

From Your President...

By Elizabeth Prather, Richland County Board of MRDD

INSIDE THIS EDITION

From Your President	1
OAAS Honors Gary Fusco	2
Conducting Internal Investigations	3
Survey Summaries	4
OAAS Strategic Initiatives	5
OAAS Conference	6
New Hire Reporting	7
DOL Information	8
New Directors	9
Regional Map	10

We have changes on the Board in 2006. Terri O'Connell, immediate Past-President has retired her position as Adult Services Director with the Union County Board of MR/DD. She has left a marked void at the OAAS Board meetings where she reigned as Queen for innumerable years. Also Keith Pohly from Highland County decided not to run for another term. Two very capable Directors expressed an interest and we are please to welcome Linda Cudd from Montgomery County as the new Southwest Regional representative. Linda has worked for Montgomery County Board of MR/DD for 19 years. When asked what her focus is for Adult Services in Montgomery County, she first discussed habilitation. They are expanding what they offer to individuals while at the same time specializing in activities. They offer activities with pets, art and music that provide both facility and community based options. In employment they have included micro-enterprise and are focusing on community employment for transition age students. Linda told me she ran for the Regional

Representative because she was interested in having a voice in the changes facing Adult Services.

Change is certainly a word that we have learned to accept, if not embrace over the past several years in Adult Services. It's funny how much easier it is to change when we can control the change in some way. When change occurs without any input from us or catches us by surprise, we are often resistant. OAAS continues to have representatives participate in the workgroups that are focusing on Day Habilitation and Supported Employment. I think if any one of us was asked if we want all of these impending changes, we would reply with a resounding "No"; however, we do want a say in how these inevitable changes will occur. Currently we are discussing definitions of the services that will be offered in the day services "array" and general implementation of these services. In addition, we are reviewing proposed rates and ratios. All of these rates will now have to fall under a cap. Qualifications for providers are another point of discussion.

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1)

And all of these decisions will need to be made prior to July 1, 2006. As we get information, we will be sharing that with the membership and working together to determine how to best implement these changes while continuing to provide quality supports and services. Though it is daunting to face the rapidly changing environment in Adult Services, I am confident we are up to the challenge.

OAAS Honors Gary Fusco



Liz Prather, OAAS President, Susan Dlouhy, OAAS Administrator, Diane Fusco, and Dr. Terry Ryan, Superintendent, Cuyahoga County Board of MRDD

OAAS presented a plaque to Diane Fusco in honor of her husband, Gary Fusco. The presentation was held at the OACBMRDD Annual Convention at the Hilton Easton in November

Gary's contributions to the field of MRDD were numerous. He was recently appointed as Superintendent of Geauga County Board of MRDD. However, OAAS members will remember Gary's contribution to OAAS through the many committees that he served on and his willingness to always be available for consultation or advice.



OAAS commissioned a plaque in honor of Gary Fusco from PassionWorks Studio in Athens, Ohio.

From Diane Fusco...

Thank you for the tribute you gave to Gary on behalf of OAAS. I will hold the memory of that day close to my heart and will always treasure the beautiful tile artwork you commissioned in Gary's memory. Over the weekend I rearranged a room to hang the art in a place where I can look at it often.

CONDUCTING INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS

The “When” and “How” for Employers (PART II)

By Patricia J. Craft, J.D.

This is the second in a series of articles addressing the importance of understanding when an internal investigation is necessary and how to conduct such investigation properly. Part II is an overview of the rules and tasks essential to an effective investigation. An incident has occurred and you, the employer, have decided that an investigation is necessary. You decide on an impartial investigator with experience. The investigator should do the following:

- **First interview the person who reported the incident.** Obtain a written statement addressing the who, what, when, where and how of the incident.
- **Visit the site where the incident took place.** The site should be immediately secured until physical evidence is collected and photographs taken.
- **Identify potential witnesses.**
- **Identify and review documentary evidence.**
- **Determine a strategy for conducting the investigation.** The order and manner in which the investigative tasks are undertaken are important for an effective investigation. Establish a time line for completion of each task.
- **Prepare for and conduct interviews of witnesses.** An outline of standard questions provides a consistent line of questioning. Take written statements from each witness.
- **Interview the accused.** Obtain a written statement of the response to the
- **Analyze the investigative findings.** When the investigation is as complete as reasonably possible, objectively evaluate the evidence.
- **Document the results of the investigation.** A final report should be written which includes the details of the

investigatory activities, all relevant and necessary information, and findings.

- **Preserve all evidence.** Secure all evidence in a locked location and document all evidence obtained.
- **Closure.** The employer takes appropriate action.

