

Pipeline

2007 Archive



'Visions' has become ...

Pipeline ... direct from the state ...

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



Pipeline will be published twice monthly.

Visit us at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

Wednesday, February 14, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 1

Note: We have revamped 'Visions' electronic newsletter to accommodate a more frequent and consistent flow of information from the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) to you, and back again. Please open the attached portable digital file (pdf) of Pipeline to enjoy accompanying photos and other graphics, allowing you to read and print the issue in a more traditional newsletter format. We hope you will enjoy the new Pipeline, and share your thoughts with us at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us

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1. 'Learning Never Ends', New Adult Day Services in Action ... Learning with the emphasis on individuals ...

We share this feature to highlight opportunities available under the new Adult Day Services, and offer a glimpse of community-based opportunities that creatively link people with services and activities. Available to individuals enrolled on 'Individual Options' and 'Level One' Medicaid waivers administered by the ODMRDD, the new services include Adult Day Support, Vocational Habilitation, Supported Employment, and Non-Medical Transportation. In the feature below, the service provider has incorporated each of the Adult Day services elements, and tailored the appropriate billable activities to the individuals participating.

With most of the work done at the day's worksite, the Ronald McDonald House, Scott was getting a drink of water and noticed a newspaper on the counter. He proceeded to read aloud until co-worker, Lane, finished his vacuuming and could then hear the interesting item being shared. While Lane couldn't read the newspaper as well as Scott, he was no less interested in the content. Such are the inter-personal exchanges one sees in Adult Day Services provided by 'Learning Never Ends,' a program that grew out of 'Upreach', a service provider in Columbus.

According to Educational Director, Nicole Barbour, the 'Learning Never Ends' Adult Day program is available to individuals who are interested in and ready for *community-based activities and employment*, and who are enrolled on the Individual Options or Level One Waiver. *Education, arts, and wellness*, along with *community inclusion* are the main focus for participants. Most referrals to the young program (started in Sept. '06) have been through local service providers.

Boarding *the van*, transporting them to the Ronald McDonald House *volunteer work site*, Nicole explains, “We have the capacity for more than the nine people enrolled, however, the maximum number we can serve depends on the individuals’ interests and abilities, and the staff available to assist with and encourage the activities. We also could improve our capacity when we are able to make our building more accessible to people who use wheelchairs or have other mobility issues. That is a top priority for us.”

Talking with the group ready to head out to the Ronald McDonald House for *supervised on-site work opportunities*, we ask, “So, what’s on tap for tomorrow?” Tim pipes up, “Check our calendar! We have something every day. I think it’s Yoga in the morning and the Franklin County Dog Shelter after that.” And, of course, Tim was right.

“Check our calendar! We have something every day. I think it’s Yoga in the morning and the Franklin County Dog Shelter after that.”

With a busy calendar for the rest of the month, including the Ronald McDonald House (in conjunction with Columbus’ Children’s Hospital), and *paid work opportunities for some* at area businesses, the schedule is packed with plans. Participants have input into the variety of activities that are designed to enhance skills in different areas. *Reading, art, recreation, and employment* are just a few of the areas addressed. Indeed, it’s difficult to imagine that only a few years ago, these lively folks had nowhere near the choices they have now due to the new rules outlining Adult Day Services.

For more information about ‘Learning Never Ends’, contact Nicole Barbour, or Troy Rothwell at (614) 442-7702. And, for more information about Adult Day Services in general, go to <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/rules/odmrdd.htm> (Rules # 5123:2-9-16; 5123:2-9-17; 5123:2-9-18; 5123:2-9-19), and, to <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/mrddlibrary/publications/adultday.pdf> for a current version of the Adult Day Services handbook.



Scott, and one of the newspapers he enjoys reading in his free time.



(l. to r., back to front) Robert, Lane, Scott, Troy, Tim, Justin, Judy, Stephanie, and Nicole head out to the van.

2. Special Population Unit Opens at NODC **... addresses Specific Health and Safety Issues**

Serving the needs of ‘special populations’ within the MRDD arena is a goal reachable by creatively applying resources to the desired outcomes, while providing an appropriate service environment. According to Mike Snow, Deputy Director of State Operated Services and Supports, the new NODC Special Population Unit is one step in the right direction...

With the admission of one individual, the Northwest Ohio Developmental Center (NODC) Special Population Unit was opened on January 29, 2007. The mission of the Special Population Unit operated by NODC (Toledo) is to:

- ... provide court ordered evaluations and restoration for individuals that meet the unit's criteria for admission;
- ... review and evaluate short- and long-term community options, including the completion of a Risk Assessment for those that meet the unit's criteria for admission;
- ... provide short-term transitional admissions providing evaluation and treatment while other opportunities are created and implemented, and,
- ... provide long-term secure residential habilitation, as needed, for the individuals, peers, and staff members' health and safety.

Admission into the unit may occur only if:

- ... the person has mental retardation;
- ... the person is at least 18 years old, and eligible for county board services; and
- ... the admission to any other less restrictive setting creates a significant health and safety risk to self or other.

Any person determined competent for criminal proceedings relative to a current and active case must be adjudicated and incarcerated through the criminal process relative to the specific offense. Due to the implementation of significant security measures, the unit will not qualify for Medicaid reimbursement and will therefore require the county responsible for the individual to private pay for the care and treatment of the person admitted. The responsible party must initiate admission and will be required to sign a contract for payment of services and to participate in planning relative to the individual's future placement options.

As the Special Population Unit is part of Ohio's Developmental Centers, all admission and discharge procedures are in accordance with Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Rules. Anyone with questions about the evaluation and treatment center should contact their regional developmental center(s).

3. Dana Charlton to Leave ODMRDD

Dana Charlton, who has served the ODMRDD most recently as Director of Community Services, will leave effective March 2, 2007, following 33 years of service to the organization.

Dana has been a project-driven public administrator with a history of leading the development of successful initiatives to support individuals with MRDD and their families. Throughout that time she has demonstrated a commitment to system changes that reduce bureaucracy, streamline access, and provide supports and services valued by individuals with MRDD and their families.

In 2003, after 30 years of serving in several leadership positions within the agency, Dana was appointed Deputy Director for the Division of Community Services, supervising more than 90 staff members. While the honors and awards she has received are too numerous to detail here, it is important to note that most recently, in 2006, Dana was honored by the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD as the recipient of the prestigious Betty Macintosh award for professional services to individuals with developmental disabilities.



The ODMRDD extends best wishes to Dana, and invites friends and colleagues who wish to congratulate her to do so by contacting her at dana.charlton@dmr.state.oh.us through March 2.

