

Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative Trust Fund

Meeting Minutes

March 14, 2008

Members Present

Richard Bendall, Jr., M.D. Monelison Family Physician, Lynchburg
Gregory Helm, M.D., Ph.D. University of Virginia Medical Center, Charlottesville
Terry Glenn Department of Corrections, Richmond
Doug Harris, J.D. State Health Commissioner Designee, Richmond
Teresa Poole Lakeview Blue Ridge, Blacksburg
David Reid, Psy.D., Chair Comprehensive Health Systems, Fishersville
**Via teleconference as an accommodation*
Jim Rothrock Department of Rehabilitative Services, Richmond
(Ex-officio)

Staff

Kristie Chamberlain Department of Rehabilitative Services, CNI Program
Administrator
Patti Goodall Department of Rehabilitative Services, Manager, BI/SCI
Services

Guests

Janet Niemeier, Ph.D. Virginia Commonwealth University
Shy DeGrace Virginia Commonwealth University

The Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI) Advisory Board met for a regular quarterly business meeting in the Lobby Conference Room at DRS Central Office, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive in Richmond, Virginia 23229. Commissioner Rothrock, as acting Chair, convened the meeting at 10:04 a.m. with introductions of meeting guests and board members.

Public Comment Period

A public comment period was held. There was no public comment.

Approval of December 14, 2007 Minutes

Teresa Poole made a motion to approve the minutes; motion passed unanimously.

Approval of March 14, 2008 Agenda

The agenda was adopted as distributed.

Presentation from Janet Niemeier, Ph.D.-Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)

Dr. Janet Niemeier and a research assistant, Shy DeGrace came to the meeting to update the Board on the progress of their CNI Grant #07-060, *Virginia Clubhouse Vocational Transition Program*. The grant is finishing up its second of three years of funding working with brain injury clubhouses across the Commonwealth. The purpose of the grant is to implement a curriculum that will assist members to improve social and vocational skills and to train staff at each clubhouse to become *VCTVTP* trainers. As a result of the grant initiatives thus far, volunteering in the community has increased substantially at each clubhouse and the vocational transition model has been recognized nationally and picked up for publishing.

Comments from the Commissioner of DRS

Commissioner Rothrock gave a brief update on the status of the General Assembly.

- Following the adjournment of the General Assembly, the Department of Rehabilitative Services learned that it will receive \$200,000 in FY'09 allocated specifically for brain injury service dollars. The FY'09 \$200,000 will be disseminated using the recommendations of the Virginia Brain Injury Council to the DRS Commissioner as a guideline.
- Funds from the Virginia Trauma Fund (similar to CNI Trust Fund, with money going to the State's Level I Trauma Centers), managed by the Virginia Department of Health, were "raided" by the General Assembly and the Governor to address the budget shortfall during FY '08.
- Legislation passed which ended the DRS-managed Central Registry for Brain Injury and Spinal Cord Injury. Hospitals will no longer be required to report instances of brain injury or spinal cord injury to the DRS Registry, but will continue to report to the Virginia Department of Health's Virginia Statewide Trauma Registry (VSTR). The legislation also requires VDH to share all of its information with DRS so that outreach and information and referral activities can continue as needed. The Brain Injury Association of Virginia (BIAV) is currently using CNI Trust Fund dollars to study other effective methods of outreach to survivors and family members.
- The General Assembly approved changing the legislative requirement for an annual CNI Trust Fund report to a triennial report, effective July 1, 2008.
- The Virginia Department of Veterans Services is developing an initiative using approximately \$4.5-4.9 million to respond to the needs of returning veterans who have problems with post-traumatic stress syndrome, brain injury, and mental health issues including depression and substance abuse. Five new staff will be allocated around the state to work with community service boards (CSBs), and the Brain Injury Services (BIS) network providers should be ready to respond to the needs of returning veterans with brain injury and their family members. Staff will receive referrals, complaints and purchase services from a brain injury service provider or the CSB to procure necessary services required to address these problems.
- Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services is now the Department of Mental Health, Intellectual Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services. The name change goes into effect July 2009.

Smart Home for Individuals with Cognitive Impairment

Commissioner Rothrock recently received a written proposal from Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L, Associate Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Occupational Therapy for \$22,756 to be used over a one year period (April 2008-March 2009). The proposal was submitted in accordance with the legal authority of the Commissioner of the Department of Rehabilitative Services to reallocate CNI Trust Fund dollars for research grants, per budget language as follows:

Page 311, after line 54:

"2. Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, the Commissioner may reallocate up to \$500,000 from unexpended balances in the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative Trust Fund to fund new grant awards for research on traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries."