The next two articles in this series provide in-depth information about the above steps. For re-prints of these articles, please contact Susan Dlouhy at NorwichCS@aol.com. MKAI conducts internal investigations for all types of employers. The MKAI consultants are trained experienced investigators, with more than 100 years total investigation experience that included interviewing thousands of employees. Call our office for details, fees and charges.

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Visit the OAAS website at
www.oaas.org

O.A.A.S. Survey Summaries

By Blair Brubaker, Adult Services Director, Miami County Board of MRDD

Facility Food Services

Last September, I sent Susan Dlouhy an inquiry to post to O.A.A.S. members regarding the provision of lunch/food services in Adult Service facilities. Sending questions to Susan for membership response is a valuable service that many of us have taken advantage of. I received 31 responses. As is the case with many topics in Adult Services, the responses were varied. Of the respondents, 18 programs rely on consumers to either carry their lunches or to use vending machines. Eleven programs provided meals in-house and several tied this service to the fact that their county still runs a school program. One program's non profit runs the kitchen and serves as a caterer for special events. Another program took an "enclave" approach for food services. The cost of facility based lunches ranged from \$1.00 to \$3.00. Four programs either contracted with other agencies or simply called orders in on either a daily or weekly occasion. These ties to the community included getting lunches from a high school, a bowling alley, the local pizza place. Several programs mentioned individuals being able to order out themselves and consumers walking to nearby restaurants during their lunch period. Hopefully this information will be helpful to Directors considering lunch alternatives and I encourage anyone who has sent a question to Susan to send her their results for Newsletter inclusion.

Creative Employment Suggestions

I wonder if there is an agency or organization that serves a more diverse group of people than County Boards and Adult Services. Other than the common denominator of meeting eligibility requirements, the values, skills, characteristics, hopes, backgrounds and experiences each person brings "to the table" is incredible. This diversity creates opportunities to learn, share, brainstorm and yes, even to get frustrated and look elsewhere for answers. In December, I asked if any one was successful employing someone with severely limited body control who is intellectually intact. "Sam" (the name I used although he'd probably love to see his real name in print) uses an augmentative communication device and basically has control of his neck and head. Through technology, Sam is able to operate his wheelchair, to communicate and to turn on lights, the television and music at home. However, we have struggled to find vocational activities for Sam so I asked for help via our O.A.A.S. member survey. Seven people responded with the following suggestions:

*Have the person activate a heat sealer gun to seal packages filled by others *Use an "able net box" to turn a shredder on and have another person feed the paper *Use an electronic scanner at the library to check books out *Use software to input information and to conduct BCI checks *Use software to create business cards, greeting cards and posters *Use software to create newsletters * Proof read material via a computer that can mark/correct errors *Quality inspect pieces and *Monitor security screens to alert someone should there be a problem.

Thanks to everyone who responded. Your suggestions have shown the value of putting several heads together!

Call Me.....

Teresa Fulk from Athens County recently polled OAAS members to find what titles are most commonly used for individuals enrolled in adult services. A total of 15 adult services programs responded to the request. The most used reference is persons/individuals receiving services. Other responses included: client, consumer, employee, trainee and guest.

OAAS Strategic Initiatives 2006

Goal #1 Best Practice:

- OAAS members will survey members about areas of “Best Practice” to find out where they want more information, resources and training.
- Continue Business Practices Resource Group as a mechanism for providing information to members.
- OAAS will advocate for a comprehensive state policy pertaining to safe and appropriate supports for persons who demonstrate the need for specific behavioral strategies and intervention. OAAS will coordinate a statewide conference on Positive Behavior Supports in 2006 in conjunction with other organizations.
- OAAS will continue to work in partnership with other stakeholders to promote best practice in the areas of supported employment and services for transitioning youth.
- OAAS will continue to work with ODMRDD and other stakeholders to promote best practice in the area of day habilitation services.

Goal #2 Influence the Development of Rules and Legislation Affecting Adult Services

- OAAS will remain active on all rule-writing, public policy committees and work groups that have direct impact on adult services.
- OAAS board members who are on rule work group will continue to e-mail summaries of meetings to the rest of the board for input and recommendations.
- OAAS will continue to lobby ODMR/DD, the Superintendent’s Association, and the County Board’s Association on the necessity of an individual service plan rule that addresses all components of the planning process.

Goal #3 Promote Self-Determination:

- Promote conferences and training related to self-determination.
- Support self-advocates through training and opportunities to network.
- Provide self-determination information to the membership via the web site, “The Leader” and other means.

