

Final Approved Minutes
Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting
September 13, 2012

Members Present: Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair; Michael M. Behrmann, Ed.D.; Clayton Bowen; Christy Crowther; Samantha Hollins; Anthony Lineberry; Kelly Lum; William Massey; Mary Mathena; Melissa Oliver

Conference Phone: Melanie Brunson, Esq.; Scott Higdon

Members Absent: Margaret Fields, Ph.D., Council Secretary; Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L; Michele Samoy; Betti Thompson

Guests:

James A. Rothrock, Commissioner, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
Barbara Seymour, Department of Medical Assistance Services
Sonja Schaible, Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE)

Staff Present:

Kathy Hayfield, Director, Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), DARS
Robert Krollman, Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) Central Office
Barclay Shepard, VATS Central Office
Elin Glass, VATS Central Office
Emily Fallings, George Mason University (GMU), VATS North Regional Site
Alisa Louther, GMU, VATS North Regional Site
Joann Ervin, Old Dominion University, VATS Southeast Regional Site

Call to Order:

Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. All members of the Advisory Council, VATS staff and guests introduced themselves. In an effort to remain diverse and meet federal mandates, VATS welcomed three new Council members:

Anthony (Toney) Lineberry - the State Rehabilitation Council
Samantha Hollins - the Virginia Department of Education
Michele Samoy - Representative of Individuals with Disabilities (Manassas, VA)

Approval of 3/8/2012 Minutes:

Elizabeth Flaherty asked if there were any corrections to the draft minutes of the last meeting. The 3/8/2012 ATAC Meeting Minutes stand approved as is.

Public Comment: No public comments were offered.

Old Business: No old Business

New Business: No new Business

Commissioner's Update:

Effective July 1, 2012, VATS is now a part of a new state agency: the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). In 2013, the adult services units from Virginia's Department of Social Services will become part of DARS. This new agency will help older Virginians and those with disabilities to maximize and secure their employment, independence and full inclusion into society and guide the Commonwealth in preparing for an aging population.

Commissioner Rothrock discussed the importance of the Agency to focus on the goal to help people live in their community, have public transportation and have the opportunity to make choices. DARS has elements up and running to build with partners toward this goal to connect with community housing.

Assistive Technology (AT) Director's Report:

Kathy Hayfield, Director, reported that VATS is a federal program, administered by the State. VATS provides comprehensive and statewide assistive technology (AT) programs and services to individuals with disabilities. VATS serves persons of all ages and all disabilities. The mission of VATS is to ensure that Virginians of all ages and abilities can acquire the appropriate, affordable assistive technology and services they need to participate in society as active citizens.

VATS has three Regional Sites - George Mason University (GMU), Old Dominion University (ODU) and Virginia Tech (VT). Due to a reduction in funds, as of Oct 1, 2012, VATS will not be able to continue to support the regional site at Virginia Tech. VATS will be assessing the needs of the Southwest region of the Commonwealth and determine the best way to serve this area. The FREE Foundation is providing AT equipment reuse services at this time in Southwest Virginia. Information and Assistance for the Southwest and statewide will be picked up by GMU beginning October 1st. Ms. Hayfield stated that VATS appreciates the years of service that VT has provided to promote AT in the Southwestern part of Virginia.

Update on "AT Follows the Student" Legislation:

Samantha Hollins, new ATAC member from the Virginia Department of Education, reviewed House Bill 382 which passed the 2012 General Assembly and became law on July 1, 2012. VATS' ATAC helped facilitate this Bill moving forward. The Bill helps facilitate the transfer of assistive technology (AT) among school divisions and when a student with a disability transitions out of the school system. Ms. Hollins reported that she will be working with community stakeholders to develop guidelines by July 1, 2013. Ms. Hollins will include the ATAC Sub-Committee and the AT Director as these guidelines are developed.

Update on Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH):

Clayton Bowen from VDDHH, reported on a grant that they received to ensure that low income families that have a combined hearing and vision loss can access the telephone, advanced communication and information services. Mr. Bowen distributed a brochure for

“iCan Connect”. For more information or to apply, visit: www.iCanConnect.org , www.fcc.gov/NDBEDP or contact VDDHH.

Update from Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority (ATLFA):

Christy Crowther reported that as of July 1, the organization went back to its original name, Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority (ATLFA), and established a new logo and tag line “Providing Help For A Better Tomorrow”.

