

Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting
September 8, 2010
APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Brenda Wickard, Chair; Elizabeth Flaherty, Vice Chair; Margaret Fields, Ph.D., Secretary; Michael Behrmann, Ed.D.; Melanie Brunson; Tom Dowling; John Eisenberg; Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L; Kelly Lum, OTR/L; Shawn Utt; Joseph Wallace, Ph.D.; Joann Willis

Present by Teleconference: Scott Higdon

Members Absent: Senator Yvonne Miller, Matthew Deans

Guests:

James A. Rothrock, Commissioner, Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS)
Barbara Seymour, Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)
Mary Nunnally, Technology and Employment Support Services, (TESS/DRS)
Clayton Bowen, Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH)

Staff Present:

Kathy Hayfield, Director, Technology and Employment Support Services (TESS/DRS)
Robert Krollman, Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Central Office
Elin Glass, VATS Central Office
Janice Austin, VATS Central Office
Emily McKeough Fallings -VATS Northern Regional Site - George Mason University
David Netherton, VATS Southeast Regional Site - Old Dominion University
Joann Ervin, VATS Southeast Regional Site - Old Dominion University
Robert (Rick) Barrow, VATS Southwest Regional Site-Virginia Tech
Sonja Schaible, Executive Director, Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment & Endowment (F.R.E.E.)

Present by Video Conference: Susan Asselin, Ph.D., VATS Regional Site at VA Tech

Call to Order:

Brenda Wickard, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. All members of the Advisory Council, VATS staff and presenters/guests introduced themselves. Ben Garret, who represented the Department of Aging, has retired and is no longer a member of the Council.

Approval of Minutes:

Errors, omissions and corrections were requested for the draft minutes of the June 9, 2010, ATAC meeting. No corrections were offered and the minutes will be posted.

Public Comment:

No public comments were made.

Old Business: There was no old business brought forward for discussion.

Assistive Technology, Director's Update:

Kathy Hayfield, Director, TESS, reported that during the last two years. VATS has been looking at how to integrate AT across the agency. DRS have OT services available through WWRC and have recently hired two AT Specialists, one in Southwest Virginia region and one in Northern Virginia region. Barclay Shepard, VATS, has been assigned a project to find out how we are doing with AT device lending and will research on what is the most sought-after AT devices, how we can tap into other inventories and how we compare with other states. Mr. Shepard will provide a preliminary report in December and a full report in March 2011 to support strategic planning in this area.

Ms. Hayfield reviewed the State Plan and how it defines what an agency will do. She also discussed the Data Collection process and how we present our data. In December, VATS staff will provide Council with our budget and planning overview. From this point forward VATS will also provide quarterly data reports to Advisory Council members prior to scheduled quarterly Advisory Council meetings.

Commissioner's Comments:

Commissioner Rothrock related that he has been appointed Interim Commissioner for the Virginia Department for the Aging. On a national level, an Aging and Disability Resource Center has been established. The Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) work with the Centers of Independent Living (CIL) on long-term care for seniors and people with disabilities. There has been an increased awareness of durable medical equipment (DME) recycling in the Commonwealth. The Department of Aging has an employment program for people who are 55 years old and older to work in community programs and introduce technology. The CILs are working with the AAA to respond to the needs of individuals. There will be an Outreach Specialist in the AAA for individuals with brain injury. Federal funding is helping with this program. There are two new AT Specialist in Virginia and FREE is opening a new location in Richmond for DME recycling in October.

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) Update:

Kelly Lum, WWRC, gave an overview of what they are working on as goals and objectives. The Blueprint for WWRC was provided for Council members to review. Input may be provided to WWRC by October 1, 2010. Dr. Asselin suggested having someone from T-TAC as a core team member to serve youth and improve service across the state.

A motion was made by Joey Wallace, Ph.D., to endorse the Blueprint as presented by WWRC. The motion was seconded by Dr. Behrmann and passed by unanimous vote.

