman thanked Mr. Meritzer for his work on the nomination process.

OVR Public Hearing:

Caroline Vidt, chair of the OVR Advisory Committee, explained the hearing process and invited everyone to participate. They are looking for comments on the operation of the system, not for personal comments. Both consumers and the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council have objected to some of the drastic changes made. Advocacy does work. The hearing will be April 4th in this room from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Seelman asked how the Plan could be accessed. Ms. Vidt pointed out it was on the OVR Web site through the Department of Labor. It has also been published. Brenda Dare pointed out that you do not have to attend the hearing for all two hours. Ms. Vidt said the Consumer Advocacy Committee will be running the hearing. OVR staff will be in attendance. They will be looking requests for additions or changes to the work plan. All comments will be submitted to OVR. Ms. Cater asked if they had produced a flyer. Ms. Vidt replied that the State will be coming out with a flier and that she would get it to me digitally. The web address is www.state.pa.us.

Employment:

Mr. Tague informed the Task Force that Enable America would be holding a Town Hall meeting on either May 19th or 24th. Dr. Seelman pointed out that no date has been decided. She would let Mr. Meritzer know when a date is selected so he can send the information to the Task Force members. Enable America offered to do a Town Meeting on employment. Melva Livingstone Goodbetter, Maggie Castile and a student will be coordinating. Mr. Tague will represent the Task Force on the Committee. We can use the Coordinating Committee and their energy to move this issue forward.

Mr. Tague reported he is forming a committee. Mr. Parking and Dr. Seelman volunteered to serve on the committee. Mr. Tague wants to look at employment in the City and County first. He will send out an email on the meeting.

Right to Know Legislation:

Mr. Tague pointed out that at the last meeting David Rosenblatt of SEIU Local 504 Direct Care Workers gave a power point presentation on the legislation. Mr. Rosenblatt reminded us that at that time there were three concerns raised. The first was the lack of Task Force members present. The second was a desire to know what other organizations have endorsed the legislation. He brought a list. The third was a desire to hear more from consumers and family members. He introduced Rosanne Jones.

Ms. Jones is the parent of a 40 year old severely retarded son, Todd. She gave a brief overview of what her son went through in the MH / MR system. She has been fighting for 40 years. She started first at a Day Care Center in Allegheny County. She served on the MH / MR Board in 1991. She is on the Right to education Task Force. He entered the system through Mercy Behavioral. Todd had been on the waiting list for 19 years. He was finally offered an apartment. He is a very well behaved and lovable young man with serious medical conditions. He must get his medication. At this first apartment the Nurse did not know what to do. She was never trained. At Ms. Jones request they got her son a second nurse. She was not trained either. Ms. Jones was barred from seeing her son. Todd's roommate was violent and distant. Todd was then moved to another facility suddenly. She was told this is the way it is going to be. Since then he has had many seizures. At this new facility there are people who were not trained. Caretakers are not getting charts on current medications. He had a seizure two weeks ago. She got a phone call that he was going to Allegheny General Hospital. Todd needs his medication rectally and the staff person refused to give it to him because she did not want feces on her hand. There were gloves available. Staff people in the system are not qualified. She works in the system. Clients from personal care homes come to eat where she works and they are turned away because they stink. People are not paid enough to provide adequate care. There are no advocates for these patients.

At this point Mr. McGann called to say he was dropped off by Access at his home, not the meeting room.

Ms. Healy said that over 60% of the people who receive services from MH / MR do not have family members. A gentleman from the audience asked if Todd was on Tegretal for his seizures. Mr. Jones said he was on a Number of medications.

Amie Downs from County Council spoke. This legislation was drafted by County Councilwoman Cleary and was introduced March 1, 2005. Councilwoman Brenda Frazier chairs the committee and would be setting a meeting to discuss the legislation. It has not been determined if there should be a hearing. The Committee chair decides if the public can speak at the committee meeting. There is a public comment period at all County Council meetings. It is being called Report Card Legislation because if it passes a report card would be available to patients and family members. She asked for the Task Force input. They will still be improving the legislation over the next month.

Dr. Seelman pointed out there was no reference to training in the legislation. Ms. Downs responded that they should add work force qualifications. Dr. Seelman explained that there is very little opportunity for training that is affordable. Mr. Tague reminded the Task Force that they had been asked to look at the legislation and suggest changes. Mr. Rosenblatt has asked us to support this legislation. Dr. Seelman pointed out that two different groups were requesting two different activities. Both were appropriate. Ms. Downs pointed out that she has been in communication with Shawn Fox of the County Executive's office. Mr. Rosenblatt handed out the list of organizations that have endorsed the Right to Know campaign.

