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From Your President...

By Elizabeth Prather, Richland County Board of MRDD

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer in spite of the unusual amount of rain, wind and lightning. By the time you get this, the back-to-school ads will be out in full force and it doesn't feel like school has been out more than a few days. I guess it is true when they say that time flies the older you get.

It doesn't seem possible that so many colleagues are old enough to retire. Two of these colleagues have been great supporters of Adult Services over the 30 years they worked in the field, Katina Karoulis and Kim Linkinhoker.

Katina's commitment to supported employment has dramatically changed some people's initial opinion that only a few individuals could benefit from community employment. She has stayed diligent and up until the end of her career with the department, has encouraged folks across agencies and within, to focus on employment for individuals with disabilities. The OAAS board meetings will not be the same without Katina in attendance providing updates from the department. We will miss the fire and passion she brought. I know she won't leave the field for long and look forward to her continuing to champion for supported employment.

Some of you may not know that Kim

was an Adult Services Director before he was hired by the department. Kim has always remained accessible and genuinely interested in the concerns from the Adult Services Directors. While at RSC he worked with us to get the support we needed for individuals with developmental disabilities. However, we all celebrated when he came back to ODMRDD. I agree with one of our members who said that Kim is a perfect example of what a good public service employee should be. He makes sure to listen to all stakeholders, not to placate, but to develop the best alternatives possible. We will miss that. However we can be thankful that Kim is another one who will not disappear after retirement.

Kim and Katina, congratulations on your retirement. See you soon.





Tony Fortkamp cuts the cake, while Kim Tabor, Adult Services Director from Morrow County looks on.

OAAS CENTRAL REGIONAL NEWS

Tony Fortkamp's 32 year public service career was recognized by OAAS central region during a June 22 lunch meeting. Tony retired June 30th from the Fairfield County Board of MRDD where he had served as Workshop Director since 1980. Tony began his career in Union County as an adult special needs instructor. He also work two years for each ADD and RSC. On July 17 Bob Gaston, former Adult Services Director in Pickaway County, joined the Fairfield County Board of MRDD as Director of Adult Services Options. The duties of this new position will include development and coordination of all services to adults by working with various service providers who provide, or want to provide, services in Fairfield County. Our best to both Tony and Bob!

Building Bridges Mini – Grants To Be Awarded

by Brenda Smith, Riverview Industries

One of the 2006 Strategic Initiatives for the Ohio Association of Adult Services (OAAS) is to promote networking opportunities with Service and Support Administrators (SSAs) at the local and state level.

OAAS recently introduced a new mini-grant offered to members who desire to improve services to individuals through an enhanced relationship between Adult Services and SSAs. OAAS originally agreed to award ten mini-grants with a maximum dollar amount of \$500 each. Twenty requests were submitted. The OAAS Board will vote at the August 4, 2006 meeting to approve the grants. The mini-grant proposals were creative and unique:

- Theatrical Production of "I Have a Dream" - Outcomes for Consumers
- 2 Breakfast Meetings, 1 Facilitated Focus Group, 1 Job Shadowing Day
- Bi-monthly team building meetings
- Team building exercises, facilitator and refreshments
- Training for SSA/AS on assessment, goal development and documentation by HBS
- Professionally facilitated meetings
- Breakfast Brainstorm meetings
- Mini-retreats at a local Nature Center
- Training in Behavior Support, Implementing Day Supports, Putting Person Back in Planning
- One-day joint training for SSAs and AS Staff
- TRANSITION - 3 part training series for SSAs and AS Staff
- Bridge Meetings - drawings and food
- Monthly lunch meetings with a set agenda
- Values Training
- Building Relationships in Functioning Teams Presentation
- Team building session with County Board Adult Services, SSAs and Private providers
- White water rafting trip for SSAs and AS Staff
- Workshops with facilitators
- Cook-out lunch, ice cream social, afternoon snack meeting, breakfast meeting
- 4 lunch meetings at local bed and breakfast

The need for this initiative is apparent in many areas. Each program will have their own set of issues and reasons for these meetings. At Riverview Industries, we have found that a lack of communication and cooperation between agencies makes it difficult for us to do our jobs. However, the people who depend on us to coordinate and offer services necessary to their quality of life, cannot afford to be the victims of our dysfunctional association. Having recognized this, we wanted to take a pro-active approach to opening up communication and improving our relationship – building our bridge. This required a change in attitude, so we developed the following standards:

- These meetings are worth it – not an expense, *an investment*.
- Adult Service is hosting because we recognize that creating a channel for open communication is important to the service of individuals.
- We are a gracious host.
- Can't control other's attitude, can control our own.
- Attitude starts at the top.
- Put others first.