Best Wishes to Dana Charlton

4. Kickoff for MRDD Awareness Month Gathers Momentum *Statehouse Event, March 2, Promises to Focus on What we CAN do...*

Once a rather formal event celebrating March as MRDD Awareness Month, a different approach is changing the way plans develop for the annual kickoff event at the Statehouse. This year, planning for the March 2 kickoff has made a giant step forward, as the event seems to be planning itself -- in part due to the participation of individuals with disabilities.

According to Robert Jennings, Public Information Manager for the Department, “We are seeing a stronger MRDD community bringing ideas to us, and helping to link together people with different abilities to create a more powerful program. The ODMRDD, Ohio Public Images (OPI), and the Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), have seen a wonderful synergy this year, as people with disabilities, providers, and county boards of MRDD work to make a powerful statement on the theme, ‘Focus on What we Can Do.’ ”

...“We are seeing a stronger MRDD community bringing ideas to us, and helping to link together people with different abilities to create a more powerful program.”

Jennings notes that there is a limited amount of space still available for organizations that have micro-enterprise programs and/or unique adult day services to display at the event, located in the Statehouse Atrium from 10 a.m. until noon.

To secure a display table, contact feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us and request ‘information on MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff.’ For additional information about MRDD Awareness Month events and promotional items, visit the OPI website at www.publicimagesnetwork.org.

In the Next Issue of Pipeline ...

In addition to feature articles, and state and national news, look for profiles of new ODMRDD key staff, and a look at an international team from Russia, visiting Ohio to learn about how people with disabilities receive services and live in our communities.

Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

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Thursday, February 22, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 2

This issue of Pipeline addresses additional information about the Pause in Transition to the new Reimbursement System, as first reported in Pipeline Extra, yesterday. Thank you for your feedback during the past 24 hours, and your excellent questions, which have prompted us to 'continue the conversation' regarding the information you need.

Waiver Reimbursement Transition Update

Yesterday, the Department completed two-days of work with an outside consultant examining our waiver reimbursement system. The consultants did an excellent job of educating us on what is happening in other states and informing us of options to improve our waiver reimbursement system. The department's next step is to develop a work plan. As we do that, we will be soliciting input from stakeholders on the various developing components.

As we evaluate the options for improvements, we will be using the following principles to guide our decisions about changes for our system.

- We want to build a system that our partners at ODJFS and CMS feel comfortable with and have confidence in.
- We want to avoid short-term patches in favor of long-term solutions. This system will need to serve our citizens who need the waiver system for their daily survival for the next ten years.
- We want a system that provides for both simplicity and accountability. This is a difficult task as individual costs in congregate settings and simplicity are almost contradicting terms.
- We want a system that can be informed and modified as time goes on, based upon data, not emotion and intuition.
- We want a system that honors and builds on all of the completed work, but is not bound by that work when it doesn't lead to a system that reflects these principles.
- We want a system of fair payments that balances limited dollars and increasing service demands. The system has to allow us to be good stewards of scarce resources – using our program funds wisely and seeking to minimize administrative complexity and costs.
- We want a system that supports individual choice, but recognizes that those choices occur not in isolation but in the context of a community.

What became clear in our two days of work is that there *are* ways to improve and simplify our system. We need to work through some options and propose the “best fit” for Ohio in light of our situation, goals, and the work done thus far. An example of prior work, which can be built upon, is the thinking that emerged from the daily rate project last fall.

Over the next month we will test with stakeholders some of our ideas and concepts about individual components of the reimbursement system. This vetting process of individual components will be followed by bringing to the field a package that can then be reviewed by stakeholders as a whole.

Lastly, we live under no illusion that everyone will be excited by our final product. The nature of change is that it affects each of us in different ways. For some of the field this will create more work and anxiety in the short run. We understand that this is additional work in the short run but it will pay benefits in the years to come.

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Pipeline ... Extra!

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A Pipeline EXTRA will be published infrequently to cover hot news on a single topic. It is similar to the former Visions ALERTS.

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Monday, April 2, 2007

The ODMRDD has received approval to move forward in addressing some critical issues. As a part of focused efforts to simplify service delivery and improve relationships with funding partners and stakeholders, including the federal government, ODMRDD continues to work with County Boards of MRDD to resolve key critical, and sometimes contentious, issues affecting services statewide. This issue of Pipeline Extra highlights several key issues.

Work Continues to Create Less Complex Service Delivery CMS Grants Strickland Administration's Request for Extension for Waiver Reimbursement

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has granted Ohio a six-month extension for completing waiver reimbursement transition activities. Previously scheduled for completion by June 30, 2007, transition is now scheduled for completion by December 31, 2007.

What this means is that as soon as transition issues are simplified and resolved to the satisfaction of CMS, the transition activity will resume (the 'pause' will be lifted) and activity can move forward to meet the new December 31 completion date.

ODMRDD Director John L. Martin, notes, "We will be working closely and aggressively with CMS to address program issues and complete the transition. I am especially pleased to see the assistance ODMRDD received from Governor Strickland's Washington Office. We appreciate Governor Strickland's personal efforts in working with CMS to set the stage for this extension. Likewise, we appreciate the ongoing time and effort of county board, provider, and advocacy organizations in the waiver reimbursement improvement workgroups."

"I am especially pleased to see the assistance ODMRDD received from Governor Strickland's Washington Office. We appreciate Governor Strickland's personal efforts in working with CMS to set the stage for this extension."

In February 2007, ODMRDD 'paused' the waiver reimbursement transition process due to complexities in the new system. The extension by CMS is a sign that ODMRDD's relationship with the federal government is improving and underscores that CMS understands the need for additional time to address system issues regarding the transition of 11,000 waiver recipients to a new, less complex system.

As the state negotiates potential system improvements with CMS, ODMRDD requests that County Boards of MRDD and providers continue to observe the pause in applicable reimbursement transition activities. The Department will provide more information to the field as developments occur.

Strickland Administration's Budget Highlights Focus on Additional Resources, Simplification, and Cooperation

State funds for the Martin lawsuit settlement, extending the waiver financing and administration contractual agreements between the Department and the County Boards, and the consolidation of subsidy funds, are three important initiatives in Governor Strickland's budget proposal (introduced in the general Assembly as HB119) that will help people waiting for services, and reduce fiscal pressures on county boards around Medicaid waiver services.

Martin v. Strickland Settlement: Helping People, Helping County Boards

Governor Strickland has proposed that the state will provide the match for an additional 1500 waivers, which will help Ohioans waiting for services without requiring County Boards to use increasing amounts of local levy funds as match to finance additional waiver slots.