Ms. Crowther reported that their fiscal year ended June 30, 2012, and the ATLFA closed 91 loans. Thirteen loans were partnership loans with their banking partner, and 78 were direct loans processed in house and totaling \$650,000. This makes the ATLFA current loan portfolio \$1.3 million. As of August 2012 the ATLFA raised their in-house direct loan limit to \$30,000.

Update from FREE Foundation:

Sonja Schaible, Director, FREE Foundation, reported that they are educating the community about the Durable Medical Equipment Reuse Program and working with the universities to provide student volunteers to assist with preparing durable medical equipment to be ready for reuse. The FREE Foundation is also helping with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to have equipment available for people in need during an emergency.

VATS Program Updates:

Robert Krollman reported that VATS, in collaboration with the VATS Regional Site at George Mason University, has developed an assistive technology (AT) training program for Employment Services Organizations (ESO). The free training will be offered to ESO job coaches/employment specialists in all regions of the Commonwealth to highlight AT devices and services available to accommodate job seekers with disabilities. In addition to training on basic high tech and low tech AT, the training will focus on AT tools to improve employment outcomes.

Mr. Krollman reported that Virginia is hosting a day- long meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Consortium of the Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center this month in Fairfax, VA. Focus will be on AT used at work, emergency management and senior support for the aging population.

Mr. Krollman reported that a trifurcated training program has been designed for DARS staff. This program will consist of online modules, a one day hands-on program at WWRC and a one day regional hands-on training program. Training participants will attend the day training at WWRC in either December 2012 or April 2013. Each participant will also attend a one day regional training in one of the first months of 2013. Over 40 people are scheduled to participate in the training.

Barclay Shepard reported that VATS is soliciting responses for a Request for Proposals (RFP) for its durable medical equipment (DME) reuse program, the Virginia Reuse Network (VRN).

The purpose of the RFP is to establish one contract to provide community-based DME reuse services for Virginians with disabilities in the following regions of the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), the Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS): Northern, Central, Eastern and Western. The project selected will be the statewide provider of DME reuse services for the VRN.

Mr. Shepard reported that VATS developed a MOU with the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) to expand VATS' statewide short-term loan/demo program to include more devices for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. Devices (approximately \$25,000) include: several types of portable loops (room loop / desktop loop / chair-car loop); weather alert radios with strobe / vibrator; iPads with apps; and portable Gentex smoke alarms with strobe. This collaboration will help improve access to AT that is not currently available in VDDHH's Technology Assistance Program (TAP) since items in the TAP are generally telecommunication devices. The collaboration will considerably expand VATS short term loan and demonstration programs, adding new technology for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. Equipment will be available at the following VDDHH outreach sites: Fredericksburg, Fairfax, Roanoke, Norfolk, Richmond, and Grundy (limited to portable loops for now). Mr. Shepard reported on data collected by VATS. Although data is still incomplete for the 2012 year, VATS has served more than 4,500 individuals through its statewide AT programs. Services include AT Demonstrations, Short Term Device Loans, Reuse of durable medical equipment, Trainings and Information & Assistance.

Advisory Council:

Elizabeth Flaherty, Chair, stated the need for Council to replace the vacancy for an ATAC Vice Chair, previously occupied by Matthew Deans. *A motion was made by Christy Crowther to nominate Kelly Lum as the new Vice Chair of ATAC. The motion was seconded by Dr. Behrmann and unanimously approved.*

Barclay Shepard, VATS, has been assigned to provide staff support to with ATAC and replace Robert (Bob) Krollman due to Bob's retirement on October 1, 2012.

Next ATAC Meeting:

It was determined that ATAC will meet three times annually, with additional meetings as needed. Meetings are scheduled to take place at the DARS Central Office, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, VA 23229. **There will not be a December 13, 2012 meeting!**

- **Thursday, January 17, 2013 (10:00am-2:30pm)**
- **Thursday, May 16, 2013 (10:00am-2:30pm)**
- **Thursday, Sept 12, 2013 (10:00am-2:30pm)**

Adjournment: *A motion was made by Dr. Behrmann to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Kelly Lum and unanimously approved. The ATAC meeting adjourned at 2:10pm.*