Goal #4 SSA and AS Roles:

- Promote networking opportunities with SSAs at the regional and state level.
- Sponsor “Building a Bridge” mini-grants to encourage collaboration between Adult Services and SSAs.





OAAS Spring Conference And Strategic Planning Session April 6 and 7, 2006 Embassy Suites Hotel – Dublin

April 6th

- Day Habilitation Rule Status, PAWS Implementation, Transportation for Day Habilitation, Documentation Requirements
- Developing an Effective Risk Management Plan
- Developing Safety Committees/Teams
- Outcomes Management Planning

April 7th

- The designated representative to OAAS from each member organization is invited to join the OAAS Board in developing a Strategic Plan for 2007.

2006 OAAS Board of Directors
Elizabeth Prather, President (Richland CBMRDD)
Melanie Stretchbery, Vice-President (Wood CBMRDD)
Blair Brubaker, Secretary (Miami CBMRDD)
Brenda Smith, Treasurer (Riverview Industries)
Melissa Howell (Perry CBMRDD)
Sheri Martin (Holmes CBMRDD)
Bob Gaston (Pickaway CBMRDD)
Kyle Miller (Licking CBMRDD)
Linda Cudd (Montgomery CBMRDD)
Jim Brown (Windfall Industries, Inc.)
Don Nalley (Sandusky CBMRDD)
Mary Brandstetter (Clark CBMRDD)
Liaisons
Susan Dlouhy, OACBMRDD
Katina Karoulis, ODMRDD

New Hire Reporting Applies to Employees of Sheltered Workshops

One of the most significant changes in child support enforcement was the implementation of the New Hire Reporting Program in 1996. New hire reporting is the process by which an employer reports information on newly hired employees to a state directory within 20 days of the hire. According to the Ohio Jobs and Family Services, the New Hire Reporting applies to individuals with disabilities who work in sheltered workshops.

Ohio Revised Code Section 3121.89 - 3121.8911 and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996, 42 U.S.C. 653A requires all employers to report newly hired employees to a state directory. This information is matched with state and national data to help collect child support through income withholding.

The Ohio New Hire Reporting Program is operated for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), Office of Child Support by a private competitively-bid contractor. The new hire reports are processed by the contractor and transmitted to ODJFS. ODJFS also cross checks this information with public assistance, unemployment, and workers' compensation files to prevent unlawful or erroneous receipt of benefits.

Ohio submits the new hire reports to the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH), a component of the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS). The FPLS receives new hire data from all states and, along with other state employment data, matches it with requests for locate information. When a match is made, FPLS provides the requesting state with the locate information.

Security and privacy of data is a major focus of the new hire program. Federal law requires all states to establish safeguards for confidential information handled by state agencies and specifies who and for what purpose the information can be used.

Who Needs to Report

Employers must report hires, rehires or the return to work of an employee who has been laid off, furloughed, separated, granted a leave without pay, or terminated from employment. Ohio Revised Code section 3121.89 defines an employee as **"an individual who is employed to provide services for compensation to an employer and includes an individual who provides services to an employer**

under a contract as an independent contractor and who is an individual, the sole shareholder of a corporation, or the sole member of a limited liability company." This statutory definition requires that Independent Contractors (persons for whom you are required to submit a 1099 form) be reported as new hires.

An employer who fails to make a new hire report can be fined up to \$25 for each failure to report. If the failure to make a report is the result of a conspiracy between the employer and the employee not to report or to supply false or incomplete information, the fine can be up to \$500.00 for each failure to report.

If you are currently not in compliance with the code, a spokesperson at ODJFS stated that all employees hired after December 24, 2004, must be reported.



Reporting Frequency

If reporting manually, you must report within 20 days of hire

1. If reporting electronically, you must report at least two times per month (if you have new employees to report), 12-16 days apart. Please include the following information:
 - o Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
 - o Employer's name, address, telephone number related to the state selected for reporting purposes
 - o Other states in which your company has employees

How To Report New Hires

1. Gather the following information:
 - o Employee name, address, date of birth, social security number, and date of hire, rehire, or return to work; and
 - o Employer name, address, and federal employer identification number (FEIN).

Continued on Page 8

Continued from Page 7

2. Create the report using:

- An internet report created at the New Hire Website: www.oh-newhire.com
- An electronic report via cartridge or diskette;
- Electronic File Transfer;
- A photocopy of the employee's W-4 form (including company name, address and FEIN as well as the employee's date of hire);
- A photocopy of the New Hire Form, JFS 07048; and
- A computer print-out or other list of employees.