In this spirit of cooperation, collaboration, and partnership, the state has assured that local funds earned by counties with the passage of levies will not need to be spent to fund the 1500 additional waivers.

Strickland's Turnaround Ohio plan notes that 'investing in what matters' is the key to how decisions will be made by this administration. And, it is a key reason for increasing the ODMRDD operating budget to fund the state's share of the *Martin v. Strickland Settlement Agreement*. The '*Martin Agreement*' offers new residential choices, including alternatives for individuals who currently reside in institutional settings. *It does not require the closure of any public or private facilities.*

The settlement is conditional upon funding approval in Ohio's next biennial budget, and was negotiated in September 2006, among system stakeholders. If approved by the General Assembly, the funding will provide opportunities for an additional 1500 Ohioans with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities to be served through Medicaid-funded home- and community-based waivers. Individuals living in institutions will be given an opportunity to choose their care and select the types of services they want and need.

The agreement also will help shrink Ohio's long waiting list for residential services and provide much-needed state funds to expand waivers. *To fund this settlement, the budget includes a new line item, 'Martin Settlement,' that provides \$6.2 million in FY 08 and \$29 million in FY 09.*

Consolidation of Subsidy Line Items

ODMRDD is requesting the consolidation of several different subsidies into one subsidy and one line item. Existing statute permits counties to use each subsidy as matching money ('match') for Medicaid waiver services. The language currently in statute needs to be changed to permit counties to use the new, consolidated subsidy as match.

For example, the ODMRDD would consolidate Service and Support Administration (SSA)

Supported living, County Board of MRDD, and Family Support subsidies into one subsidy and one line item. This would require changes to the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) in order for it to be in synch with actual practices.

Clarifying this issue should result in:

- A less complex accounting system offering increased flexibility at the county level.

Medicaid waiver service provider contracting with County Boards of MRDD

The budget proposes that ORC 5126.035 be repealed, which governs contracts between County Boards of MRDD and Medicaid service providers. Following a recommendation of the Taft Administration, the Governor's budget proposes to resolve the issue, following six years of contentiousness and controversy. The current statute has never been able to be implemented, litigation began in 2004 and continues unresolved, and the provision is a source of federal compliance concern.

During the last biennium, ODMRDD and the county boards agreed to put in place contracts between the county boards and the Department, in part to replace the contemplated contracts between County Boards and Medicaid waiver service providers. In addition, the authority of County Boards to assure and monitor health and safety has been clarified in statute and through the contracts between the Department and the County Boards.

ODMRDD is working with Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD and the Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD to propose additional budget language being requested by the County Boards in connection with their support of the repeal of ORC 5126.035. The additional language, once mutually agreed upon, would codify into law and extend waiver financing and administration agreements currently in place between ODMRDD and the County Boards.

The counties have agreed to work with ODMRDD in developing the language, through April 12, in a collaborative effort to arrive at a satisfactory resolution to the additional budget language issue.

Resolving these issues should result in:

- Eliminating a statute that has never worked, and putting in its place a statute that codifies and extends current agreed-to contractual arrangements between the ODJFS, ODMRDD and the Department's waiver administration and funding partners, the County Boards;
- Resolving a contentious issue, possibly ending a source of litigation, and making Ohio's law on waiver administration clearer and less complex, and resulting in a federally-compliant and fair system of administering Medicaid waiver services;
- Allowing all stakeholders to more clearly understand responsibilities for Medicaid waiver services contracts, and know their operational guidelines.

Advocacy and Protective Services

Ohio law mandates support of advocacy and protective services for people with developmental disabilities. Currently, Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc. (APSI) has a growing caseload of more than 4,300 individuals represented by 76 Protective Services Representatives. The ODMRDD budget includes a 13.4 percent increase (\$329,000) to support increased need in this area. The increase in GRF will help retain a professional workforce and offer improved assurances of health and safety due to more manageable caseloads.

Waiver Reimbursement Transition

The budget reflects an addition of \$6.5 million each year for the transition of 11,000 waiver recipients to a new waiver reimbursement system. When the transition was undertaken several years ago, it was thought that it would be budget-neutral. However, fiscal projections now indicate that costs of services to waiver recipients may be \$6.5 million more than projected by the previous administration.

Budget Summary

The proposed *total* biennial budget (includes all state and federal funding) for ODMRDD decreases by 4.6 percent in FY '08 and includes a 6.7 percent increase in FY '09, much of which is to support the details of the *Martin v. Strickland* settlement agreement (formerly *Martin v. Taft*, and now dubbed '*Martin Settlement*'). The new budget line for this item includes \$6.2 million in FY '08 and \$29 million in FY '09.

Including funding for the Martin Settlement, the proposed General Revenue Fund (state funding only) for 2008-2009 increases by 4.2 percent in FY '08 and 5.3 percent in FY '09. This level of increased funding is much higher than has been recommended for nearly any other state department, and shows Governor Strickland's understanding of the need for a well-administered and more balanced way of funding Ohio's services for individuals with MRDD.

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Wednesday, November 28, 2007

Volume 1, Issue 23

- 1. Stakeholders Address ODMRDD Futures Committee
- 2. 'Lest We Forget' Proves Unforgettable
- 3. State Representative Jon Peterson Earns Award

1. Stakeholders Address ODMRDD Futures Committee

A rain-soaked day failed to dampen the resolve of the many MRDD system stakeholders who came to Columbus on Monday, November 26, to present testimony regarding the future of services for people with developmental disabilities in Ohio. The stakeholders addressed the members of the ODMRDD Futures Committee's *Finance*, and *Serving Populations with Specialized Needs* subcommittees, at the Columbus Developmental Center.

Mary Hall, a mother of three children with severe disabilities and a provider of services to medically fragile children, provided insightful remarks focusing on the need to have more services for Ohio's children with challenging medical needs. She stated,

"We need to eliminate the biases that exist with regard to serving medically fragile children. Ohio must look at the services that are currently available and eliminate barriers to funding."

Hall also briefly touched on the need to make system changes that would adequately compensate parents who care for loved ones at home.



- Looking to the Future -

Exemplifying the true spirit of what these open forums hope to accomplish, the mother and daughter team of Nancy and Elizabeth Beu, each provided testimony from their unique perspectives. Nancy proudly stood by as her daughter, Elizabeth, began with an articulate and moving account of life impacted by a long list of challenges resulting from Asperger's

Syndrome—a pervasive developmental disability within the Autism Spectrum, generally characterized by social isolation and eccentric behavior.

