

**Community Services Reimbursement Rate Commission**  
Maryland Association of Community Services, Columbia, Maryland  
September 18, 2012

**MINUTES**

Present: Commissioners – Jillian Aldebron (chair), Patsy Baker Blackshear, (by telephone), Rebecca Fuller, Jeffrey Richardson, Thomas Sizemore, and Timothy Wiens (vice-chair). Consultant – Charles Betley

Absent: Kia Brown

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**Proceedings**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting agenda was approved; Aug. 14 and Aug. 27 minutes will be reviewed at a later date.

**Approval of Annual Report**

A final draft of the annual report was distributed to Commissioners on Sept. 7 for review. Several small changes were proposed and accepted, most notably a more careful use of modifiers. Laura Howell remarked on the fact that the report used outdated terminology in the way it referred to people with disabilities. In particular (but not exclusively), the term “client” has been dropped in favor of “person/people/individual,” and staff provides “supports,” not care. She referred us to the People First Language website. The Commission agreed to update the language after referring to the website and Laura offered to submit an edited version in track changes before noon on Sept. 19. The Commission approved the document, with the proviso that Jillian Aldebron would make final changes as discussed before submitting to DHMH for printing and distribution the following day. The Commission hopes to release the report on Sept. 24.

**DDA Wage Survey**

DDA ordinarily sends out notice of the annual Wage and Benefits Surveys to providers in Aug., with a Nov. 1 deadline for completion. In order to take advantage of recommendations made by the Commission regarding the need for improved data, DDA suggested working together to revise the survey and send it out in the next week or two with a deadline of Dec. 1, along with the cost report. Jillian Aldebron, Chuck Betley, and Gerry Skaw met to work on revisions. The Commission reviewed the draft revised survey that came out of this process. Concerns were raised about the ability of providers to understand all the instructions, and whether they had sufficient staff resources to complete the forms. The Commission agreed that a pretest with several providers would be useful so that necessary adjustments could be made. Alliance will participate in the pretest; Laura Howell agreed to solicit several providers for this purpose. The pretest and revisions will be conducted over the next week, in coordination with DDA. DDA will also conduct a webinar with providers to improve their understanding of the information needed and how to complete the forms. In any event, the Commission agreed to add a column to the full-time and part-time employee pages that gives total payroll expenditures for each class of employees (total direct care job titles and first line supervisors) by business line so that this can be tracked back to the cost report (for each business line, the number in the direct support cost center column, for salaries and wages - direct support employees).

The Commission also agreed to ask for the cost report to include the total number of hours paid out for direct support workers.

## **Administrative Processes**

The Commission discussed changing the technical advisory group structure. Suggestions included conducting advisory group meetings based on subject area (wages, financial performance, etc.) rather than dividing work up by sector; holding TAG meeting on the same day and just prior to Commission meetings; shortening meeting time. No conclusion was reached, The basis for disagreement on organization of the TAGs is that some commissioners feel that the two sectors are structurally so different that they have to be addressed differently; moreover, combining the two sectors may discourage participation by stakeholders who would only care about one or the other sector. On the other side were those who felt inadequately prepared, as commissioners, to approve recommendations on topics that they had no opportunity to discuss in depth because they did not participate on the relevant TAG. The Commission decided to suspend discussion on this matter and on delineating roles and responsibilities for Commission members until the new technical consultant comes on board in November.

## **Meeting Venues and Administrative Support**

Brian Hepburn very graciously and generously offered the Commission regular meeting space in MHA offices at the Spring Grove Hospital Center in Catonsville. He has also offered to provide some support for minor administrative functions, and “cubicle” space with a desk, computer, phone, etc. The Commission agreed to take advantage of this offer.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the full Commission will be 6-8 p.m., Monday Nov. 26 at MHA.