The proposal submitted by Dr. Gentry is to establish a "Smart Home" which would feature home accommodation hardware and software designed to improve the safety and accessibility of the home environment for individuals with cognitive impairments. Currently, rehabilitation practitioners do not typically use "smart home" technologies with this population, so it is anticipated that the research study will result in the replication of similar "smart homes" that will improve independence and safety for people with cognitive impairments..

Researchers will assess the cognitive function of participants using the Rivermead Behavioral Memory Test – Extended (RBMT-E) and the Test of Everyday Attention (TEA), both ecologically valid instruments. They will test the functional independence of participants utilizing the Canadian Occupational Performance Measure (COPM) and the Functional Assessment Tool for Cognitive Assistive Technology (FATCAT) prior to the intervention and at the conclusion of the intervention. Additionally, participants will be interviewed for qualitative information regarding the usefulness of this technology in their lives. This project will involve the Department of Occupational Therapy at Virginia Commonwealth University, rehabilitation therapists at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, rehabilitation engineers employed by the Virginia Department of Rehabilitation Services, and the Brain Injury Association of Virginia, as partners in execution and dissemination activities.

The grant award includes moneys for the training of rehabilitation providers and engineers in the utilization of "smart home" technologies with individuals who have cognitive impairments. This training will include face-to-face workshops, an informational website maintained at VCU and a catalog of smart home technologies appropriate for this population. Additional funding will be sought at the conclusion of this project to extend this research into the community and track behavioral change among consumers and providers who utilize these technologies.

The Commissioner briefed the Board on the request and requested their endorsement to use unexpended balances, \$22,756 to fund the research project with Tony Gentry, Ph.D. of VCU as Principal Investigator. The Board unanimously supported the project which they felt would further research on the study and use of smart home technology to assist consumers with brain injuries.

Financial Report

Kristie Chamberlain, staff to the Advisory Board, provided an overview of the CNI Trust Fund finances. Since its inception in 1998 through February 29, 2008, total revenue into the Fund is \$12,313,760.77. The Trust Fund has actually awarded \$14,615,108.30 in grant awards (including \$398,273.32 in administrative services since July 2003). The Fund currently has an obligated balance of \$2,301,347.53 (revenue minus grant awards), with an available balance of \$1,278,926.90 (revenue minus expenditures). The current monthly average in fees and interest into the Trust Fund in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 (began July 1, 2007) is \$100,486.06 per month.

Neurobehavioral Services

Patti Goodall updated the Board on a meeting convened by the Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) which invited representatives from the Secretary's office; DRS, the Brain Injury Association of Virginia; Medical College of Virginia Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit; Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services; two caregivers; and a company called Quality Behavioral Solutions (QBS). The purpose of the meeting was to hear a presentation by Dr. David Lennox of QBS regarding the consultation work that the company has done with nursing facilities in other states that wanted to establish specialized units and/or services designed specifically for people with brain injury who have challenging behaviors. DMAS has been sending individuals out of state because there is no appropriate in-state option. DMAS is exploring the feasibility of establishing one or more in-state neurobehavioral treatment facilities; this would avoid having to place individuals out of state which are more costly to the State. QBS works with Medicaid-approved nursing facilities, or assists them to achieve Medicaid approval, so that they can offer Medicaid-reimbursed services for people with brain injury. Patti Goodall will keep the board apprised of the progress of a special work group convened by DMAS to explore this issue. It was suggested that Terry Smith, Director of Long-Term Care Services for DMAS, be invited to present at the Board's June 13 meeting.

Release of Request For Proposals (RFPs) in 2008

The Board postponed a decision on whether or not to release a Request For Proposals (RFPs) during 2008. The issue will be discussed again at the June 13, 2008 meeting of the Board.

Term Dates for Drs. Bendall & Helm

The first of two possible four-year membership terms for Drs. Bendall & Helm expire June 2008. Rick Bendall, M.D. stated that due to professional constraints on his time, he could not consider a second 4-year term on the Board. Therefore, a new member to fill the vacancy will be appointed by the Governor for a new term, effective July 1, 2008. Dr. Bendall offered to be a liaison to the State Academy of Family Practice to share information on brain injury and the continuing work of the CNI Trust Fund grant projects.

Gregory Helm, MD, Ph.D. expressed an interest in serving a second 4-year term and stated that he has notified the Secretary of his interest.

Future Meeting Dates

The next scheduled meeting of the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI) Trust Fund Advisory Board is scheduled for Friday, June 13, 2008 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Commissioner Rothrock, Acting Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:34 a.m.