“I hope my story gives you a sense of what it is like to live with this kind of a disability,” Elizabeth said to a hushed audience. She added with a grin, “But despite all these challenges, I am just a person who loves the Buckeyes and my dog, Rudy.”

Nancy Beu followed her daughter’s testimony by explaining the endless issues she faced during Elizabeth’s years in the public school system. She recalled that because people with Asperger’s Syndrome can be very high-functioning, Elizabeth was not deemed eligible to receive MRDD services. Nancy remarked,

“I have a dream that some day a comprehensive center for people with Asperger’s can be developed.”

Sister Marianne Van Vurst, a Futures subcommittee member who represents the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA), thanked the Beus for their testimony, with high praise for Elizabeth’s efforts. “You are a shining example of what a public education can accomplish,” she said.

Free and open access to information that assists families in finding appropriate services was the focus of testimony by Jeanne Huber, mother of a 27 year-old son who lives at the Columbus Developmental Center. “I spent nearly 24 years searching for services for my son,” Huber said. She added that the searches were long, costly, dangerous, and frustrating experiences. Huber asked the committee to find ways to provide timely assistance by developing direct lines that provide general information, available 24 hours a day.

“ I spent nearly 24 years searching for services for my son ... ”

Testimony provided by participants on November 26, at this round of public hearings hosted by the ODMRDD Futures Committee, brought many individuals and families together to address concerns, highlight areas of interest, and share their thoughts. Here are a few more:



“ Caregivers in their 80’s and even in their 90’s are telling us they are not going to give up caring for their sons or daughters until they absolutely have to! We see them break down physically – right before our eyes – in the process. We need to be aggressive with our plans and look at their specific needs so that it can be easier for them to make these difficult choices. “

< Wynema Mebane, parent advocate



“ I hope my story gives you a sense of what it is like to live with this kind of a disability ... but despite all these challenges, I am just a person who loves the Buckeyes and my dog, Rudy. ”

< Elizabeth Beu, advocate



“ Your coming here today to offer testimony on the subject of encouraging Developmental Centers to become stronger regional resource centers for people throughout the state is very helpful to us.”

< Subcommittee Chair, Barbara Yavorcik (center), responds to a participant at the November 26 public hearings.

More Opportunities to Provide Testimony

Next, the MRDD Futures Subcommittees will be hearing testimony on the subjects of *Accessing Services and Supports* on Friday, November 30, from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm, and on *Delivering Quality Services* on that same day, from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm, at the Columbus Developmental Center, 1601 W. Broad Street in Columbus. We ask that public testimony be held to 3-5 minutes, but any length written comments may be submitted in person or through the MRDD Futures Website via an email to: Futures-Feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us.

When registering, please include your name, what geographic and interest area you represent, and what issue(s) you would like to provide testimony about. *Every effort will be made to accommodate everyone wishing to testify within the time available.* All written comments will be made available on the website. Written comments may be submitted via e-mail or US Mail. Please send any mailed comments to: ODMRDD, 1810 Sullivant Ave., Columbus, OH 43223, Attn. Lisa Walsh. Anyone wishing to provide written comments may do so at any point during the MRDD Futures process.

Subcommittee members ask that participants consider the following questions on the subjects of *Accessing Services and Supports*, and *Delivering Quality Services*:

- What does "quality" mean to you?
- How can we do a better job as a system to ensure that individuals get high quality services they need and value?
- Individuals reside in and receive services in a variety of settings. Do you believe there should be basic requirements that each provider should meet, no matter what the service is or how it is funded? If so, what are those basic requirements?

- Do you have any suggestions on how we can do a better job as a system to recruit and retain good direct care staff?
- What specific information do you need when choosing services and providers?

For additional information on issues being considered by the ODMRDD Futures Committee, visit the website at www.mrdd.ohio.gov/futures.



Mary Hall, a mother of three children with severe disabilities and a provider of services to medically fragile children, provided insightful remarks focusing on the need to have more services for Ohio's children with challenging medical needs.

She comments, "The current service system cannot effectively maintain this beautiful life we have promised our children. We raised them with the expectation of a full life in their communities."



2. 'Lest We Forget' Proves Unforgettable

" Ours is not to place the blame for the past, but to set the course for the future. "

- John F. Kennedy

Following his opening remarks on the quarterly meeting's agenda which included Futures Committee activities and other statewide matters, ODMRDD Director John L. Martin, prefaced a video presentation reminding staff that,

"We cannot develop a vision for the future without first understanding our past."

'Lest We Forget', a statewide initiative to record and preserve first-person histories of people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities who lived in state institutions in Ohio, and who were part of the de-institutionalization process beginning in the 1960s, quietly opened the November 28 meeting for all ODMRDD Central Office Staff. It also opened some eyes to what -- only 30 or 40 years ago -- conditions were like for people with disabilities based on available information and popular beliefs at the time.

Exiting the William Green Administration Building in Columbus, it was difficult for staff to think of mundane matters like paperwork as they recalled the histories of people who were profiled. Instead they were thoughtful, considering the impact of these very personal stories.

Kenneth Latham, Developmental Disabilities Council public policy/public affairs staff member, gathered his coat and shared, "It was a very affecting documentary. I know how difficult it is to put together something like that so that it is meaningful and real to the audience. Most of the time participants in a documentary want to know one thing -- will this

make a difference to the people viewing it? Will it make a difference in the future? This is what they want to know. And this is what 'Lest We Forget' does, and it does that very well."

" Most of the time participants in a documentary want to know one thing – will this make a difference to the people viewing it. Will it make a difference in the future? This is what they want to know. And this is what Lest We Forget does, and it does that very well. "

As Judy Leasure, 'Lest We Forget' film producer, noted in her comments following the documentary, the video brought to light several remarkable stories concerning family members, pioneering advocates, and professionals, as well as individuals residing in the institutions. She added that Partners for Community Living, who co-produced the series along with Jeff Moyer/Music from the Heart, hopes that -- after seeing the video, and the lives people endured in many institutional settings -- we can make better decisions in the future based on the information that we have.

The 'Lest We Forget' series is presented in a sequential, chronological format, with the beginning focusing on stories from families and their experiences upon first hearing that their children had disabilities. Subsequent chapters follow families and individuals as they are sent to institutions, followed by life in the institutions, and culminating with leaving the institutions to return home. The film follows their journeys to where they are today.

A statewide advisory board has been established to further define the role of the *Lest We Forget* mission beyond the documentaries, and build upon a commitment to educate young people to become the next generation of strong, dedicated and vocal advocates.

