MCB Statutory Advisory Board Minutes

June 10, 2022

Present SAB:

Joe Abely, Chair

Kim Charlson

Amy Ruell

Susan Foley

Present MCB:

David D’Arcangelo, Commissioner

John Oliveira, Deputy Commissioner

Nathan Skrocki, Director of Policy and Compliance

Loran Lang, General Counsel

Regina DiMarzo, EA to the Commissioner

Alexander Pooler, Assistive Technology Director

Approximately 12 members of the public also attended.

May meeting minutes approved by SAB.

The meeting was recorded.

Commissioner Update:

* Senate Ways & Means Budget – Commissioner reviewed dashboard. Plans for FY23 staffing – David is optimistic that the number will be modestly higher (maybe by 1 or 2 FTEs). Discussion about potential retirements and possible challenges of low number of applicants. MCB actively trying to get postings out to the public. Amy shared her experience and resource idea for outreach to the blind/visually impaired community regarding open positions.
* Status of the 2022 reallotment fund RFR Process – Sleek Machine working with MCB (pm Kara Sittig) on VR welcome kit project (final stages/on track). Customized VR kits/experience.
IHCD project, UMass Medical project, and NECO project all underway. Nate is managing these 3 projects.

HSRI and MCB AT department working on developing and distributing tech survey. Loran collaborated on reviewing questions. Project objective on understanding consumers’ technology use, demand, and possible barriers. Survey - Part A. demographics, Part B. tech details.

Susan asked about HSRI response rate with previous MCB surveys. Alexander hoping for 5%-7% rate with this survey. Questions to HSRI about strategy of response rates. Request for HSRI to present.

* Description of RFR’s issued during 2022 to be funded by state funds – All consumer survey (waiting on). Data hygiene and Digitization of files and Podcast series with the Polus center.
* Current FY spending against the GAA – Vendor staffing shortages/employee retention present challenges with some programs.

Program Updates:

* Dashboard on Registrations, Process, and Outcomes – Nate presented dashboard. YTD through May, 967 registrations have been processed which is putting us on pace to process over 2000 cases for the year which would be above pre-covid. Registrations are almost being processed in almost real-time. Automation has improved processing time and data efficacy. Working toward the goal of central registration processes being completed within 10 business days.
* Joe asked why the numbers haven’t returned to pre-covid numbers? Nate mentioned that he thinks it may end up between 2021 and 2019 numbers by the end of the year.

Ongoing Discussions:

* Status of effort to automate notification of blindness to assessors for tax exemptions – Communications will first go to staff, then stakeholders, and then to consumers. Anticipated this will happen less than a week apart from each other. Hopeful to begin process next week.
Loran discussed opt-in and opt-out procedure via accessible formstack. Consumers may call or contact via email, via counselor, etc.
* Status on rewrite of reform of organization – Dialogue with HHS. No additional update.
* Update on phone system procurement: Feedback through discovery sessions, passed requirements on to EOHHS IT to EOTTS who is the procurer of phone system. Feedback was gathered from consumers, staff, union, and various stakeholders. EOTTS has gone out on an enterprise-wide solution. EOTTS assured MCB the solution will be able to meet MCB’s requests. Not sure when this will happen. We had hoped for the summer but may possibly happen in the Fall or later.
* Update on PPE available to MCB staff: Remains from last meeting - “KN95 masks continue to be available to MCB staff upon requests. Gowns, gloves, shields, sanitizer etc. are also available upon request. Direct service staff have been approved to receive N95 masks. Fit testing is required for N95 which has been done and will continue to be done on an as needed basis.”
New guidance on congregate care to come.

SAB questions:

 Amy – Delays from Registration to Service
 Consumers not hearing after being registered?

David and John asked for Amy to send the names so that they may address any issues.
David: Once onboarding of new CR staff member is complete, wewill begin delivering the short form which will hopefully eliminate these potential issues. The goal is to have this process flow better.
Challenges with postal services. MCB has been experimenting tacking and possible work arounds.

Next meeting: Friday, August 12 at noon.