



VOICES & VISIONS

A VOICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES: A PROMISING VISION FOR TOMORROW

Letter from the Chair

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Appointment of new Board members will be announced shortly. Please visit the Board's website for more information.



New Board Chair,
Lisbet Ward

It has been only a few weeks since I officially became the new Chair for the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities. One of my first responsibilities was the pleasure of signing letters to welcome on

board some of Virginia's newest advocates, the student delegates for this year's Youth Leadership Forum. I greatly enjoyed meeting them in person at the YLF and experiencing their enthusiasm for leadership and the future.

As the new Chair of the Board, I am excited about these young leaders as well as the other key advocates, professionals, and policy makers with whom I will have the opportunity to work this year. An important part of the mission of the Board is to be a "Voice", to help bring forward the issues and services that we, as Virginians with disabilities, have identified to be most important and relevant to our lives today. Having lived my entire life with a disability and as an advocate, I am excited to be a part of this Voice.

My disability philosophy and foundation is in the Independent Living movement. This simple philosophy is that I, the person with a disability, am the one who best understands myself, my needs, and what I want out of life. Such a simple concept, with such profound results, can and should be applied to every policy decision and every service that affects people with disabilities. As the Board's

recent *Biennial Assessment of the Disability Services System in Virginia* points out, choice is a critical component in grading our current system and determining whether Virginia's services and supports give Virginians with disabilities the tools we need to live the lives we each individually choose.

Today people with disabilities and other advocates join together in reminding Virginia of our civil rights that call for choice and consumer design of all services and supports. A range of community-based services should be a choice to all Virginians with disabilities. Community options should be an entitlement under Medicaid, equal to institutional options. Those who provide our daily support should have competitive wages, and Virginia should concentrate its wealth of energy and creativity in developing innovative community-based services and supports rather than looking to institutional models of the past. Virginians with disabilities want true access to what all Virginians want—housing, employment, transportation, places of business and shopping, and recreation. Let's work together to make this a reality. As this year's Youth Leadership Forum theme states, "Believe, Imagine, Achieve, Succeed!" **VV**

Go to

www.vaboard.org/publications.htm

for

*Disability Fast Facts
to duplicate and share!*



Narrowing the "Front Door"

Linda Redmond and Tom Driscoll

On August 15, 2006, the Board submitted its 2007-2011 State Plan to the federal Administration for Developmental Disabilities (ADD). Starting with its first goal, to promote strategies that support moving people with disabilities from institutions to communities of their choice, the new Five Year State Plan clearly establishes that public advocacy, on its own and in collaboration with others, will be a hallmark of the Board's role in public policy in coming years. Action taken by the Board at its last quarterly meeting provides an instructive example.

The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) recently began a review of regulations governing voluntary, respite, and emergency admissions to Virginia's Training Centers. This review is part of a regular process to ensure that the regulations are appropriate to current needs. As an early step in the process, DMHMRSAS requested public comment on the regulations and proposed changes.



In response, on June 15, the Board approved detailed recommendations for modifications to the regulations. In its comments, the Board called on the Commonwealth to demonstrate its commitment to reducing the number of individuals residing in institutions and to increasing community supports by "narrowing the 'front door'" of the Training Centers through

appropriate specific, limited criteria for admissions.

As currently written, the DMHMRSAS regulations are very broad and, essentially, support admission of any person with mental retardation (MR) who meets the criteria for an Intermediate Care Facility for Mental Retardation (ICF-MR). The Board calls for restricting admissions to persons with MR who have either co-occurring mental illness or challenging behaviors that require treatment in an intensive, restrictive environment. It further calls for anyone referred for admission to be first evaluated by an appropriate outpatient program—such as the Regional Community Support Centers

(RCSC) described in the DMHMRSAS restructuring proposal—and for thorough, precise documentation that all appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that services cannot be provided in a community setting.