For more information on the *Lest We Forget: Spoken Histories* visit www.mrddohio.com
Or write to: Partners For Community Living, 1651 Needmore Road, Dayton, OH 45414.
You may also contact them to be included on a list to receive information with the film documentary series is available early next year.

" ... It is our hope that after seeing the video, and the lives people endured in many institutional settings, we can make better decisions in the future based on the information that we have. "



3. State Representative Jon Peterson Earns Award



State Representative Jon Peterson, center

President of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDS) Board of Directors, Stan Butkus, and Vice President/President Elect of the Board, Kenneth W. Ritchey, presented the *Ben Censoni* award to two recipients during the Association's Annual Meeting on November 8: The Honorable Jon Peterson member of the Ohio General Assembly, received the award for passion and leadership in supporting and advocating on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Gerry Morrissey also received the award for exemplary service in his previous position as Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation.

The NASDDDS *Ben Censoni Award for Excellence in Public Services* is the only award that recognizes public officials who strive to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. The award is named in honor of the late Ben Censoni (1948-1988), former developmental disabilities director for Michigan and Chair of the Association's Governmental Affairs Committee. Ben's motto was, "*People are what really matter.*"

ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, commented on Representative Peterson's achievements,

“ Representative Jon Peterson is a passionate and caring legislator whose actions have had a significant impact on improving the lives of Ohio's most vulnerable citizens. ”



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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor

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Wednesday, December 12, 2007

Volume 1, Issue 24

- 1. Pipeline to Poland – via Global Volunteers from Ohio
- 2. Update on the 1500 Waivers funded by the *Martin v. Strickland* Settlement
- 3. Key Staff Profile – Mark Seifarth, Legislative Liaison
- 4. Governor Strickland Establishes Executive Medicaid Management Administration (EMMA)
- 5. Superintendent Position at Warrensville Developmental Center Remains Open
- 6. ODMRDD Futures Committee Update

1. Pipeline to Poland – via Global Volunteers from Ohio



Siedlce, Poland – Last day for the Ohio volunteers – mixed in and among the group, holding gifts of thanks in their hands, and gifts of another kind in their hearts.

Indeed, gifts of another kind were dear to the handful of Ohio volunteers who recently visited Poland. The gift of understanding, for one. The gift of time, for another. Special thanks to Jackie Bowling, Vinton County MRDD Superintendent, for the brief report following:

“Learning about the world -- and the impact of people with disabilities in it -- is a fascinating proposition. Each country serves people in different ways, for various reasons, whether cultural, fiscal, or societal ... but in reality, the reasons for doing so are more alike than different.

During the latter part of September and the first part of October 2007, *Jackie Bowling*, Vinton County MRDD Superintendent; *Heather Kendall*, Coshocton County MRDD Superintendent; *Sarah Winters*, retired Superintendent (Perry County MRDD); *Georgia Bruce*, retired Physical Therapist; and, *Sharon McCoy*, Montgomery County Community Development Trainer, were a team of people through *Global Volunteers* -- working with individuals with disabilities in Siedlce, Poland.

The experience was valuable for the team from the U.S. as well as the people of Poland, both through the hands-on work, and as a general learning opportunity. Services for people with disabilities in Siedlce (east of Warsaw) and its surrounding communities are operated by the Catholic Church and are culturally driven, focusing on the value of art, music, and cultural heritage.

While the services available to people with disabilities may be somewhat comparable in nature, they are different in practice from services delivered in Ohio. The largest gaps we noticed in service delivery are for children ages 0-3 (minimal), and services provided to people in the community (not many) as opposed to in a church or congregate setting. Acceptance of people with disabilities as a natural part of a community also still is a challenge, although tremendous progress has been made since services through the Catholic Church began in the late 1990s.

A dedicated staff worked hard each day in Siedlce to provide quality services, and warmly welcomed the volunteers from Ohio. As the three-week visit progressed, our Polish hosts were curious about U.S. services and facilities and how we promote community integration. Sharing differences and similarities created a camaraderie that united two very different cultures.

“ As the three-week visit progressed, our Polish hosts were curious about U.S. services and facilities and how we promote community integration.

On our last day, encircled by the individuals as they sang an old Polish song to the volunteers (right before the photo above was taken), all of us were feeling pretty emotional, and felt that the bond created during the brief time there should never end. There is so much we can learn from them, and so much more to be shared! -- *Jackie Bowling*



*A view of Siedlce, Poland,
courtesy of Wikipedia.com*

Editor's Notes

Pipeline talked with Jackie Bowling, and learned a little more about the trip. Here are a few additional thoughts:

- Although miles separate them, the U. S. visitors and Polish hosts were united by a spirit of caring about those who need a life-long system of support, regardless of where they live in the world.
- The church setting where the group photo was taken is similar to what a sheltered workshop might be in the U.S. The *Global Volunteers* noted that people at this location were high-functioning, and those who have more severe or profound conditions are generally cared for in their homes in Poland.
- It was notable that many of the Polish staff and others encountered during the visit could speak at least some English. There was also an interpreter available to the group.

Lastly, Jackie and the group of U.S. volunteers hopes this is the beginning of a longer relationship, and was struck by the positive possibilities of these kinds of cultural exchanges. She commented, “What I took away from there was how much we could help them.”



2. Update on the 1500 Waivers funded by the Martin v. Strickland Settlement

Good news to report ...

As *Pipeline* readers may recall, per the conditions of the *Martin v. Strickland* settlement, a total of 600 people are to be enrolled on the Individual Options Waiver during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008, and a total of 900 are to be served during the following fiscal year. In order to accomplish this, ODMRDD planned that 60 people per month would be enrolled in each month this fiscal year, beginning in September. We are right on target.

ODMRDD is tracking the enrollment by quarter in order to align with the PICT* process. The enrollment goal, through the end of December, is 240 people (60 x 4 months, September through December.) We are pleased to report that, at the end of December, County Boards of MRDD expect to have 230 people enrolled. Please note that of these 230 people, 26% are from institutional settings.

Last week ODMRDD compiled county boards' enrollment plans for next quarter (January – March 2008) and the plans indicate there have been 188 requests to enroll individuals. If this occurs as planned, there will be 418 people enrolled through the first seven months of the *Martin v. Strickland* settlement activity. Comparing this to ODMRDD's budget estimate target of 420 people, we are at 99.52% of where we'd hoped to be, enrollment-wise. This is excellent news – for all involved – especially the individuals moving to their new residential settings!

Thanks to everyone at County Boards of MRDD and other partnering organizations, who have collaborated to make the settlement implementation a success, so far.

