

**Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting**  
**September 19, 2013**  
**Approved Minutes**

**Members Present:** Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair; Margaret (Peggy) Fields, Secretary; Michael M. Behrmann; Clayton Bowen; Clay Huie; Mary Mathena; Melissa Oliver; Erin Smydra; Betti Thompson; Joann Willis

**Members Absent:** Melanie Brunson; Christy Crowther; Tony Gentry; George Scott Hidgon; Anthony W. Lineberry; William Massey; Michele Samoy

**Guests:**

James A. Rothrock, Commissioner

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

Pat Sitter, OT; John Allen, OT; Tom Rybak, RE, DARS

Mary Wilds, Statewide Coordinator for Distance Education, Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) – Old Dominion University (ODU)

**Staff Present:**

Kathy Hayfield, Director, Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS)

Barclay Shepard, Manager, VATS

Robert Krollman, AT and Aging Coordinator, VATS

Elin Glass, Administrative Assistant, VATS

Emily Fallings and Alisa Louthier, George Mason University (GMU), VATS North Regional Site

Sonja Schaible, Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (F.R.E.E.)

**Staff Absent:**

Sharon Davis, David Netherton and Joann Ervin, Old Dominion University (ODU), VATS Southeast Regional Site

**Interpreters:** Elizabeth Leitch and Elizabeth Grant

**Call to Order:**

Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. New Council members, Clay Huie, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center, and Erin Smydra, Virginia Department of Education, were introduced. All members of the Advisory Council, VATS staff and guests introduced themselves.

**Approval of 5/16/13 Minutes:**

The May 16, 2013, ATAC Meeting Minutes, as is, stand approved.

**Public Comment:** There were no comments from the public.

**Old Business:** No old Business

**New Business:**

*A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously passed by the Council for Joann Willis to serve as Vice Chair of the Council.*

**Introduction to McGuire Veteran Affairs (VA) Medical Center's Rehabilitation Services:**

Dr. David Cifu, the National Director of the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) Office, Department of Veterans Affairs, presented "The State of Art Rehab for TBI - VA Polytrauma System of Care and Beyond." Dr. Cifu provided an overview of the VA health system's rehabilitation services nationally including assistive technology (AT) services.

**VA Medical Center VISOR Program (Blind and Low Vision):**

Rosemary Duda provided an overview of the VA Medical Center's Visual Impairment Services Outpatient Rehabilitation Program (VISOR) for individuals who are blind or have low vision needs. Ms. Duda provided information on program eligibility and service availability. Ms. Duda discussed AT devices available in the program.

**VA Medical Center AT Program Overview:**

Melissa Oliver, AT Program Coordinator, provided an overview of the AT program at the McGuire VA Medical Center. The overview included how the AT program has evolved as well as new and future initiatives.

**Update on AT Follows the Student Legislation:**

Erin Smydra provided an update on the transfer of assistive technology devices among school divisions, State agencies and to individuals pursuant to the Virginia Code. Ms. Smydra walked council members through the guidelines developed by the Virginia Department of Education (DOE) and reviewed where this information is being made available. More information about the guidelines is available on DOE's Assistive Technology Homepage, T/TAC Online and on DOE's homepage under "Superintendents and Principals Memos, September 6, 2013."

**Commissioner's Update, DARS:**

James A. Rothrock, Commissioner, DARS, provided an update for the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.

**VATS Program Update:**

Barclay Shepard provided program updates for VATS. Mr. Shepard reported that VATS is in the process of re-negotiating contracts with its three regional sites: George Mason University, Old Dominion University Research Foundation, and the Foundation for Rehabilitation

Equipment and Endowment. Mr. Shepard reported the status of VATS' contract with the Mid Atlantic ADA Center to provide the "AT at Work Training". VATS regional sites have been providing targeted trainings to employment service organizations to improve access to assistive technology devices and services to individuals with disabilities served by the vocational rehabilitation program. In FFY 2013, VATS provided thirteen trainings to more than 230 training participants. VATS will be reimbursed for providing these trainings at the end of the fiscal year. VATS is in the process of re-negotiating the contract for FFY 2014.

### **ATAC Member Updates:**

Mary Methena reported that there will be a Low Vision Technology Expo at the Meyera E. Oberndorf Central Library in the Virginia Beach on September 28, 2013.

Melissa Oliver reported that there will be an Assistive Technology Expo on October 28, 2013 (8:00am-4:30pm) at McGuire VA Medical Center's Multi-Purpose Room (near cafeteria).

Clayton Bowen reported there will be a 2013 Veterans Conference on Hearing Loss, "Soldiering on with Confidence & Independence", November 9, 2013 (9am-4:00pm) at the John F. Fick Conference Center, 1301 Sam Perry Blvd, Fredericksburg, VA.

### **VATS Regional Site's Update:**

Emily Fallings provided a program update for the VATS-North Regional Site at George Mason University (GMU). VATS-GMU has contracted with the ALS Association of Virginia to provide in home AT assessments. VATS-GMU reported the continuation and change in focus of the Compu-Write program in the Summer of 2014. VATS-GMU reported that they are working with the Border Patrol to provide 508 compliance assessments.

Sonja Schaible, FREE Foundation, will be working with the Area Agencies on Aging. Mr. Krollman, VATS, may provide information regarding the aging population.

### **Tour of AT Lab at McGuire VA Medical Center:**

Meeting participants took a tour of the VA Medical Center's assistive technology (AT) lab. Participants interacted with the Center's occupational therapists and rehab engineers and reviewed the types of AT devices offered to the Center's patients for trial/evaluation.

### **Next ATAC Meeting:**

The next ATAC Meetings are scheduled for 2014 as follows:

**Thursday, January 16, 2014 (10:00am-2:30pm)**

**Thursday, May 15, 2014 (10:00am-2:30pm)**

**Thursday, Sept. 18, 2014 (10:00am-2:30pm)**

Meeting Location: DARS Central Office, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, VA 23229

### **Adjournment:**

*A motion was made to adjourn and unanimously approved.* The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm

