

**Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**June 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021**  
**1-3pm EST**

**Attendees:**

- Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Members: Joe Bellil, Inez Canada, Naomi Goldberg, Steve LaMaster, Olympia Stroud
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) Staff: Amanda Costa, Kate Biebel
- Public: Sarah Wiles (CAP), Ronaldo Fujii, Cheryl Scott (WIB), Ellen Breslin (HMA-vendor), Uma Ahluwalia (HMA-vendor), Juliet Marsala (HMA-vendor), Michael Anderson-Nathe (HMA-vendor) Bill Henning (Boston ILC), Taciana Ribeiro-Saab (Boston ILC)

Please Note: This meeting was held remotely.

**Meeting was called to order at 1:03pm by the Chair.**

**Introductions:**

- Executive Committee meeting attendees and Health Management Associate (HMA) team members introduced themselves. Attendees who arrived late were asked to introduce themselves in the chat.

**Minutes Approval – Mr. Bellil**

- Mr. Bellil. motioned to approve minutes from the previous Executive Committee meeting. Ms. Stroud seconded the motion. The May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were approved with no amendments.

**Old Business:**

- **Debrief of meeting w/Robert Jones re: Membership**
  - Ms. Canada met with Robert Jones from Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), as the point of contact for the Boards and Commissions. He screens SRC membership applications before the EOHHS Secretariat approves sending the applications to the Boards and Commission.
  - Ms. Canada and Mr. Jones discussed ways to make the SRC application process more efficient by working with Mr. Jones to ensure all applicant information is streamlined. The two discussed information the SRC can provide to reduce the amount of time the application stays at the Secretariat level review. The information included why a person wants to join the SRC; their background with disability work, if any; demographic to promote diversity, and noting red flags.

- Ms. Canada and Mr. Jones also discussed and will document a process for prompting applicants who are stagnant in their application process.
- Ms. Canada recommended to the Committee that we document the new process for tracking recruitment efforts.
- **Adjustments to agenda for June 17<sup>th</sup> SRC Quarterly Meeting**
  - The June 17<sup>th</sup> full SRC meeting agenda has been adjusted slightly to allow for our new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Consultants to present and describe their purpose for engagement, and how they plan to tackle the work as well as some other pertinent updates to the agenda.

**New Business:**

- **Subcommittee Updates:**
  - **The Business & Employment Opportunity (BEO) Committee: Mr. LaMaster**
    - Mr. LaMaster walked through the purpose of the committee noting that he was new to the SRC and position as BEO Chair. He provided a recap on the FY21 goals for this committee: (1) to increase the number of state employees with disabilities (2) to develop and communications marketing and branding strategy for the Statewide Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and (3) update and make more user-friendly employment resource materials.
    - The Committee will be meeting next Thursday, 6/10/21 at 1pm EST.
    - Since the last meeting, Mr. LaMaster had a follow-up conversation with Bill Allen from the MRC Job Placement team and Mr. Allen recommended Mr. LaMaster host a meeting with a diversity and recruitment manager who works for the Commonwealth. The meeting will take place next Tuesday, 6/8/21, and will also include the Director of Diversity and Equal Opportunity. The discussion will be focused on how to collaborate regarding improving the numbers of employees with disabilities employed at MRC.
    - Mr. LaMaster also met with MRC Communications Director on January 29<sup>th</sup> with the goal of working collaboratively to have access to key communications, when appropriate, for review by SRC and opportunities to provide input to communications, marketing and branding materials that go out from MRC.
  - **Policy Committee: Ms. Goldberg**
    - Ms. Goldberg walked through the purpose of the committee and provided updates on the work. The group continues to work on recommendation re: improvements to procurement to ensure there are sufficient services available to consumers and enough varieties to meet the need of consumers. Ensuring cultural and linguistic needs are considered as part of procurement.
    - SRC is supposed to receive information about fair hearing decisions and are responsible to ensure there are sufficient hearing officers. The committee will ask MRC for information on how the agency advertising

the need for hearing officers and thinking of ways to assist with this effort.

- **Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment Committee: Ms. Stroud & Ms. Costa**
  - Ms. Stroud walked through the purpose of the committee and discussed how the committee is partnering with an ongoing MRC effort to improve the consumer satisfaction survey, developing workgroups to address this work, and identify barriers to overcome.
  - The consumer satisfaction committee met in May to provide feedback to the Synergy Consulting group on what consumers think need to be added into the survey, and how to collect that information. Consumers at the meeting expressed an interest in more open-ended questions to better understand people's experiences, including survey information about transportation needs/experiences, and an interest in better capturing ongoing experiences of consumers.
  - The next meeting will happen in July 2021.
- **State Planning Committee & Fiscal Year 2022 Recommendations: Mr. Bellil**
  - Mr. Bellil walked through the purpose of the committee and recent efforts for all committee members to add in Diversity Equity and Inclusion principles for the proposed MRC recommendations for Fiscal Year 2021.
  - The committee also reviewed the process of developing state plan recommendations, tying information learned from consumer satisfaction data to directly impact development of vocational rehabilitation services, and how the recommendations can be best moved forward by committees to make a real impact on advising and supporting MRC in holding the recommendations.
  - Labeling of the recommendations will be updated to reflect a Fiscal Year 2022. Mr. Bellil will make these corrections.
  - The Chair called for a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2022 recommendations; the motion was presented by Ms. Goldberg and seconded by Ms. Stroud. The vote to approve the State Plan recommendation was unanimous, and the recommendations will be presented at the June SRC Quarterly meeting for approval by the full Council before sending them to MRC for responses.
  - Ms. Biebel recommended that Mr. Bellil give a brief explanation around the purpose and process for the recommendations at the SRC Quarterly meeting as a reminder for the Council. Also, Ms. Biebel requested that the State Plan recommendation timeline, listing the date for MRC's response, be submitted with the vote on June 17, 2021. Mr. Bellil agreed to the recommendation and the request.
- **DEI Launch with Health Management Associates:**
  - Health Management Associates (HMA), the awarded vendor to support Diversity Equity and Inclusion principles, introduced themselves.