Here is a recap:

- As of early December 2007, there are 230 people in process (being 'processed' to get on the waiver) compared to a budget of 240 for the time period. Of these individuals, 26% are coming from institutional settings; ICFsMR and Nursing Facilities.

- Projections from County Boards of MRDD indicate that, for the next quarter, nearly the exact number of folks that are 'budgeted' are being processed to begin receiving the waiver services.
- In total, through the end of next quarter (March 2008), the actual utilization of *Martin v. Strickland* funded slots will be 99+% in line with the budgeted amount. This progress indicates that county boards are meeting the challenge with nearly 100% precision, and, that the ODMRDD is doing what we said we would do to make the most of the additional slots and funding.

Pipeline Quarterly

Look for the Winter issue of ODMRDD's newsmagazine, *Pipeline Quarterly*, issue II publishing this month, for a feature article on the first two individuals served via *Martin v. Strickland* funding for IO waivers.

* *PICT* = Preliminary Implementation Component Tool: A tool used by County Boards and the ODMRDD to identify and allocate capacity on Home and Community-Based waivers administered by the Department.



3. Key Staff Profile

Mark Seifarth, Legislative Liaison



The ODMRDD division of Constituent Services welcomes Mark Seifarth, Legislative Liaison. Mark notes with great enthusiasm that, "This year marks my 25th year of impacting public policy."

Beginning in 1983 as an intern at the Legislative Services Commission (LSC), Mark's career has spanned a quarter of a century serving in various legislative capacities, most recently in Washington D.C., as a Congressional Liaison with the National Council on Disability.

"The three years I spent in D.C. were extremely rewarding and somewhat exhausting!" notes Mark, with characteristic good humor. "Going uphill in a non-power chair at times, it was clear to me why they call it *Capitol Hill*."

"This year marks my 25th year of impacting public policy."

As ODMRDD's Legislative Liaison, Mark sees many opportunities to work toward a greater understanding between legislators at the Ohio Statehouse, and the issues facing people with disabilities in the MRDD arena. "I'm especially interested in the issues of aging caregivers, and of people with autism spectrum disorders, and their families. These areas interest me in particular, and I look forward to learning a lot more about them," says Mark.

He adds, “I’m impressed, so far, with how well I see ODMRDD communicating to its stakeholders, and I’m going to do my part to keep that same free flow of information to benefit our constituencies.”

Renuka Mayadev, Deputy Director, Constituent Services, notes, “Mark brings many years of valuable legislative experience to ODMRDD. His understanding of Ohio’s legislative landscape, coupled with his boundless energy, will serve as wonderful assets for our agency. We are fortunate to have him as a new member of our team.”

”Mark’s understanding of Ohio’s legislative landscape, coupled with his boundless energy, will serve as wonderful assets for our agency.”



[EMMA to Coordinate and Manage Medicaid Programs](#)

4. Governor Strickland Establishes Executive Medicaid Management Administration

As noted in the biennial budget, Governor Ted Strickland has signed an executive order establishing the Executive Medicaid Management Administration (EMMA), an independent state office that will coordinate the management and implementation of the Ohio Medicaid program across state agencies.

A news release from the Governor’s office this week quoted him as saying, “In order to provide the best value to Ohio taxpayers, we must improve the way the Medicaid program is administered. The Executive Medicaid Management Administration will ensure that Medicaid services are coordinated and delivered efficiently and cost effectively.”

Due to the size of Ohio’s Medicaid program – currently funded at \$13.3 billion -- several agencies currently share responsibility for its management and coordination, which has resulted in some fragmentation of the program’s overall policies and processes. EMMA will facilitate Ohio’s compliance with federal Medicaid regulations, clarify policy decisions, and maximize federal funding through timely decision-making.

Governor Strickland has appointed Cristal Thomas as the executive director for EMMA. Thomas currently serves as the assistant director of Ohio Health Plans at the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). As executive director of EMMA, she will be a member of the governor’s Cabinet and will be responsible for developing a governance structure for EMMA, preparing an operating budget for the office, and providing strategic direction and management for major Medicaid policies and functions. Thomas and her staff will work directly with a council of Cabinet-agency partners to implement EMMA’s responsibilities.

It is important to note that ODJFS will continue to serve as the state’s single Medicaid agency. Federal law requires one state agency to assume responsibility for Medicaid grants and waivers, administer the state Medicaid plan, and ensure that all activities are conducted in line with federal laws and regulations.

Ohio’s Medicaid program, started in 1968, assists approximately two million low-income children and adults each year, and is approximately one quarter of the state’s annual budget.

According to Tracy Williams, ODMRDD Deputy Director, Medicaid Development and Administration,

“The creation of EMMA presents an opportunity for Ohio’s Medicaid-related Cabinet agencies to determine a shared set of policy and operational goals that are action-oriented, and can be achieved in a reasonable amount of time.

She adds, “We hope that EMMA will be a vehicle to address some long-standing challenges together and increase consistency for individuals and families served by various parts of Ohio’s Medicaid program.”



5. Superintendent Position at Warrensville D. C. Remains Open

The Superintendent position at Warrensville Developmental Center remains open, following a notification after the original hiring announcement for Ralph Keller. Keller declined the position following initial acceptance, and was to become Superintendent effective November 26, 2007. Dan Housepian, ODMRDD Coordinator of Developmental Center Services, serves as interim Superintendent at Warrensville during the candidate review period. “We are confident that the Warrensville facility will have a fulltime Superintendent at the helm in the near future,” notes Michael Rench, Deputy Director, Community Services. “Meanwhile, Dan Housepian will continue to provide consistent day-to-day operational oversight.”



6. ODMRDD Futures Committee Update

The MRDD Futures Committee held four sessions for public testimony during the week of November 26. Each of the four Subcommittees -- Accessing Services and Supports, Delivering Quality Services, Financing, and Serving Populations with Specialized Needs -- hosted a session to hear input from people interested in the process.

The Futures Committee regularly requests system stakeholders to recommend changes that will improve individual choice, support quality outcomes, assure that the system uses sound financial and service delivery practices, and address the long-term sustainability of funding.

More than 30 people, including self-advocates, family members, direct care providers, County Board of MRDD staff, and other stakeholders, shared concerns and issues with the Subcommittees. In addition, more than 300 pages of written comments were submitted through the ODMRDD Futures website, via email and U.S. Mail, and at the hearings. Written testimony is posted on the website at www.mrdd.ohio.gov/futures.

Next Meeting of Full Committee

The next meeting of the MRDD Futures Committee is Wednesday, December 19, 2007 on the 31st Floor of the Riffe Center in Columbus. A meeting agenda will be posted to the website by Friday, December 14.



