



MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION
STATEWIDE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

Chairperson

**Vice
Chairperson**

Secretary

Members at Large

Dawn Clark

Policy Committee

600 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111

November 7, 2019

11:00 AM -12:30 PM

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order/Introductions:

Naomi Goldberg (SRC), Inez Canada (SRC), Chris Dreher (SRC), Alex Scarlis (CAP), Dawn Clark (SRC)

Remotely:

Rosanna Woodmansee (SRC), Michael Stepansky (DMH)

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes were not yet complete; the vote on the minutes was tabled.

New Business:

The Policy Committee continued its review of internal policy documents provided by MRC.

Today the committee reviewed the Case Closure and Case Closure as Rehabilitated policies. The committee will submit concerns/questions to MRC/Teri Walsh and request feedback on the Policy Committee's comments.

The committee discussed the request that an IPE template be provided to them for the committee to review and discuss. Naomi submitted the request and is waiting to hear from MRC. Michael Stepansky has a blank template that he received from MRC in 2017. The IPE policy will be discussed at the December 5, 2019 Policy Committee meeting.

Case Closure Reference Number 7.00, Dec 13, 2012

Purpose

This instructional memorandum replaces the Instructional Memorandum dated October 15, 1997 about case closure and procedures to be used in closing case records. Please note this instructional memorandum does not replace relevant regulations (CMR) or associated instructional memorandum. Rather, it provides procedures and practices to be used to assure compliance with existing policies.

Case Closure from Referral and Applicant Status

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) **should** work with the individual as long as the outcome is employment. If the counselor believes employment is not possible then a Trial Work Experience (TWE) is necessary. The TWE is to give the individual the opportunity to achieve competitive employment.

Certification of Ineligibility

2nd Page 2nd paragraph

Add a description of services available from the Client Assistance Program (CAP) and how to contact that program.

Add federal regulatory language regarding MRC's obligation to refer individuals with closed cases to other agencies or facilities that can address the individual's training, employment, and rehabilitation needs.

Add federal regulatory language that a closed case must be scheduled for review within 12 months and annually thereafter if requested by the individual or if appropriate by the individual's representative.

- TWE period required by federal law should be added to this section.
- What is the timeframe before an individual is considered for their case to be closed?
 - Define the time frame.
 - What efforts are made to reach out to an individual other than telephone calls and mailing?
 - Text messages and emails are a means of communication that the committee will submit be added to the policy.
- If an individual is ready to work with MRC, what is the timeframe that they have to return the contact?
- Committee also discussed appropriate timeframe for referral to MRC

- Spinal cord injury patients often get rejected as ineligible, because they are not ready to work
- Difficult to know the right time to refer them to VR
- Suggestion made that referral should happen once discharge date is imminent
 - paperwork can be completed beforehand and submitted to MRC on day of discharge

Action Items: Dawn will inquire for data on ineligibility

Case Closure after Determinations of Eligibility when not Rehabilitated

3rd paragraph

Change one year to within 12 months and annually thereafter if requested by individual or individual's rep.

Regulations Rehabilitation 361.43 says that a review must be conducted every 12 months

- What is a reasonable amount of time to conduct the review?
- If an individual changes his mind, are they able to return to MRC for services when they are within the 12 month period?

Delete homemaker references in policy.

Under Notifications, add "the services available under CAP and how to contact CAP."

Discussion:

- What do individuals who suffer with substance abuse, mental health/ homelessness do when their disabilities may be viewed as being too severe to benefit from services?
- Area offices have different policies when it comes to individuals who are determined ineligible when confronted with these disabilities. Area offices have difference approaches to the period of time an individual must be sober before applying for services (30, 60 or 90 days). Individuals who are homeless or if an individual does not take prescribed mental health medications are also determined ineligible in some offices.
- Under Federal Regulations sobriety is not a requirement in order to receive VR services.
- Eligibility Policy add a statement re: substance use not being a bar to VR eligibility under "Prohibited Factors" listed in Subsection 4.07 of CMR
- Counselors must take extra care when determining an individual for services that their biases are not interfering with their decision.

Case Closure as Rehabilitated Reference Number 7.03, Dec 13, 2012

Comments for whole document

- Check CMR references for accuracy
- Replace certain language with language from CFRs
- Hyperlink references

Who are the appropriate signatures for case closure?

Competitive Integrated Employment was defined:

- Person making minimum wage or higher
- Receive benefits that are substantially similar to people without disabilities; and
- Community based

Action Items

- Naomi will submit a request for the IPE template
- Dawn will retrieve data on:
 - How many cases have been determined ineligible due to lack of communication
- The word 'should' be changed to 'must' throughout the document
- 'He/she' will be changed to 'they,' 'his/hers' will be changed to 'theirs' throughout the document
- Under Conditions for Formal Termination...
 - delete "homemaker" as an employment goal
 - #3, change "suitable" to "satisfactory" to align with federal regs
- Are there data available on how many consumer cases have been closed, and for what reason they have been closed?
- The policy related items listed in the RSA monitoring report are issues on which the committee may also choose to focus. It should be noted that these items are from FY17 and that the report may not necessarily reflect changes that have been made since that time. Potential areas of focus could include:
 - Developing IPEs in a timely manner
 - Focusing on higher quality employment opportunities for all clients including those in transition
 - Making eligibility determinations in a timely manner
 - Making pre-employment transition services available to potentially eligible clients

At the next meeting the discussion will continue about prioritizing the committee's work going forward.

Adjourn 12:30 PM