- The work they are supporting will be done between now and December 2021. All HMA materials will be reviewed to incorporate basic accessibility principles.
- The team reviewed a slide deck on diversity, equity and inclusion and strategic planning capacity building services (slides uploaded to website).
- Initial definitions that were provided by HMA covered the following:
  - Diversity is around people, the workforce, and domains
  - Equity- the policies and procedures, and are they designed in a way to ensure success for all and set everyone up for success
  - Inclusion- the practice, how are we operating together with each other that sees, values, hears and respects everyone
- An exercise was conducted by the HMA team surrounding two main questions (1) what do we mean when we say diversity, equity and inclusion? (2) Why is SRC focused on DEI now? Feedback from members on these questions included the following:
  - *The Chair recommended that the meeting minutes reflect general responses only to allow for open dialogue in the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion exercise. The Committee agreed.*
  - **How do we define Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?**
    - Diversity can happen without inclusion, where you have representative people around the workforce, but they are not necessarily equitable. It's important to have representativity everywhere.
    - Diversity includes both the people and their cultures as well as diverse thought processes, even within the same culture. Sometimes people don't think about this aspect.
    - Equity is around the policies and how they're implemented. Inclusion is the sense of belonging. I'm not included if I don't feel like I belong.
    - Diversity and Equity makes inclusion better if they are incorporated.
    - When thinking about DEI, it should center around people with disabilities, people with minorities, the general MRC Consumer. We don't have enough information and involvement from consumers with diverse backgrounds.
    - Equity is having people with disabilities, MRC consumers, having an equal chance in the employment world, getting the resources they need. Inclusion means it's been tough to include active MRC consumers in the SRC process.
    - Making sure everyone is at the table, all means all.
    - Diversity is disability, equity is race, inclusion is LGBTQ, when you look at those who are outcasted and you bring these populations at the table we are fighting for justice. It's real basic, we need to get to the point and be direct to fight for the change.

- Diversity is difference in its broadest form, respecting and embracing, not just those we see and present with, but the difference in ideology and experience. Equity is creating an environment where we are leveling the playing field and providing opportunities and resources to those folks who are systemically disadvantaged. Creating policies, procedures and action that address equity.
- DEI work in general involves shifting of power, which can be difficult for people currently in power.
- Inclusion means we need all aspects of DEI to address systemic “isms” like sexism ageism.
- DEI is about all the ways we as humans are alike and different. Diversity is asking who is in the room, equity is making sure folks can get to the room, inclusion is making sure all feel safe to come.
- **Why are we doing this work now?:**
  - There’s very clear inequity in the way services and access to healthcare and employment opportunities are given. To ensure that changes, we need to practice inclusion, to promote equity. The now is a perception that there are populations (that are currently underserved and have been impacted to homelessness, mental health and other issues.
  - America has finally owned some truth surrounding racism, people are in a position and at a time where they are willing to change. If you don’t accept the truth, you can’t make lasting change.
  - Black Lives Matter, we have current champions within the SRC to support this effort.
  - George Floyd started this conversation, but we cannot forget Trayvon Martin and Emmet Till. Pain started with George Floyd, but there are so many other names. We need to bring this conversation to every table, all means all.
  - As a country we have gone through a moment of reckoning. Anyone that has been a victim or has been impacted by injustice has been there already. The urgency of now isn’t because this is something new, but others around those impacted by injustice have started to buy into this message and have more clearly identified this as a set of issues.
  - It’s not that people haven’t been excluded throughout time, but society is moving in a direction that the SRC recognizes with the importance of this work and working with people with disabilities, we need to address the needs of everyone. Data tells us that there are people who are excluded, and policies often have to catch up and we want help with how to put this lens on everything we do.

- It's about time to challenge systemic injustice.
- Genetically humans are so similar and DEI gives us a new lens to celebrate our differences
- The meeting discussions ran longer than expected and the decision was made in partnership with the HMA team and the SRC team that the second planned exercise and set of questions will be sent through email to collect feedback and responses.

**Adjournment:** The Chair called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Bellil made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stroud. **The meeting adjourned at 3:03pm.**