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Wednesday, December 26, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 25

- 1. Susan Arnoczky Joins ODMRDD Staff
- 2. *Martin v. Strickland* Settlement: Recipients of Waivers to be Surveyed Beginning January '08
- 3. Representative Fred Strahorn Named Legislator of the Year by OACBMRDD
- 4. 'Housing Conversation' Sheds Light on Issues
- 5. Pipeline Quarterly, Winter Issue, Now Online

1. Susan Arnoczky Joins ODMRDD Staff

Duties to Include Oversight of Fairfield Center



Susan Arnoczky (second from right) poses with officers of the parent advocacy group, Friends of Fairfield Center, during a recent meeting. Pictured with Arnoczky are L to R: Cheryl Garnett, Lori Argalas and Peggy Potts.

Susan Arnoczky, Ph.D., has accepted a position with the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) as project manager in the Division of Community Services. Arnoczky brings with her more than 30 years of experience in the MRDD field.

Arnoczky will spend much of her first two years on the job overseeing the day-to-day operations and transition plans of the Fairfield Center in Butler County. The 119-bed Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded (ICF/MR) in Southwest Ohio is scheduled to undergo significant changes over the next several years to include a phased downsizing, and conversion to a new operating-license holder in 2008.

“As a former superintendent of the Columbus Developmental Center, Dr. Arnoczky is uniquely qualified to oversee the operations at Fairfield Center,” noted Michael Rench, Deputy Director

for the Division of Community Services, at a December 19 family meeting held at the Fairfield Center. “She has a wealth of knowledge in facility-based care and possesses the experience necessary to take on a job of this magnitude,” he said.

In addition to her four years at the helm of the Columbus Developmental Center, Arnoczky helped develop the ODMRDD Office of Quality Assurance, which has grown increasingly important in the overall system of ensuring quality-of-life outcomes for Ohioans with developmental disabilities. She also served people with disabilities for several years as a program director with Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc. (APSI).

Her most recent assignment was as Director of Provider Management Services for Care Star, a private provider of home and community-based services, contracted through the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Arnoczky stated,

“ I liked my job with Care Star, but my real passion is working in the field of MRDD. When Director Martin and Michael Rench asked me to come back to the Department it was an easy decision to make. I see it as a tremendous opportunity to work with people of great integrity, and with philosophies around service provision that I share.”

“No one is more respected professionally in Ohio’s MRDD field than Susan,” said ODMRDD Director, John Martin. “We are very fortunate that she has chosen to join our team, and I look forward to her contributions in shaping the future and improving the lives of the people we serve.”



[Martin v. Strickland Settlement](#)

2. Recipients of Waivers to be Surveyed Beginning Jan. ‘08



As recently profiled in [Pipeline Quarterly](#), Jamie (center) is one of the first recipients of the Individual Options (IO) waivers funded by the Martin v. Strickland settlement. He lives in Miami County, and is shown here with friends. Jamie now receives additional services through the waiver that allow him to continue living in the family home. His parents (caregivers) are in declining health. What does he enjoy about living at home? He answers, "For one thing, eating beef stew, potato soup, and biscuits."

The *Martin v. Strickland* settlement will fund a total of 1500 additional IO waivers in Ohio. Jamie and 1499 other Ohioans with disabilities will be able to receive needed services. Follow-along reviews are part of the settlement agreement.

Beginning in January 2008, the ODMRDD will be conducting ‘follow-along’ reviews of individuals enrolled on the Individual Options (IO) Waiver, utilizing waiver slots funded by the *Martin v. Strickland* settlement. These reviews will be conducted at 90-day, one year, and two year intervals from the date of an individual’s enrollment on the waiver. The reviews will utilize the *Participant Experience Survey*, a survey tool developed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for individuals receiving waiver services.

The review is not intended as a provider compliance tool, but rather as a way to gain an individual's perspective on the services they receive. The survey focuses on waiver recipients' choices and controls, respect and dignity, access to care, and community integration/inclusion. The survey also will be used by the ODMRDD to evaluate the transition process an individual experiences when being enrolled on the waiver, and ways to improve that process.

All reviews will be conducted by ODMRDD staff, and every effort will be made to coordinate these reviews with any others (licensure, compliance, etc.) being conducted in a given county, and a copy of the completed survey will be provided to that County Board.

If you have any questions about the survey, or would like more information regarding the survey tool or review process, please contact Ernie Fischer at (614) 644-5965 or ernie.fischer@dmr.state.oh.us.

The survey also will be used by the ODMRDD to evaluate the transition process an individual experiences when being enrolled on the waiver, and ways to improve that process.



3. Representative Fred Strahorn Named 'Legislator of the Year' by Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD



Pictured (L-R) Dan Ohler, Executive Director, Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD; Mark Gerhardstein, Superintendent, Montgomery County Board of MRDD; Representative Fred Strahorn; Wynema Mebane, President, Advocates for People with Disabilities; and, Clinton Brown, Board President, Montgomery County Board of MRDD.

Representative Fred Strahorn was named the Ohio Association of County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OACBMRDD) "Legislator of the Year" at the organization's 24th Annual Convention, December 5, 2007.

Representative Strahorn was honored for unwavering support of people with disabilities. Montgomery County Board of MRDD Superintendent, Mark Gerhardstein, stated, "Representative Strahorn is a tireless advocate for families and individuals with special needs. He helped present training for families who wanted to know more about the legislative advocacy process, and was instrumental in clarifying County Boards' financial responsibilities in the most recent budget process. In addition, Representative Strahorn hosted 65 self-advocates and parents in Columbus as part of a Budget Rally in 2005. He continues to be a

tireless sponsor and co-sponsor of legislation for all citizens, some of whom happen to have mental retardation.”

“ ... He continues to be a tireless sponsor and co-sponsor of legislation for all citizens, some of whom happen to have mental retardation.”

Representative Strahorn is currently serving his fourth term in the Ohio House of Representatives. He serves on the House Finance and Appropriations Committee, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, Health Committee, Public Utilities Committee, and is the ranking Democrat on the Primary and Secondary Education Subcommittee. He also serves on the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) and chairs the House Democratic Policy Committee.

Special thanks to Tim Pfister, Community Relations Specialist at Montgomery County Board of MRDD for this information and photo.



4. 'Housing Conversation' Sheds Light on Issues

“Housing for People with Disabilities in Ohio: A Conversation” was presented to a joint meeting of the *Financing and Accessing Services and Supports* subcommittees of the *ODMRDD Futures Committee* on December 18 at the Rhodes State Office Tower.