In further keeping with the principles of community integration, the Board calls for appropriate, specific time limits on a person's length of stay at a Training Center. Stays exceeding these limits should be reported promptly to the DMHMRSAS Commissioner and to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). Discharge planning should be included and documented as a part of all admissions, with timely return to the community—with appropriate supports—as the goal of all admissions. Overall, the objective of Virginia's MR facilities should be to "put themselves out of business" by helping individuals live successfully in their home communities with the supports they need.



The Board's recommendations draw heavily on the research and recommendations included in its recently released *Biennial Assessment*. Findings and recommendations of the OIG in its recent facility site visit reports were also consulted. Those studies have noted that few Training Center habilitation plans are person-centered or consumer-driven, that most communities lack adequate crisis intervention services, and that the appropriate role of Virginia's Training Centers is unclear. ♡

To learn more, please visit:

DMHMRSAS Information on
Regulations Affecting Mental Retardation Facilities
www.dmhmrzas.virginia.gov/OMR-FacilityRegulations.htm

Virginia Board Policy Positions/Public Comment
www.vaboard.org/vapolicy.htm
and the

Biennial Assessment of Virginia's Disability Services System
www.vaboard.org/biennial.htm

OIG Annual and Semiannual Reports
www.oig.virginia.gov/rpt-AnnualSemiAnnual.htm

DD Network Update: Children and Youth in Virginia's Facilities

Fred Orelove

In Virginia, many individuals with mental retardation or developmental disabilities (MR/DD) receive publicly funded services in state and non-state operated Intermediate Care Facilities for Mental Retardation (ICFs-MR) and in nursing facilities. The number of individuals in state training centers in Virginia has been in steady decline, although at a significantly slower rate (3% from 2002-04) than the national average (7%) or that of the neighboring states of North Carolina (7%) and Maryland (17%). (West Virginia closed its state training center in 1998.) Similarly, the rate of institutionalization for children has declined nationally. In line with the national trend, the percentage of children in ICFs-MR in Virginia has leveled off in the past decade. Virginia served 210 children under age 21 in ICFs-MR in 1996. The number dropped to 163 in 1999 and has remained in the 150 range every year since. The majority of those children reside in St. Mary's Infant Home (Norfolk) and Holiday House (Portsmouth).

Conversely, the number of children in nursing homes in Virginia has increased steadily during that same time period. In 1996, 55 children under age 21 were served in nursing homes, and 88 children in 2005, a 60% increase.

Why are 237 children in Virginia being served in facilities? A preliminary national report on children and youth in institutions for people with developmental disabilities, commissioned by the National Disability Rights Network, suggests several reasons. The first two reasons listed in the report are "absence of community services" and "unmet need for support to parents and other caregivers."

One does not have to look very hard at Virginia's legislative history to see the truth. Although Virginia's supported living spending has grown over the past three years, we still spend much less on supported living (\$4.12 per capita in 2004) than the national average of \$11.15, and that of Maryland (\$8.08), North Carolina (\$20.02), or West Virginia (\$23.46). Our spending on family support is even more dismal. The average amount Virginia spent per family in 2004 was \$997, compared to a national average



of \$5,005. Again, Virginia's family support spending, ranked 44th nationally, can be compared to our neighbors in Maryland (\$4,338), North Carolina (\$13,721), and West Virginia (\$3,796).

Children should not grow up in institutions because of a lack of commitment to community or home-based services. Further, children grow up to be adults, perpetuating and extending the cycle of "maintaining" people in institutions rather than facilitating quality of life and community care. If Virginia is to reverse its institutional bias, it needs to start with its youngest and most vulnerable citizens. ♡

The DD Network Partner agencies include: the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (Heidi Lawyer, Director), Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy, (Colleen Miller, Director), Partnership for People with Disabilities (Fred Orelove, Director).

Can We Talk?

Regular feedback from its many, diverse constituents has consistently helped the Board improve its advocacy, outreach, training, funding, and other activities. Public comments were essential in developing the Board's *Biennial Assessment* of Virginia's disability services system and producing its new 2007-2011 State Plan.