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Out of the meeting, we expected better communication, a higher commitment to team work, a coordinated effort to problem-solving, all of which we felt would ultimately contribute to better service coordination and delivery. The unexpected happened when the most obstinate of the participants requested a follow-up “Bridge” meeting.

A location off-site provides neutral ground so there are no turf issues. Some hotels will donate the use of their conference room. In addition, good feelings are created by providing a nice display of food and, to make it even more fun, plenty of door prizes.

Participants may include SSA’s, SSA Director, Superintendent, A/S Director, Workshop Management, Transportation, Residential Director.

The theme of the meeting, Building Bridges, is analogous of agencies working together to improve services provided to individuals with disabilities. Riverview Industries applies the following actions to join together in solving issues:

Assess the gap – relationships between agencies

- How close or far apart are we?
- What does each of our jobs involve?
- What is the impact of your job on my job?

Identify landscape on each side – issues & concerns

- What are our top priority issues that create distance between us?

Envision & design bridge – how will the solution look

- What will our system look like if we are able to work together and solve problems, without constant conflict?

Determine what materials are needed

- Strong materials – Stone, metal, concrete = communication, maturity, strength, planning
- Weak materials – Hay, wood, straw = quarreling, immaturity, disorganization, pride, weakness
- We surely do not want to build our bridge with inferior materials.

Identify Actions – who does what & how

- Based upon the top concerns, identify who will implement the solution & what they will do – be specific.

Begin building – implementation of ideas

- Administrators will periodically check progress and communicate with each other.
- Administrators will set the example using strong materials.

Survey structure – ideas on improving relationship

- Continue to search out ways to build bridges.
- Improve understanding of each other’s roles.
- Hold a training during the meeting on an area of identified need.
- Use the meeting to introduce new members of your team.
- Meetings may be held frequently until relationship improves.
- Either side may indicate the need for a meeting. A/S will graciously host it.
- The meeting is an investment – not an expense.

The OAAS mini-grants will be used for any purpose that will promote collaboration between the two departments. Look for the results of the meetings in future editions of the OAAS Leader.

OAAS Provides Day Habilitation Testimony ODMRDD Provides Response

On May 12, 2006, the OAAS Board, represented by Susan Dlouhy, OAAS Administrator, provided testimony to ODMRDD on Rule 5123:2-9-19, HCBS – Payment Standards for Adult Day Support, Vocational Habilitation, Supported Employment – Enclave, Supported Employment – Community Services and Non-Medical Transportation.

The major issues with the proposed rule centered around the acuity assessment and its use in determining “staff intensity ratios”. The OAAS testimony stated, “It is our understanding that the original intent of the acuity assessment was to determine an “average” staffing need for each person during a typical day. Some individuals have very high needs (1:1) for large parts of the day (typically personal care and behavioral supports). However, during the remainder of the day, they need very low supervision (1:12). Planning for the “average” assures that the program has an adequate number of staff to meet the variations in any given day. The way the rule is written, people will need to be placed into discreet groups in order to provide and document the service at discreet staffing ratios. In addition, practical implementation of the rule would encourage providers to serve people within their designated ratio, in order to be able to accurately document services, time in and time out, and ratios of both staff and consumers.”

OAAS received a response from Nancy McAvoy at ODMRDD to this part of the testimony stating, “It is the Department’s plan to expand the training that has been presented to date in 2006 in order to demonstrate to providers the methods that can be used to integrate individuals with differing staff intensity ratios in discrete groups, to maximize staff assignments to these groups and to adequately document the provision of waiver services.”

In addition, OAAS took exception to the use of “program venues” within a program or facility. This rule states that a maximum of 16 people can be in one “program venue”. the OAAS testimony stated that sixteen is an arbitrary number, which does not speak to services, service delivery schedule, and/or the purpose or mission of the program. Limitations will promote the segregation of individuals, undermine self-determination and decrease flexibility. We suggested that the “venue” be defined as the facility in which the services are delivered.

ODMRDD has indicated that it is not acceptable to CMS to designate all individuals in one program site divided by the total numbers of staff providing services in that site as a method to determine staff intensity ratios. However ODMRDD responded to this section by saying that the rule will be amended to replace the term ‘venue’ with the term ‘grouping’.

Finally, OAAS provided testimony about the provision of nursing services, “adult services programs cannot operate without nursing services, given the population that we are serving. It is no longer recognized as a billable service. When nursing staff are providing supportive services, it is done as an integral part of the individual’s day. Therefore, it should not be necessary to record time in and time out when people access nursing services as specified in their Individual Service Plan.”