Doctor Seelman said the mission of the Task Force is to advise the County on our positions as Mr. Rosenblatt asked and to comment on the legislation as Ms. Downs asked. Ms. Carter added the Task Force should endorse the legislation and we should look for ways to improve it. We should continue to move forward on this. Mr. Henderson asked what the follow-up plan was. Ms. Carter responded that it was the task Force's job to follow up. Mr. Tague asked for a motion to discuss. Dr. Seelman moved that THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH / ALLEGHEY COUNTY TASK FORCE ON DISABILITIES SUPPORT COUNTY COUNCIL BILL # 188005, THE REPORT CARD LEGISLATION. Ms. Carter seconded the motion. Dr. Seelman said it would be useful for Ms. Downs to respond to what the outcome of this bill would be. Ms. Downs said it would amend the Contracting section of the Allegheny County Administrative Code allowing the County to terminate and stop contracts with agencies which do not comply. The information would be available on the Web.

Mr. Henderson pointed out that the County Department of Public Works passed legislation recently. Does this overlap? Ms. Downs said that was for MRDD providers. Ms. Barricella asked if this legislation included any pay requirement. Mr. Tague responded that this was not living wage legislation. Ms. Jones added that where she works also runs a food bank. The workers from these facilities go to the food bank. Mr. O'Hanlon pointed out that the network of providers doesn't capture personal care homes. Ms. Downs replied that it does not cover personal care homes except to MRDD facilities. The motion was passed unanimously.

Housing:

Mr. Henderson reported that he was working with Stan and Chuck to set up a meeting to discuss the plans. Also there is a new development in Tarentum and they offered to let people see it. Mr. Tague pointed out that this was a Mall the Mills Corporation is building out Route 28.

Mr. Tague also reported that he had been unable to reach Ruth Brenyo.

Voting Update:

Mr. O'Hanlon reported there had been no results or achievements. We are at a crisis. Allegheny County is typical for Pennsylvania. There has been for 20 years a law on the book that only accessible polling places can be used in Federal and State elections. Some of the money we are getting from HAVA (Help America Vote Act) is to increase the number of accessible polling places. There is still no plan. If we don't get accessible polling places now, we will never get them. We have a Federal law, Federal money and a sympathetic Secretary of State. We must move now.

The Director of Elections was here almost a year ago to discuss this problem. Every County in Pennsylvania has this problem; it's systemic. We must find out what needs to be done. On March 31st there is a meeting of the Election Task Force in Harrisburg. Mr. O'Hanlon is speaking.

Mr. Tague added that he had met with County Executive Onorato and Director Wolosik. County Executive Onorato said he would appoint a committee to look into this. Mr. Henderson and Mr. Parker were there. So far nothing has happened. Ms. Healy responded there are three pressure points; communicate with County Council, inform the Governor's office and inform the Legislative office of Civil Rights at the Federal level. In education if civil rights are violated special education funds can be held up. Mr. O'Hanlon responded that he does not want to hold up Federal funds for more accessible voting machines. Ms. Barricella said resources are one thing, will is another. County Executive Onorato approached her about this issue but there was no follow-up. Ms. Carter suggested we go back to him and follow-up in written form. Mr. O'Hanlon said Mr. Wolosik is a great civil servant, but he is not convinced that Mr. Wolosik doesn't have resources.

Ms. Barricella said Mr. Onorato will give this project to the solicitor as a job to do, but more people need to request this then just the Task Force. Mr. Henderson he will go back with the information on accessibility. They should follow-up with County Executive Onorato and then do a survey on what needs to be done to increase accessibility. Mr. Tague pointed out that the Task Force advises the County. We should be careful about ratcheting it up. Ms. Healy asked which committee of County Council would be responsible for this issue. Ms. Downs said it was a special committee chaired by Council Member Jabour. Ms. Carter said we should invite Mr. Onorato to the next meeting. The Task Force starts working on some issues but does not follow-up. Mr. O'Hanlon said he would invite Mr. Onorato to the next meeting. Mr. Henderson said he would prefer to have a follow-up meeting with him. Inviting him to a Task Force meeting is just spinning our wheels. Ms. Carter said she would like him to hear from consumers as well.