Over the coming year, the Board will expand its quality assurance efforts. To start, the Board has produced a new on-line **Consumer Satisfaction and Stakeholder Feedback Survey** at www.VBPDfeedback.com to collect your input. Copies in printed and other accessible formats are also available.

Your completion of this survey will be greatly appreciated! Results will be reported to federal and state authorities overseeing and funding the Board's activities, and your feedback will play an important role in ensuring support for the Board's mission on behalf of Virginians with disabilities. ♡

Next Board Meeting

September 13, 2006
Wyndham Richmond
Airport Hotel
4700 S. Laburnum Ave.
Richmond, VA

Upcoming Meetings:
December 8, 2006
March 15, 2007
June 7, 2007
September 20, 2007
December 13, 2007

Partners in Policymaking Update

Teri Barker-Morgan



The Board's Partners In Policymaking program is gearing up for a new year and is excited to welcome 2006-2007 PIP class participants:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Iris Anongos | Mechanicsville | Christine Hoch | Gainesville |
| Chele Brandon | Glen Allen | Mona Leesa Holmes | Fork Union |
| Lisa Brown | Staunton | D'Shea Jones | Chesterfield |
| Donna Cannon | Virginia Beach | Antonia Lopes | Richmond |
| Robyn Carey | Hayes | Marilyn McCombe | Warrenton |
| Mary Jo Champe | Richmond | Jennifer Rohler | Stephens City |
| Angela Cimmino | Powhatan | Chitra Sharathchandra | Reston |
| Allison Coles-Johnson | Richmond | Ania Swanson | Richmond |
| Christine Cox | Newport News | Rosezella Swanson | Stafford |
| Larry Daigre | Virginia Beach | Mary Taylor | Hopewell |
| Susan Foster | Chesterfield | Petrina Thomas | Culpeper |
| Leo Freeman | Richmond | Renee Valentine | Chesapeake |
| Theresa Fuller | Virginia Beach | Rebecca Voskeritchian | Virginia Beach |
| Mary Allan Hampton | Midlothian | Katherine Wallace | Scottsburg |
| Vicki Hardy-Murrell | Mechanicsville | Kara White | Richmond |

These outstanding individuals with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities were chosen by a selection committee of PIP alumni through a competitive application process. Their journey to becoming more effective advocates and partners with legislators and other policymakers in improving Virginia's disability services system begins on September 21 & 22 with the first of eight monthly PIP training sessions at the Sheraton Park West Hotel in Richmond. We congratulate the in-coming '06-'07 class on their selection and look forward to their learning and development as true Partners In Policymaking. ♡



The Board would also like to congratulate John Richmond, PIP Program Assistant for the past two and a half years, on his new teaching position at the Virginia Treatment Center for Children. John's creativity and hard work have strengthened PIP and its alumni network. John will be missed on the Board staff, but we are sure that he will stay in touch with the Partners and continue to be an effective advocate and leader on disability issues. Thanks, John, and goodspeed!

YLF Update

Teri Barker-Morgan



The upbeat theme of the 2006 Youth Leadership Forum emerged as the spirit and attitude of the student delegates, staff, and presenters. In his Networking and Mentorship Luncheon keynote, Dr. Roy Grizzard, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, reinforced the theme's importance, emphasizing that its elements are more than just words, they are the ingredients for success. He further explained that the most important ingredient is Believe: "One must believe in oneself before others will. If one believes in oneself, anything is possible!"



Spirits continued to soar as student dele-

gates ascended Capitol Hill to meet up close and personal with Governor Tim Kaine. As the highlight of "Capitol Day", the Governor visited with the delegates for more than thirty minutes, addressing leadership, his own formative years, and desire to work in public service, before answering delegates' questions.