The response from ODMRDD was, “The rules will be amended to include administration of medication and the completion of nursing tasks by non-licensed personnel as billable waiver activities in each of the four Adult Day services when licensed nursing personnel delegate these tasks within the limitations of state law.”

OAAS will continue to work with ODMRDD to develop a viable rule for the administration of adult day support services.

My Voice, My Choice Project Begins Day Program Interviews

Norwich Consulting Services, Ltd. recently announced that additional funding was secured for the My Voice, My Choice project. They recently completed a second pilot of the residential report card and are ready to begin grading day program providers. Fifty – nine counties participated in the second pilot of the residential report card which was completed in June 2006. For more information about the project and to view the results of the residential report card pilot from 2005/2006, please visit the web site at: www.myvoicemychoice.com.

Starting in July 2006 and continuing until June 2007, Norwich Consulting Services, Ltd. will be conducting interviews with consumers who receive day program services in all interested counties. The interviews will be conducted at all public and private day program sites.

At the end of June, an e-mail was sent to all superintendents asking for their voluntary participation in the project. Forty counties responded to the first request. Thirty-one counties plan to participate, nine counties have declined. Responses from the remaining counties are expected by the end of July.

Eleven new interviewers were trained in June to assist with completing the day program interviews. There are now a total of 13 active interviewers involved with the project. The interviewers include people from diverse backgrounds: retired County Board employees, self-advocates, college students, parents, self-employed, and a stay-at-home mom. The interviewers are eager to begin working and are looking forward to visiting adult services programs around the state.

For more information:

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FORKLIFT FATALITIES CALL FOR SAFETY ACTION

By Terri O'Connell, Editor, OAAS Leader

Statistics provided by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health indicate that nearly 100 workers are killed each year in forklift related accidents. An additional 20,000 are seriously injured. The most common types of forklift related accidents are overturns, workers on foot struck by a forklift, victims crushed by a forklift and workers falling from a forklift. One recurring source of accidents is "early departure", trucks pulling away from the dock before a forklift has exited.

Both OSHA and the Department of Transportation (DOT) issue standards related to loading dock operations. Broadly speaking, OSHA has jurisdiction over loading and unloading while DOT controls dock plates and trucks. OSHA is preempted from enforcing its regulations with respect to working conditions regulated by other Federal agencies (such as DOT).

OSHA regulations for Power Industrial Trucks (29 CFR 1910.178) are easily accessed at www.osha.gov. On the right side of the home page find Laws and Regulations. Click on standards. Scroll down to Part 1910 Occupational Safety and Health Standards, and click. Scroll to 1910.178 Powered Industrial Trucks and click to open the standards.

Section 178(k) covers wheel chocks. Section 178(l) addresses training. Workers are required to complete training before operating a forklift. Their skills must be evaluated at least every three years and retraining provided if needed. Employers must certify that the training and evaluations occurred. Other important sections include 178(m) operations, 178(n) traveling, 178(o) loading, 178(p) operations and 178(q) maintenance. A separate section, 1910.23 C1, covers guard requirements for floor and wall openings.

When viewing the standards it is helpful to note that some of the headings on the left are printed in blue. The reader can click on the standards printed in blue to access written directives and interpretations that OSHA has issued in regard to the standard. Click on [1910.178\(k\)\(1\)](#) to find directives and interpretations related to wheel chocks. Here you will see the issues that arise from the overlap of OSHA and DOT regulations.

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health has issued an alert: Preventing Injuries and Deaths of Workers Who Operate or Work Near Forklifts. Go to www.cdc.gov/niosh/2001-109.html#2 for more information and safety recommendations. Your loading dock area is perhaps the most dangerous part of your facility. Make sure you have a superior dock safety program. Knowledgeable board members and local industries may be good sources of help.

Visit the OAAS website at

www.oaas.org

MUI REPORTING AND RESPONSE – *What Adult Services Should Know* *By Terri O'Connell, Editor, OAAS Leader*

County Boards of MRDD have responsibility to ensure the health and welfare of all consumers. The requirements for reporting, investigating, reviewing, and remediating incidents that adversely affect consumers' health and safety, and to monitor preventative actions, are specified in rule [5123:2-17-02 - Incidents adversely affecting health and safety](#). The requirements of the rule apply to county boards of MRDD, developmental centers, and providers. Under the rule "Provider" includes a county board when providing the services, or county board contracting entity as defined in section 5126.281 of the Revised Code. Therefore, for purposes of this rule, adult services is a provider, whether provided by a county board or a private entity.

