

## **Approved Minutes**

### **Assistive Technology (AT) Advisory Council Meeting October 15, 2008**

#### **Members Attending**

Scott Higdon, Chair  
John Eisenberg, Vice Chair  
Pat Beattie  
Elizabeth Flaherty  
Sam Simon  
Brenda Wickard

#### **Members Absent**

Peggy Fields, Secretary  
Tom Dowling  
Ben Garrett  
Linda Harris  
Senator Yvonne Miller  
Celestine Walker

#### **Guests**

James Rothrock, Commissioner, Department of Rehabilitative Services

#### **Staff**

Dr. Joseph Ashley, DRS  
Kathy Hayfield, VATS  
Bob Krollman, VATS  
Barclay Shepard, VATS  
Elin Glass, VATS  
Janice Austin, VATS  
Emily McKeough Fallings, VATS North Regional Site  
Dr. Susan Asslein, VATS Southwest Regional Site  
Rick Barrow, VATS Southwest Regional Site

#### **Staff Absent**

Dr. Michael Behrmann, VATS North Regional Site  
David Netherton, VATS Southeast Regional Site  
Joann Ervin, VATS Southeast Regional Site  
Sharon Davis, VATS Southeast Regional Site

#### **Presenter:**

Carolyn Turner, DRS

## APPROVED MINUTES

### **Video or Audio Conference:**

No one participated in this meeting by audio or video conferencing

### **Welcome:**

Scott Higdon, Chair, brought the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Higdon thanked John Eisenberg for chairing the last meeting in his absence.

### **Introductions:**

All members of the Advisory Council and VATS staff introduced themselves.

### **Approval of 7/31/08, Meeting Minutes:**

The minutes of the July 31, 2008, Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting were approved.

### **Public Comment:**

No public comments were made.

### **Old Business:**

No old business was brought forward.

### **Overview of Money Follows the Person /Medicaid Waiver Funded AT:**

Carolyn Turner, DRS, provided information on Medicaid Waivers and the Money Follows the Person initiatives. The purpose of a waiver is to allow disabled and elderly people to remain in their community (home) versus an institution. On July 1, 2008, a service option was added for \$5,000 per year for environmental modifications (home or vehicle) and \$5,000 per year for assistive technology. Individuals must be approved for Medicaid and must be assessed with justification by appropriate professional. The purpose of the funds must enhance something in their lives. There was discussion on who are appropriate professionals to conduct these assessments and what role VATS may have in developing appropriately trained professional resources to provide this training.

## APPROVED MINUTES

### **Remarks by James Rothrock, Commissioner, DRS:**

Jim Rothrock joined the meeting and provided information on the budget for the Commonwealth and DRS. He discussed various programs in DRS and budget cuts.

Commissioner Rothrock also asked the Council members to think about people to add to the Council membership and that he would welcome names of persons to be considered for appointment to this Advisory Council.

### **Review of Data Collection System; Strategic Planning Process and State Plan:**

#### **State Plan**

Kathy Hayfield, Assistive Technology Resource Manager, provided the Council with an update on the status of the State Plan for Assistive Technology. She stated that each state is required to submit a three-year State Plan to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) in order to receive funding. Our current State Plan for AT became effective in Federal fiscal year (FY) 2006 and remains effective until the end of FY 2008, which ended on September 30, 2008.

RSA developed a new State Plan format intended to replace the one that expired at the end of FY 2008. Unfortunately, RSA did not get approval to use the proposed format for the new State Plan before FY 2009 began. Therefore, our current State Plan will remain in effect until the proposed format is approved for use and our new State Plan is submitted to and approved by RSA. RSA assured states that we will be notified once the new format for the State Plan is approved and that we will be given a reasonable time to complete it. Ms. Hayfield explained that in the meantime, VATS has begun working on our plan as we expect to hear from RSA sometime this fall that the plan will be due – possibly due by the end of December.

Ms. Hayfield further explained that development of this new plan gives VATS, DRS and the Council the opportunity to both improve access to and acquisition of assistive technology and to better integrate assistive technology across the agency and the community.

#### **Data Collection**

Kathy Hayfield explained that VATS collects data on all individuals served in the areas of Device Reutilization, Device Loans, and Device Demonstrations. Additionally, she said that we track individuals who receive Training, Technical Assistance, Public

## APPROVED MINUTES

Awareness and Information and Referral through our program. On July 31, 2008, VATS submitted an annual data collection report to the Rehabilitation Services Administration to report services delivered through the AT Act program in FFY 2007. Due to lack of a data collection system, Ms. Hayfield explained that this report had missing data in the areas of performance measures and consumer satisfaction information.