After meeting with the Governor, the YLF delegates participated in a mock committee hearing attended by state Delegates McQuigg and Albo. The YLF delegates presented testimony on issues such as health care, stem cell research, SOL's, and teacher training, and before Capitol Day was over, they achieved their first advocacy success. That afternoon, as Delegate McQuigg chaired the Disability Commission, she cited the YLF delegates' testimony as a possible guide to the Commissioners' work plan for the coming year. It was an excellent beginning for the YLF delegates as they embark on their leadership journey! ♡

Community Assistive Technology Recycling

Tom Driscoll

In 2005 alone, the Virginia Medicaid program spent nearly \$45 million on durable medical equipment, including wheelchairs, listening and low-vision aids, adapted computers, and other types of assistive technology (AT) for people with disabilities. Over time, much of this equipment goes unused or is discarded because the user outgrows it, passes away, or no longer needs it for other reasons.



Several Board members are currently working with the Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) to develop a statewide AT recycling network to maximize the impact of AT expenditures

and provide AT to more individuals who need it.

Earlier this year, at their request, the Board sent an e-mail message to more than 4,500 contacts across the state requesting information on community AT recycling initiatives.

Thanks to e-mail forwarding well beyond Virginia, message recipients have provided a wealth of valuable information. Virginia's efforts appear to be ahead of some nearby states but behind others. A member of New York's Developmental Disabilities (DD) Network operates an extensive AT recycling system and may be able to provide some guidance to Virginia. In contrast,

the New Jersey DD Council has asked VATS to share what it learns to help them establish a network in their state.

Some local Goodwill and Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE) programs across Virginia had already partnered with VATS, but several more reported on their efforts. The Peninsula Area Agency on Aging (AAA) identified eight small "loan closets" operated by service and civic organizations in their area. The Region 3 AAA in Southwest Virginia reported that it is developing a network involving three nearby Centers for Independent Living. Challenges identified by these programs include building public awareness, recruiting volunteers to collect, refurbish, and distribute AT, and space for storage and refurbishment.

The Board and VATS continue to receive and share responses. Network planning teams, coordinated by VATS, have scheduled meetings in several regions of the state, and the development of more teams is encouraged. For more information or to get involved, visit the VATS website at www.vats.org or contact Jane Lively at 804-726-1904 or jane.lively@drs.virginia.gov. ♡



Nominees Sought for Leadership and Achievement Awards

Last year, the Board initiated two new awards recognizing leadership and achievement in disability advocacy and service.

Self-advocate Ed Turner received the 2005 Jackie Crews Award for Excellence in Leadership for his work exemplifying the goals of the award's name-sake: independence, productivity, inclusion, and self-determination. Max and Garth Larcen received the inaugural Outstanding Achievement Award for their Positive Vibe Café's innovative employment and training program.

Nominations for the 2006 awards will be accepted between September 1 and October 15. Additional information on nomination criteria and procedures will be distributed and posted to the Board's website at <http://www.vaboard.org/awards.htm> prior to the start of the nomination period. ♡

Accessing New IDEA 2004 Regulations

On August 3rd, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced new federal regulations for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), enacted by Congress in 2004. Over the coming months, the Board and others will be watching closely and offering guidance as the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) reviews and modifies the state's special education regulations to ensure compliances with IDEA 2004.

As a convenience, the Board has posted a link to the new regulations on its Policy & Legislation webpage, www.vaboard.org/vapolicy.htm. The regulations and additional information can also be reached by visiting the sites listed below. ♡

USDOE

IDEA, 2004 News, Information and Resources

www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html

IDEA 2004 Fact Sheet

www.ed.gov/admins/lead/speced/ideafactsheet.html

Wrightslaw

IDEA 2004 Regulations: Summary of Major Changes

www.wrightslaw.com/idea/law/idea.regs.sumry.chngs.pdf

VDOE

Special Education Regulations Review Process

www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/dueproc/regulationsCWD.html

"Mapping" Transition Services

Linda Redmond

In recent months, three projects initiated by the Board in 2004 have completed transition services "maps" and begun sharing the results with their communities. Using funds provided by the Board, the grantees—the Arc of Northern Shenandoah Valley and the Central Shenandoah and Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commissions—set out to improve public awareness of and access to transition services and to improve the transition process for middle and secondary school students with disabilities, ages 14-22.

