

Michigan Council for Rehabilitation Services (MCRS)



QUARTERLY BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES - Approved

November 14, 2019, 10:00 a.m. – 3:10 p.m.

MRS State Offices, Cass Building 1-N, Lansing, Michigan

Participation

Council Members Present

Carol Bergquist, Carrie Dudek, Trina Edmondson, Jackie Tahtinen, Aaron Andres, Elham Jahshan (pending her appointment)

Council Members Not Present

Michael Miller (excused), David Szydowski (excused), Tiffany Guthrie (excused), Jennipher Wiebold (participated in morning work session via phone, excused for Business Meeting), and Sheryl Diamond

Ex-Officio Members Present

Bill Robinson - BSBP, and Jonathan Bischoff for Tina Fullerton- MRS

DSU Liaisons Present

Karsten Bekemeier - MRS

DSU Staff Members Present

Nichole Lepley – MRS

12:00 - 3:10 p.m. Business Meeting

Minutes

Chairperson, Carol Bergquist, called the Business Meeting to order at 12 p.m.

Nichole Lepley read the roll call. A quorum was present.

Carrie Dudek made the motion to accept the proposed agenda for the meeting with support from Trina Edmondson. After discussion, additions were added to the agenda including the following: Review of the 2019 Budget, MRS Rate Restructuring Update, and Open Phone Line for business meetings. Motion passed unanimously to add these items to the agenda.

Carrie Dudek made a motion to accept the Minutes from 9/10/19 Business Meeting with support from Aaron Andres. Motion passed unanimously.

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Jackie Tahtinen made a motion to approve the Final 2020 MCRS Business Meeting Calendar with support from Aaron Andres. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business

MCRS Appointments: Karsten Bekemeier and Nichole Lepley from MRS have been working closely with the Governor's Appointments Office to provide information about Appointments required for the Council. MRS was previously informed by the Governor's Office that appointments to the Council would be made by late November. Since the Council has been challenged with vacancies and underrepresentation of key members of the Council this past year, Jackie Tahtinen made a motion with support from Carrie Dudek to have Council Chairperson Carol Bergquist follow up with the LEO Director after January 1, 2020, if we have not heard from the Governor's Office by that date. Motion passed unanimously.

MCRS Member Resignation: Carol shared that one of our members, Brenda Hienge, resigned recently due to new employment with the Developmental Disabilities Council that would preclude her eligibility for Council membership. Brenda represented current or former consumers of VR services and her contributions will be truly missed. Brenda also served on the Council's Executive Team, so that vacancy will also need to be filled.

MCRS FY 2019 Annual Report: The members present, including Jennipher Wielbold who participated in the morning work session, agreed to serve on an Ad Hoc Work Group to complete the Annual Report by RSA's due date of December 30. Jackie Tahtinen made the motion, with support from Aaron Andres, to have the Work Group send the draft to the Executive Team for input, and then to have Chairperson Carol Bergquist send the report to the DSU's by December 16 for their review.

Michigan's Unified State Plan (USP) - MCRS Response: The Council is required to write a response to the Vocational Rehabilitation Section of Michigan's Unified State Plan. Since this section is currently being developed by the DSU's, we postponed work on the Council's response until December.

2020 Resource Plan: Jackie Tahtinen made the motion to accept the final 2020 MCRS Resource Plan that was approved by the DSUs and RSA after our September Business Meeting. Trina Edmondson supported the motion and it passed unanimously.

FY2019 Resource Plan Update: Treasurer Carrie Dudek shared MRS' current report on the FY2019 Resource Plan expenditures by the Council. Aaron Andres made a motion to accept the report, with support from Jackie Tahtinen. Motion passed unanimously.

MRS Rate Restructuring: Carol Bergquist reported that she has recently participated in two committee meetings recently about MRS VR Services rate restructuring. MRS initiated a partnership with Public Consulting Group, Inc.(PCG), a nationally recognized firm, to conduct the study and establish reasonable, allocable, and allowable methodology for necessary (RAAN) VR service rates. This study is required for compliance with federal regulations cited by RSA following their 2017 MRS monitoring review. MRS is encouraging statewide participation from VR partner vendors to ensure accurate and representative rates. Karsten Bekemeier shared updates on this process. Bill Robinson reported that BSBP is also working on rate methodology and a review of fees for VR services.