Report from Nominations Committee:

Dr. Wallace, as a member of the Advisory Council Nominations committee, presented a slate of officers to be installed for one year terms at the end of this meeting. Nominations were solicited from the floor and there were no nominations from the floor.

A motion was made by Tom Dowling to approve the new slate of officers for the ATAC as presented: Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair, Matthew Deans, Vice-Chair, and Margaret Fields, Secretary. The motion was seconded by John Eisenberg and passed by unanimous vote.

New Well Fund

Dr. Wallace reported on the New Well Fund and provided a success story of a consumer receiving a shower chair from the DME recycling program.

The New Well Fund has been very busy since the last Council meeting. They had been reviewing 15-20 applications each month. There has been a recent increase in applications from 20 to 27 in August. Twenty-seven (27) applications were reviewed last month. At least ½ to ¾ of the applications have been approved.

The New Well Fund provides low interest loans to people who want to telework and start a business in their home. Dr. Wallace and Larry Roberts, Self-Employment Enterprise, TESS/DRS, toured the micro-enterprise centers in Southwest Virginia.

Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE)

Sonja Schaible, FREE, reported on current activities. FREE of Richmond is in the final stages of development and is planning to start gifting by the end of September. FREE has received a grant from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) to help with FREE of Richmond. OT students from VCU will work with the program to experience working with DME and with clients on how to get equipment. FREE of South Hampton Roads is also being developed with a community-wide project and a ribbon cutting is expected in January 2011.

George Mason University

Dr. Behrmann, GMU, reported that the Kellar Institute received a sub-grant from RESNA/NATTAP to do webinars, improve distance education and improve technical assistance for the State Tech Act projects.

Virginia Department of Education

John Eisenberg, DOE, reported that he has been working with Dr. Behrmann on providing accessible text books and the demand has increased for this service.

The Virginia Department of Education will be having a Technology Conference, November 11 & 12, 2010, at the Richmond Convention Center. There will be national speakers and vendors on the first day of the conference and hands-on AT, with instruction, on the second day. You may register to attend on line at T-TAC, AT Event.

There is a Governor's Initiative on Virtual Classes. The DOE will be looking at how to have virtual schools, courses on line, vendors to be regulated and how course work can be put in an accessible format. It is projected that by year 2020, fifty percent of students will be using virtual classes.

Also, a major Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Center has been started at VCU. One child in every 100 potentially has ASD, which is on the increase each year.

VATS Regional Sites

All three regional sites provided a report on regional site activities in the preceding quarter.

Report on AT and Transition:

Susan Asselin, Ph.D., presented on the AT and Transition study: "AT Follows the Student". The study consisted of working with T-TACs and contacting 50 states, including DC. They asked questions to find out if a state had an agreement for transitioning equipment. Seventeen (17) states out of 51 had a formal agreement. Twenty-four (24) states did not have an agreement. Ten (10) states did not respond as of this date. They also contacted the mid-Atlantic Transition Council. Minnesota and Texas had superior agreements.

A motion was made by Dr. Behrmann to propose a statement of problems in writing of the benefits and barriers (AT transition) and recommend legislative action. The motion was seconded by John Eisenberg. Added was an Amendment to the Motion and that proposed having a meeting with Senator Miller and Commissioner Rothrock within the next 30 days to discuss this issue. The motion was made by Dr. Behrmann and seconded by John Eisenberg and passed by a unanimous vote.

Presentation on Hand-Held Communication Devices

Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L, VCU, provided an informative presentation on hand-held devices for people who are cognitively and/or behaviorally challenged. Various types of devices were discussed and how they can be used as reminders and ways to manage daily activities as well as helping with managing job duties for successful employment outcomes.

Next Scheduled ATAC Meeting:

The next quarterly meeting is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, December 8, 2010,

(10:00am-2:30pm) at the DRS Central Office, 8004 Franklin Farms Dr., Richmond, VA.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn this meeting was made by Elizabeth Flaherty, seconded by Peggy Fields, Ph.D., and passed by unanimous vote. The meeting was adjourned at 2:10pm.