Regional transition services mapping makes the search for services easier for students and families by creating a web-based resource guide that identifies specific services available in their locality. The map is a graphic representation of those services with links to more detailed information. As a result of Board support for these projects, service information never before found in one resource is now readily available in an accessible format.

Each grantee mapped a variety of transition services, including academic supports, funding sources, career development, employment, housing, transportation, assistive technology, and related services. To develop the map, each grant team had several tasks to complete. First, they had to identify the resources available in their region. To do so, each team developed its own standardized format for collecting information on services. Then, through direct contact with each service provider, a description was obtained of the services offered, eligibility criteria, costs, accepted insurance, and other important details.



High School student,
Daniel Milner

Next, this information was organized and placed on a website fully accessible to persons with visual and other disabilities. Each website has a link to an evaluation form viewers can use to provide feedback on the site's usefulness and accessibility. Hard copies of the transition maps have also been distributed in each region.

In addition, each grantee has developed a "how-to" manual of instructions describing the steps required to replicate transition resource maps in other locali-

ties or regions. Those manuals are also available on each website.

Although transition services maps are inexpensive to maintain, there is an ongoing cost for server space. As a part of their project, each grantee has an effort underway to sustain its transition map and website on a long-term basis.

Another project benefit for each region has been to bring professionals and consumers together to plan the development process and website content. Collaboration and communication within each region on transition needs and services have been enhanced. For the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Council, for example, the grant project was a springboard to development of a Regional Transition Council, which meets monthly and is pursuing future projects.

To access these new regional transition services maps, visit the websites listed elsewhere on this page by the localities that they serve. After reviewing each site, please let the project team know how useful it was for you by completing their feedback/evaluation questionnaire. If you can provide the project teams with support to ensure the long-term availability of their websites, that will be also greatly appreciated. ♡

Regional transition services mapping makes the search for services easier for students and families by creating a web-based resource guide that identifies specific services available in their locality.

Visit these new Transition Services "Maps"

supported by the
Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

Clarke, Frederick, Page, Shenandoah
& Warren Counties
and the Cities of Front Royal & Winchester
www.ValleyResourceNet.org

Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge
& Rockingham Counties
and the Cities of Buena Vista, Harrisonburg,
Lexington, Staunton & Waynesboro
www.ValleyTransitionServices.org

Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa
& Nelson Counties
and the City of Charlottesville
www.LifeAfterHS.org

Effectiveness Training for Local SEACs

Teri Barker-Morgan

In Virginia, local Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs) advise school divisions on the needs of students with disabilities and make recommendations for the improvement of special education services and student outcomes. With the new school year about to begin, the Board would like to report on an effort over the past year to improve the effectiveness of those committees.

Between October 18 and November 3, 2005, the Board collaborated with the Virginia Department of Education and the Partnership for People with Disabilities to sponsor and facilitate eight one-day training sessions in Abingdon, Roanoke, Staunton, Farmville, Manassas, Winchester, Hanover, and Newport News. A total of 254 individuals attended the training sessions. Fifty-seven percent identified themselves as parents, and over ninety percent of those parents were members of local SEACs. Other participants included local special education directors and school board chairs.

As a part of their training, participants from each school division worked together to develop a next-steps plan for their local SEAC. The resulting action plans indicated that local SEACs intend to:

- Improve organization by following regulations, understanding their roles, developing and updating bylaws, and submitting annual reports;
- Increase membership and participation;
- Increase community awareness of local SEACs;
- Identify and report on unmet needs in order to plan systematically and strategically; and
- Improve collaboration.