As part of a corrective action plan, VATS is implementing various methods and strategies to fulfill our data collection requirements in the future. VATS-North, George Mason University, has been contracted to perform Database Development and Data Reporting for VATS. They have developed an electronic data collection system that will be used by all VATS regional sites. Further, each regional site and the VATNet recycling grant partners will participate in a project to recover missing data not collected in FY 2008. This will include a consumer satisfaction survey of all individuals served.

### **VATS Central Staff Reports:**

Bob Krollman discussed the AT@ Work initiative. The first year ended 30 September 2008 and VATS exceeded the performance measures-more than doubling the number of people trained as part of this program. VATS received a performance bonus of 25% for this accomplishment. The new contract is in place for the next year.

Barclay Shepard reported on the activities of the VATNet grant. Mr. Shepard reported that VATS has been working with the VATNet Project Co-Director from the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (F.R.E.E.) to ensure data and data collection procedures meet the requirements of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Several new reporting requirements have been communicated to VATNet Partners and included in partner contracts which will bring data in line with federal requirements. Mr. Shepard also reported that VATS has been working with the VATNet Co-Director to plan an annual meeting for VATNet partners and affiliates. The meeting titled "*Shaping the Future of AT Reuse Programs in Virginia and Beyond*" will be held in Richmond on Tuesday, December 2, 2008, and will focus on sustainability and expansion of VATNet. The working meeting is being coordinated and will be facilitated by representatives from the Pass It On Center, the national center for technical assistance for device reutilization programs.

### **VATS Regional Site Reports:**

VATS North, Southeast, and Southwest Regional Sites reported on activities and initiatives offered by their respective sites.

## APPROVED MINUTES

### **Assistive Technology and Universal Design:**

Mr. Shepard played two videos for council members which demonstrated the benefits of using Universal Design as a strategy to help employers improve their applicant pools and customer base by designing environments which benefit the broadest range of customers. One video demonstrated Walgreens efforts to improve production at their distribution plant in South Carolina, and the other video demonstrated how a local employer in the Tidewater area, used principles of Universal Design in the development of their employee workstations. Discussion ensued regarding how VATS outreach efforts regarding assistive technology (AT @ Work, etc.) have helped employers know resources available to provide workplace accommodations.

### **Workgroup Reports/Discussion/Action Steps:**

#### **AT and School Workgroup**

John Eisenberg facilitated a discussion with VATS advisory council members to involve council members in strategic planning discussions regarding the process of how assistive technologies transition between grades, between schools in the same school system, between school systems, at home and the transition out of school –to college, work or community. Issues of funding and policies need to be examined as it relates to AT, VR and Education. Mr. Krollman will look to other states who have developed policies addressing issues of this type and assemble information for the workgroup to review at the next Advisory Council meeting.

#### **Reutilization Programs (VATNet) Sustainability**

Mr. Shepard facilitated a discussion with VATS advisory council members to involve council members in strategic planning discussions regarding VATNet sustainability. There was a considerable amount of discussion regarding the focus of VATNet reutilization efforts, resources available to support VATNet programs and expectations of advisory council members. Some discussion regarding efforts to support device reutilization programs through contracting directly with Medicaid were discussed (Kansas project). In brief summary, advisory council members felt that: The goal is to sustain the individual (VATNet) projects to maintain the current level of distribution and

## APPROVED MINUTES

expand the project to meet anticipated/growing needs; VATNet should promote itself in a coordinated fashion and as a permanent entity; Data should be collected which demonstrates the impact of the program; A Summit could be developed to make funding requests/applications centralized; VATNet should pursue grant funding on a statewide level; VATNet should identify other viable funding sources (foundations, etc.); The VATS advisory council member's role is to advise/ use input and expertise of membership to problem solve VATNet issues; VATS advisory council members should bring information regarding VATNet back to their constituents for additional input and support.

### **New Business:**

Scott Higdon suggested revisiting the issues discussed in the workgroups and AT for older people. Members suggested interest in hiring more people with disabilities and need to look at the 508 policy. Support was suggested for the VATNet grant by developing a letter of support and reviewing strategies for educating people at State and Federal levels.

### **Next Council Meeting Date:**

The next Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting is scheduled to be held Wednesday, December 10, 2008, at DRS Central Office, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, Virginia.