**Statutory Advisory Board (SAB)**

**October 3, 2023**

**Minutes**

SAB Attendees: Blair Wong, Brian MacDonald, and Kathy Petkauskos

MCB Staff Attendees: John Oliveira, Nathan Skrocki, Lucy Evangelidis, Mike Saccone, Loran Lang

Meeting Held via Zoom; Recordings made available to public on MCB YouTube channel

Public invited to participate through Q&A made at end of the meeting.

Beginning November 7th, this meeting will occur from 12pm to 1pm.

Minutes

Blair motions to accept the minutes from the September meeting. Minutes accepted.

Commissioner Update: John Oliveira

John says that Secretary Walsh announced that he was appointed Commissioner.

There is a meeting scheduled later this month to discuss the dashboard. Consumer groups and boards have been invited. It is important to agree on the statistics that everyone wants to see. Lucy will forward the meeting to Kathy and Blair.

The reverse job fair has begun. The education session for employers was last week and this Friday is part two.

Media campaign is focusing on the white cane initiative this month. The White Cane Celebration will be held at the State House. Over 100 people have registered so far. Perkins School for the Blind will be providing goodies for attendees.

Staff meetings are starting to return to in person, when possible, but will still include a virtual option.

John provides an update on the additional board members for the SAB. The 5 resumes were submitted and are currently being worked through the selection process. This process takes time.

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services is embarking on a strategic mapping initiative. This is similar to developing strategic plans. It is expected to be completed in four months.

Dashboard Update: Nathan Skrocki

1328 registrations for the year. It was slightly higher last year coming off Covid. Communication will be released to providers in the next few weeks letting them know the best way to register consumers through our portal.

Kathy asks what MCB hopes for in terms of registrations. Nate says we are right where we expected.

There are currently 13 registrations in quality control, 6 that were received through fax, and 1 that needs additional verification.

There are not a lot of changes in our open cases. 839 children’s cases. 2065 SR (social rehabilitation) adults. 1009 DBES (deaf blind extended support) cases. 725 VR (vocational rehabilitation) adults, 200 pre-ETS, and 15 transition youth.

There are currently 86 closed children’s cases and 1700 SR adult cases. VR cases are calculated a little bit differently by the fiscal year so we are at 30 successful closures and 26 non-successful closures.

Kathy asks if it is the federal fiscal year so October through September? Nate says it is the state’s fiscal year so currently July 1st through October 2nd.

Support services are currently close to 2700 people. 6200 certificates of blindness, 824 IDs, 357 EDPs, 52 handicap placards.

Brian asks if there was an update on big data. The only update is regarding the Dashboard meeting previously discussed.

John reminds everyone that October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month so there will be lots of activities from different organizations.

SAB Board Member Questions

Kathy asks about the big survey and when the results would be available to the SAB. John says the survey is completed and was sent to EHS communications to have it vetted before it is shared. We are waiting to get that form back to share the results. John says that results were positive and one section highlights underserved populations.

Blair asks if in the next couple months, the SAB can receive a summary report of the results of the reverse job fair. He also asks how they can help get employers involved. John says he will have the employment services team come to a meeting and give data on those results. The employers who attend the job fair are the groups that employment services are always working with, but they are always looking for new employers. This is an annual event.

Blair asks what the message reads on the billboards. John says they have been done annually and include information about the white cane.

Blair asks if there is a published agenda for the White Cane Day Celebration. Lucy says there is an overview of the event on the MCB website.

Kathy asks if there is still the opportunity to sign up for the resource tables at the event. John says to reach out to mcbinfo email account and they will know if it is full or not.

Questions from the Public

Debbie M asks if the Department of Transportation is participating in the strategic planning. John says no, they are not under our secretariat. This only includes agencies in the executive office of health and human services.

Debbie M asks if there has been progress on appointing a Deputy Commissioner. John says no, not yet. The Deputy Commissioner spot is still available.

David Kingsbury asks what the strategic plan will include as far as content. Is this strategic plan going to be similar to documents in the past and would it be more of a strategic reflection? John says the last document they did was in 2011 or 2012. So far there have been big picture topics discussed and it is being referred to as strategic mapping. He is not sure it will get down to the specifics that David brought up as the Secretariat is determining what is focused on.

Brian says 4 months would be fast if you are doing a full-blown strategic plan with multiple agencies. He says he thinks mapping is the correct word and it will identify strengths and weaknesses.

Jane Perry asks what the status of the phone system is. She also asks about the rehab person who was hired for region 5 and says there is a lack of experience in technology. John says Amanda is a rehab teacher and will do the best she can but is not specifically there for technology support. John says the phone system is being deployed. He will have an update on the timing for that next month.

Liz Lesperance asks if there has been discussion on making the policies that govern the VR program public. John says the VR program is run based on the rehab act. If a consumer wants a certain policy or reasoning for a decision, they have the right to appeal and ask for the policy that was used in making the decision. Nate is happy to provide policy to anyone asking questions.

A reminder that the meetings moving forward will start at 12pm.

Meeting adjourned.