Participants also identified supports that their local SEAC would need to accomplish their next steps. This activity revealed that local SEACs need:

- Additional information such as sample bylaws, needs surveys, and more Resource Notebooks for local SEAC members;
- Technical assistance including additional training, website support, and mentors;
- Administrative support;
- Networking opportunities such as statewide or regional annual meetings for local SEACs and State SEAC support; and
- Fiscal resources to fund copying, advertising, and other aspects of their work.



In late Spring 2006, two additional training sessions were held, one exclusively for graduates of the Board's Partners in Policymaking program and another as part of a two-day training for local SEAC chairs and special education directors. A website has also

been created to provide support for building and maintaining effective local SEACs.

For more information, visit www.vcu.edu/partnership/seac or contact the Partnership for People with Disabilities directly. ♾



Housing Coalition Honors Two in the Disability Housing Arena

*Special Correspondent, William Fuller,
Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA)*

On June 22, 2006, the Virginia Housing Coalition (VHC) presented special awards to two individuals instrumental in creating accessible housing for people with disabilities. Diane Davis of Craddock Cunningham Architectural Partners was recognized for the L'Arche Home in Lynchburg. Diane and her design team used Universal Design principles to create a spacious yet intimate living space for L'Arche's residents and support members. Billy Howell, owner of Howell-Franklin Construction, was recognized as a founder of Housing Opportunities Made Economical. HOME, Inc. has created \$7.5 million of affordable, universally designed living space in the Fredericksburg area that is integrated into the community and close to services.

VHC works to improve access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing, identify housing issues of common concern, and develop effective strategies to address them. The VHC is a frequent collaborator with the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities on matters of common interest. For more information, visit VHC's website at www.vahousingcoalition.org. ♾



Meetings & Events of Interest



Virginia Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Advisory Committee

September 8, 2006 10:00 AM
(Sponsor) Department of Health
Children's Hospital, 2924 Brook Road, Richmond, VA

Disabilities Advisory Council

September 13, 2006 10:00 AM
Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy
Byrd Building, 1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5, Richmond, VA

"Catch the Wave" 10th Annual Collaborations Joint Conference

September 17-19, 2006
(Sponsors) vaACCSES, VA-APSE, and VRA
Ramada Plaza Resort Oceanfront, VA Beach, VA
Contact: Marilyn Morrison at MMorrison@ourpeoplework.org,
(703) 970-3675, www.vaaccses.org/html/collaborations.htm

Empowering Employers to Build an Inclusive Workforce

September 17-18, 2006
(Sponsor) Job Accommodation Network
Hilton Boston Logan Airport, Boston, MA
Contact: 800-526-7234 (Voice/TTY) OR conference@jan.wvu.edu
<http://conference.jan.wvu.edu/>

Board for Protection and Advocacy

September 26, 2006 9:00 AM
Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy
Byrd Building, 1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5, Richmond, VA

Virginia Public Guardian and Conservator Advisory Board

September 28, 2006 10:00 AM
Department for the Aging, 1610 Forest Avenue, Suite 100,
Richmond, VA

The Future of Disability Statistics: What We Know and Need to Know

October 5-6, 2006
Doubletree Hotel/Crystal City in Arlington, VA
Contact Anne Sieverding at acs5@cornell.edu
<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/srrtc-2006conference.cfm>

Long-Term Care Administrators Board Meeting

October 10, 2006 9:30 AM
6603 W. Broad Street, 5th Floor, Richmond, VA 23230

ESOAC/LTESS Steering Committee Meetings

October 10, 2006 9:30 AM
(Sponsor) Department of Rehabilitative Services
DRS Central Office, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Conference Rooms
101,103,105, Richmond, VA, Tim Olive 804-662-7127

Medicaid Transportation Advisory Committee

October 18, 2006 1:00 PM
(Sponsor) Department of Medical Assistance Services
600 E. Broad St., 13th Floor, Board Room, Richmond, VA

2006 Governor's Housing Conference

November 28 - December 1, 2006
Norfolk Waterside Marriott, Norfolk, VA www.dhcd.virginia.gov



Contact Information

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