Disability Connections:

Ms. Barricella reported on a meeting of an ad hoc new leaders group. She is organizing a Disability Leadership Summit on June 15th. At this summit those attending will break up into issue groups. Voting Accessibility could be one of those groups. The County received a grant from the State for a pilot project on an Urban Demonstration site for an Aging and Disability Resource Center. This will streamline service information and become a one stop shop. The Department of Human Services will pull stakeholders together to develop a plan. They will be meeting in April and she expects the contract to be in place by July.

Mr. Henderson asked how large is the grant for? Would it cover new staff? Ms. Barricella replied they received \$466,000 for two centers and one new staff person. Mr. Henderson asked how the resource manual was coming along. Ms. Barricella replied it is on the web site. She added she wanted to do a calendar, but she just doesn't have enough time.

Cuts in Medical Assistance:

Ms. Healey asked if we could move to new business. There will be a Cut MA No Way Rally in Harrisburg. She moved THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH / ALLEGHENY COUNTY TASK FORCE ON DISABILITIES SPONSER THE CUT MA NO WAY RALLY IN HARRISBURG. Ms. Carter seconded the motion. Ms. Perlman asked what sponsorship means. Ms. Healy responded we will be listed as a sponsor. Two buses are going from Pittsburgh. Mr. Tague informed the Task Force he was going. The motion passed unanimously.

Transportation:

Mr. Tague reported that the Governor Flexed Transportation funds. SPC voted to approve the flex money to tide Port Authority over until June. Then SPC must approve additional funds. We continue to talk to the Legislature about funding Public Transportation.

Consolidated Plan:

Mr. O'Hanlon said this could be held until the next meeting.

New Issues:

Mr. Tague reported on the Linda Dickerson Dinner for Working Women. He asked the Task Force to send people. The Dinner is April 21st at the Radisson in Greentree. Tickets are \$60.00. Ms. Healy pointed out that since was an expenditure, there needs to be a motion passed. Dr. Seelman asked how we distinguish what events people should be sent to. Mr. Parker asked how have we done this before. Have we supported organizations before, but not bought tickets? Ms. Healy said the criteria should be does it advance our agenda. If there is a goal any work done at the event is worth it. Mr. Parker pointed out that the Employment Committee is just getting off the ground. He moved to SEND ONE REPRESENTATIVE TO THE LINDA DICKERSON DINNER FOR WORKING WOMEN. Dr. Seelman seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.

Ms. Perlman reported that mental health legislation has been passed for Advance Directives. This is a living will for mental health. While the patient is stable they write up a plan. This includes what happens when they are under care and appoints an agent and a secondary agent. Ms. Healy said this is an important issue. We should get the information out to the community using our Web page and emails. Ms. Perlman said she can get a list of trainings.

Ms. Healy requested that we add an item on next month's agenda. Allegheny County has four support coordination units. The County is discontinuing the UPMC unit. Can Mark Chernov come to speak at the next meeting on what plans are being made to accommodate patients? Ms. Barricella said the letter implies the WPIC decided not to continue the center. Ms. Healy said that they were coordinating and the Coordinator could not provide services. They picked up the Center when Saint Frances folded. Will the support staff be moved or will the case load go up? Mr. Rosenblatt said the Task Force might look at their relationship with the MH/MR Advisory Board. Fair for Families will decide where the patients will go and the money will follow. Ms. Healy said the whole Task Force should be involved because we are developing a program of looking at a broader range of disabilities. Mr. Tague told Ms. Healy to invite Mr. Chernov. Ms. Barricella also suggested she set up a meeting with Dan Clark. Ms. Healy and Ms. Carter both said they could come.

Public Comment:

Ms. Barricella reported that the County has a Director's Action line. The complaints go to Mr. Clark and Mr. Chernov.

Mr. Laychak suggested that we send Ms. Barricella to the Dinner. Mr. Tague responded that she is not a member of the Task Force. Ms. Barricella informed the members that the County does not buy tickets to events.

Adjournment:

It was moved by Ms. Carter to ADJOURN THE MEETING. Ms. Healy seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 PM

THE NEXT TASK FORCE MEETING:	DATE:	April 18, 2005
	TIME:	1:00 P.M.
	LOCATION:	First Floor Conference Room Civic Building, 200 Ross Street Pittsburgh, PA 15219