Old Business

Open Phone Line during Business Meetings: Council Members discussed the need to have an Open Phone Line during Council Business Meetings. The Phone Line would provide access for Members who were unable to attend the meeting in-person and for the general public. The Open Phone Line would also be utilized for periods of Public Comment. All members present agreed that public access was extremely important. An Open Phone Line will be available at all future Business Meetings. Karsten and Nikki will investigate phone line options, including Zoom, which is used by BSBP, MRS and SILC.

BSBP Honor Roll: Three Council members, Elham, Carrie, and Brenda, attended the October 11, 2019, BSBP Honor Roll Celebration in Lansing and were awed by the experience. Bill Robinson expressed appreciation for the Council's participation in this annual event that honors customers.

MRS Champion Awards: Carol and Carrie attended the October 17, 2019 MRS Champion Awards in Lansing. Carol served as the MC of the event on behalf of the Council. Carol and Carrie were very impressed with the event, especially the celebration of the successes of all the award recipients.

UP Special Education Conference: Jackie and Carol participated in the UP Special Education Conference in Marquette on October 10 and 11 and hosted an informational booth about the Council. Responses to the informational booth by attendees were very positive. The majority were teachers and school administrators, who were unaware of the Council and its purpose. Not only did the booth provide the opportunity for attendees to discuss function of the Council, but they also provided feedback about transition services for students with disabilities.

Re: Con: Carol and Carrie attended the Re: Con Conference in Traverse City on November 6-9. On behalf of the Council, they hosted a vendor booth and were able to provide information on the role and function of the Council, as well as receive opinions about VR services across MI. They both participated in the conference workshops, which provided valuable learning opportunities.

DSU Updates

MRS: Jonathan Bischoff, on behalf of Tina Fullerton who was unable to attend the meeting, gave an informative overview of FY 2019 Agency outcomes. Information on MCTI was also shared, including a record number of participants this past year, 13 state-wide training programs that are meeting the needs of both participants and business customers across Michigan, and an 87% job placement rate. Jonathan will send a written summary of the results to the Council.

BSBP: Bill Robinson provided a comprehensive report about BSBP. In collaboration with MRS, he reported that BSBP is in the preliminary stages of piloting some customized employment placements. BSBP has increased their Pre-Employment Transition Services to potentially eligible students with visual impairments in Michigan during FY2019. Bill also discussed BSBP goals for transformative services and empowerment for FY2020. He will also provide the Council with a written summary of FY2019 outcomes. Bill invited Council members to attend the 50th Anniversary of the Kalamazoo Training Center that will be held on December 6, 2019. An invitation will be forwarded to members.

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3:00 p.m. Public Comment: No public comment was given.

Wrap Up

Council Member Share and Announcements:

- There was a brief discussion about ways that Council members might obtain input from VR counselors and staff in field offices regarding any concerns related to serving customers, as well as educate field offices about the role and function of the Council.
- As Chair of the SILC, Council Member Aaron Andres invited everyone to participate in the SILC's Virtual Public Hearing to Gather Input on Michigan's FY2021-2013 State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL), on 12-9-2019 from 11:00am to 1:00pm EST. Teleconference information is Call In 1-646-558-8656 Meeting ID 201-985-965

'To-Do' list from Today's Meeting

1. Post Business Meeting Minutes 11-14-2019 on Website
2. MCRS Ad hoc Work Group to prepare draft FY2019 Annual Report to present to DSUs by 12-16-2019 and to RSA by 12-30-2019
3. MCRS Ad hoc Work Group to begin preparation of draft MCRS response to VR Section of the Unified State Plan by 12-30-2019 and complete when VR Section is received from DSUs
4. Distribute information and confirm MCRS Member participation at BSBP Training Center 50 Year Anniversary Celebration in Kalamazoo on 12-6-2019 and SILC SPIL Meeting on 12-9-2019.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:10 p.m.