

Policy Committee
600 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02111
February 2, 2023
11:00 AM -12:30 PM via Zoom

Minutes

Attendees Rosanna Woodmansee, Christine Tosti, Sarah Wiles, Liz Fancher, and Naomi Goldberg

Approval of Minutes: There were no requested revisions to the December 2nd minutes

Fair Hearing and Administrative Review Decisions

It was reported that in the coming months MRC will begin sharing information with the SRC about administrative review and fair hearing decisions that have been made. It is the Policy Committee that will be receiving the information.

The information that MRC will provide will include brief summaries of case decisions from administrative reviews and fair hearings. The summaries will provide enough information that will allow the reader to understand the basic disputed facts that led to the appeal and the decision without confidential information that would identify individual consumers. The idea is to give the SRC a better idea of consumers' experiences and an opportunity to track patterns of systemic problems if applicable.

MRC will begin sharing the information in the Spring from appeals that have occurred since the beginning of the federal fiscal year. Summaries will be provided on a biannual basis.

Guidance Documents

The committee began review a draft of the IPE fact sheet that was included as an attachment with the materials for the meeting. Liz offered specific revision. She also inquired as to whether IPEs are offered in other languages. None of the participants knew the answer and all agreed that per the SRC's commitment to DEI, it is something that we should research for the next meeting. Christine concurred with the importance of this and suggested that Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs) should ask if people need help with translating an IPE if in fact they are not provided in other languages. She added that consumers shouldn't have to ask.

The next set of fact sheets to be drafted will be on the subjects of due process and financial participation. The group agrees that we can consider other subjects over time that should also be addressed.

Christine shared her experience with due process. She stressed the importance and need for VRCs to always inform consumers when they say no to something that has been requested,

even if it is just a verbal informal denial, that the consumer has the right to appeal. She remarked that most consumers do not know this. The group also discussed the fact that the consumer in that position also needs to know why they are saying no so that they can more effectively appeal the decision. The group agreed that this information will be incorporated into the draft on due process.

There was a discussion around a question/concern raised regarding the MRC Connect process. Rosanna noted that a particular applicant to MRC did not receive a welcome packet or any acknowledgment of receipt of application as noted would happen from the website. The group subsequently discussed the proper timing around applying in consideration of when one is ready to work. Rosanna noted that patients with whom she works who are newly spinal cord injured need to have a lot of things in place before going to work such as modifying a home and vehicle, among other things. It seems to make sense for them to connect with MRC early on in their rehabilitation to ensure that they are connected and getting things in place to pursue employment. Sarah and Naomi agreed that CAP could look into this matter and report back.

At the next meeting, the committee will review other drafts and follow up on outstanding items from this meeting.

The next meeting of the Policy Committee will be on Thursday, June 1st from 11:00- 12:30 via Zoom.