Rule 5123:2-17-02 identifies the respective roles of the provider, county board, and the Department of MRDD in the incident reporting system. The role of the Investigative Agent and the categorical definitions of Major Unusual Incidents were reported in the Spring edition of *The Leader*. (Past editions of *The Leader* can be found on the OAAS website, www.oaas.org) The purpose of this article is to identify provider requirements for notification and reporting of major unusual incidents as well as county board response obligations under the rule.

Provider Notification Responsibilities

1. Immediately, upon identification or notification of a major unusual incident, take all reasonable measures to ensure the health and safety of all individuals served. The provider and county board shall discuss any disagreements regarding reasonable measures in order to resolve them. If the provider and county board are unable to reach agreement, the department shall make the determination.
2. Immediately notify the county board by telephone or other electronic means if the MUI requires notification of a law enforcement agency (possible criminal act) or public children's service agency, if the provider has received inquiries from the media regarding an MUI that has not previously been reported, or the MUI raises immediate concerns for the individual's health and safety such that immediate notification regarding the incident is necessary. Nothing in the rule prohibits a provider from contacting local law enforcement or the public children services agency prior to notifying the county board.
3. Submit a written report to the county board by 5:00 p.m. the next working day following initial knowledge of any MUI, except when immediate notification is required (see 2).
4. As soon as practicable, but no less than 24 hours after becoming aware of a major unusual incident, verbally notify the legal guardian or advocate selected by the individual, unless the guardian or advocate is the primary person involved and forms the basis for the reported incident. If unable to verbally notify the guardian or the advocate selected by the individual, document all efforts made to comply.

Requirements for County Board Response to a reported MUI

Immediately upon notification of a report of a major unusual incident from a provider, the county board shall:

2. Notify the law enforcement agency of jurisdiction if the MUI includes conduct that would constitute a possible criminal act, the local public children services agency if the individual is under twenty-one years of age and meets the definition of an abused or neglected child, the service and support administrator unless the SSA is the primary person involved that forms the basis for the reported incident, and, when an incident occurs at a program operated by a county board or county board contracting entity, the licensed or certified provider of residential or supported living services where the individual resides.

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2. Review the incident to ensure that the provider has taken all reasonable measures to protect the health and safety of the individual(s) and determine whether any additional actions must be taken.
3. Enter preliminary information regarding the incident through the online system established by the Ohio Department of MRDD.
4. Immediately begin an investigation if the MUI involves 1) abuse, neglect or misappropriation 2) any injury of an unknown or suspicious origin 3) suspicious or accidental death 4) the individual cannot be located or 5) any other MUI the county board determines should be investigated based on the county board's review.

Recommendations for adult services providers:

Reduce the occurrence of MUI's. Proactive approaches include, but are not limited to, consumer training and empowerment, positive behavior support practices and an active safety program.

Assure that all staff receive annual training in MUI rule requirements. Document all training.

The county board is required to designate a contact person to receive or manage receipt of all required reports, ensure that a system exists whereby providers may make required reports, and communicate that system to providers. Adult Services providers should know the name of the county board contact person and obtain written instructions for making reports. The name and telephone number of the county contact person could be on the list of emergency numbers posted by each telephone in your facility. ODMRDD maintains a hotline (866) 313-6733 which may be used if there are concerns or difficulties in reporting to the county board of MRDD.

Rule requirements for incident reporting should be placed in operation through written policies and procedures. There should be a written process for routing all incident reports and systematically documenting all related communication and actions.

Disciplinary policy should address failure to comply with incident reporting requirements.

Maintain the name of and contact information for each individual's guardian or designated advocate for easy access, while still protecting confidentiality.

Plan ahead. Brainstorm incidents that could occur and what steps should be taken to immediately assure health and safety. Protocols should be in place for all possible medical emergencies. Behavior support plans should be developed to reduce and eliminate behavior dangerous to self and others. Contingency plans for staff member reassignment or removal should be developed.

If your program has found successful methods for reducing unusual incidents OAAS would like to hear from you. We will compile and distribute the ideas we receive. Email oaasohio@aol.com

Next Issue – MUI Investigation and review, remedy and prevention. Do providers have a role?

OAAS Web Site Updates Needed!

www.oaas.org

Please check your e-mail address on the OAAS Web Site Interactive Map to make sure it is correct. If it is NOT correct, please send the correction to Susan Dlouhy at: NorwichCS@aol.com.

OAAS Regional Map