3. Submit the Report

You can submit the report via the Ohio New Hire Reporting Center's Website at www.oh-newhire.com, fax to 1-888-872-1611, or mail to the Ohio New Hire Reporting Program, P.O. Box 15309, Columbus, Ohio 43215-0309.

Using one of the electronic methods is the most efficient and accurate way to submit the information. If you would like more information on electronic reporting, please contact their office at the phone number or address listed above.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. As an employer, how do I benefit from New Hire reporting?

A. A direct result of New Hire reporting will be the reduction and prevention of fraudulent worker's compensation and unemployment insurance payments. Timely receipt of new hire data allows Ohio to cross-match this data against its active unemployment claimant files and either stop payments or recover erroneous payments.

Q. How can I minimize the amount of time I spend on reporting new employees?

A. The majority of information you must submit is already information on a new employee's W-4 form.

Although the reporting process is an additional requirement, the majority of employers either report very little or no cost impact to their operations. To ease the process, Ohio offers a variety of reporting methods.

Q. Isn't new hire information currently available through quarterly wage reporting?

A. There can be as much as a six month lag from the date of submission of wage data information to the date the child support office receives the information. Because many individuals change jobs frequently, quarterly wage data is often out of date or the employee is no longer working for the specified Ohio employer. With new hire reporting, data is available within a significantly shorter period of time.

Q. Do I have to report a new employee as a new hire if the employee worked for me in the past?

A. Yes. You must report all new hires, including rehires.

Department of Labor Worker Notification

Regulations governing the employment of workers with disabilities at special minimum wages require that each worker with a disability and, where appropriate, the parent or guardian of such worker, shall be informed orally and in writing by the employer of the terms of the certificate under which such worker is employed (see section 525.12(g)).

Compliance with this requirement should be part of your intake procedure. In addition, employers must display the Wage and Hour Division poster, *Notice to Workers with Disabilities Paid at Special Minimum Wages* (WH Publication 1284), available on the Internet at:

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/esa/public/regs/compliance/posters/disab.htm>.

New Adult Services Directors Announced

Lawrence County

The new Workshop Director for Lawrence County (Tri-Sate Industries) is Ray Langdon. Ray began his career earlier this year with Lawrence County as the investigative agent. Ray has a Bachelors Degree from Marshall University and was formally employed by the Autism Service Center in Huntington West Virginia. Ray replaces Jesse Roberts who has moved on to become the Director of Adult Services for the Union County Board of MRDD.

Hocking County

The new Adult Services Director for Hocking County (Hocking Valley Industries) is Janet Flanagan. Janet has 8-years experience with the Hocking County Board of MRDD. Janet was formally the Manager of Health Services. Janet replaces Kevin Davis who has moved on to become the Director of Adult Services for the Meigs County Board of MRDD.

Union County

In November 2005, Jesse Roberts accepted the position of Adult Services Director for Union County Board of MRDD and as the CEO for U-Co Industries. Jesse graduated from Ohio University in 1985 with a degree in Business Administration and an emphasis in Management. He received His Masters in Science and Strategic Leadership from Mountain State University in Beckley WV on May 25, 2005. After the sale of a family printing business in 1983 and graduation from college in 1985, he joined the SuperAmerica Division of Ashland Oil, Inc. During his career with SA, he held the positions of store manager, point of sale coordinator and district liaison. In 1998 he left SA and went to work for Clevenger Oil Company of Eastern Kentucky as a District Manager.

Jesse began his career in the MRDD field in September 1999, when he was hired to the position of Workshop Supervisor for the Lawrence County Board of MRDD. In 2001 he became the Workshop Director and CEO of Tri-State Industries, Inc. While at the Lawrence County Board of MRDD, Jesse was instrumental in the opening and operation of a Share Home where individuals could live semi-independently, assumed lease and business responsibilities of TSI owned rental/warehouse space making it profitable, participated in a 10 county consortium with OIH, Inc. to create new jobs and work for persons with disabilities, saw the adult work program services increase in employment opportunities for some 210 persons as well as overseeing TSI employment transportation and county operated buses.

Clinton County

Dave Ross has been serving as the Adult Services Director in Clinton County since February 28, 2005. Prior to coming to Clinton County Dave had worked for twenty years for the Scioto County MRDD program. Sixteen of those years were served in adult service management positions, including production manager and program director. "I'm excited for what the future holds for adult services in Clinton County", said Ross. "We're once again in a period of great change in the MRDD system in Ohio and we are determined to make those changes positive for the people that we serve."

OAAS Regional Map