The presentation introduced and fostered discussion on various housing issues and placed them in the context of:

- What affordable housing options are and are not available for people with disabilities;
- Why these options are or are not available; and,
- Recommendations to consider concerning financing, accessibility, health and safety issues, and property maintenance.

A panel of five presenters included Patrick Rafter, President/CEO, Creative Housing, Inc; Dennis Guest, Executive Director, Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority; Steve McPeake, President/CEO North Coast Community Homes Inc; Robert Morgan, Superintendent, Delaware County MRDD; and, Linda Martin, Community Support Manager, Cuyahoga County MRDD.

The panel members brought differing perspectives to subjects ranging from Federal Housing/low-income housing programs, to housing development and partnership options. In addition, the group discussed ways to effect changes in legislation that can improve the affordable housing outlook for people with disabilities.

In the area of improving a property’s health and safety factors, Steve McPeake noted that maintenance is key. He explained,

“You have to consider the needs of the specific individuals who live in a home, and then look at a property to see if it is meeting health and safety standards for them. Does a well-maintained property positively affect the health and well-being of the people who live there? You bet it does.”



According to presenter Robert Morgan, Ohio's three major benchmarks in helping people to have needed service options were:

1984 – The advent of Family Resource Services, which set aside a small amount of discretionary money for families to use;

1989 – Supported Living services debut;

1997 – The national model of care known as Self-Determination

Wrapping up a far-reaching 'housing conversation' were several recommendations for consideration. They included exploring rent subsidies with 'gap financing'; localized state housing plans; shared housing options; and, improving accessibility in new and existing housing properties.

For updates on ODMRDD Futures Committee activities visit
<http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/odmrdd.htm>



5. Winter Issue of *Pipeline Quarterly* Now Online



Terry Marovich and Linda McElroy, HYBRIDS HR Department, with Jeanne Maxwell, Team Leader, and the Accessory Manufacturing Team

The winter issue of ODMRDD's newsmagazine, [Pipeline Quarterly](http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/pipeline/odmrdd.htm), was published this month, and is archived at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/pipeline/odmrdd.htm>. The photo above introduces the cover story, featuring *PersonnelPlus*, the community employment arm of the Athens County Board of MRDD.

According to Robert Jennings, ODMRDD Public Information Manager, “In traveling around the state interviewing people for the articles contained in this issue we gained more insight into how specific MRDD services can help people and their families – and more importantly, we saw how the people we serve positively affect the lives of others around them. I was very taken by how many direct service staff told us, “I get so much from working with my folks – so much more than they get from me.”

To suggest an article or idea for the Spring issue, contact feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us and put the words *Pipeline Quarterly* in the subject line. *Pipeline Quarterly* is published in summer, fall, winter, and spring. The publication is in addition to, and not in place of, the regular twice-monthly issues of *Pipeline*.



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In this issue –

- 1. MRDD Futures Subcommittees Address Specific Issues
- 2. Ohio Self-Determination Assn. Conference, Ten-Year Anniversary
- 3. Ohio Adult Siblings Conference, October 12 & 13
- 4. National Disability Employment Month, October
- 5. Preparedness Month Opportunities for People with Disabilities

1. MRDD Futures Subcommittees Address Specific Issues



Looking to the Future.

The ODMRDD welcomed members of the Futures Subcommittees to the first round of individual subcommittee meetings on September 18th at the Riffe Center in Columbus. The four subcommittees reviewed specific tasks at hand, and determined approaches to tackling topics in a thorough and orderly fashion. In addition to reviewing the brief synopsis below, please visit <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/odmrdd.htm> for meeting updates and additional information.



(Left) A full committee meeting followed the four individual subcommittee meetings, and allowed the group to review specific tasks as defined, and set priorities as discussed.

The subcommittees are:

- Accessing Services and Supports
- Financing
- Delivering Quality Services
- Serving Populations with Specialized Needs

Following discussion and clarification, committee charges were adopted by the full committee. Each of the subcommittees planned their work over the next several months, and made recommendations to the full committee. This information is at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/minutes.htm> and will be updated again this week.

In addition, it was determined that there will be a series of public hearings scheduled to provide opportunities for public input into the Futures planning process. Details will be finalized with the four subcommittee chairs and will be published in an upcoming issue of *Pipeline*. ODMRDD Director, John Martin, chair of the Futures Committee, noted,

“The full committee has accepted the spirit and the scope of our work, and we will move forward now in the direction each subcommittee has defined.”

Futures Committee members remind *Pipeline* readers that there are several ways to provide feedback and offer ideas to the group, including the website’s “Contact Us” area at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/contacts.htm> and the feedback email address at futures-feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us .



2. Ohio Self-Determination Assn. (OSDA) Conference, 10-Year Anniversary



Gloria Tiller (left) of Sandusky, Ohio, is a perfect example of why the OSDA is so pleased with the celebration of their 10 years in existence, and with the number of presentations and displays that packed the University Plaza Hotel in Columbus this week. Gloria’s business is *GJ’s Custom T-Shirts*, described as, “T-shirts that make you think.” On display were shirts bearing, “*Label Jars ... Not People,*” and “*Men Stress Me Out!*” (Wouldn’t it be interesting to know which of those two designs sold better?)

The OSDA conference featured more than a little information about promoting, advocating, and facilitating self-determination for all people with disabilities and their families throughout Ohio. ODMRDD Director, John Martin, provided the conference’s opening remarks, and noted,

“ Choice is a messy kind of thing. There are a lot of expectations and issues involved in making choices. Should there be some limitations on what we can make choices on? Questions like this are important for all of us to think about.”

He added, “One of the things we are doing with the ODMRDD Futures Committee is to look at ways that, as a system, we can begin to remove barriers to choices.” OSDA President, Nancy

Richards, echoed those thoughts, challenging attendees to think about ways that *they* can help to remove barriers and strengthen their decision-making power.

For more information about the Ohio Self-Determination Assn., email ohiosda@sbcglobal.net, or visit their website at www.ohiosda.org



3. Ohio Adult Siblings Conference Oct. 12 & 13



OHIO SIBS

S I B S
SPECIAL INITIATIVES BY BROTHERS & SISTERS

The Seventh Annual Ohio Adult Siblings Conference is coming up next month at the Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel, October 12 and 13, 2007. *The purpose of the Ohio Adult Siblings Conference is to create an environment where adult siblings can gather together and share family experiences, develop new relationships, obtain relevant information, and be recognized as an integral part in the family's success.* During the past seven years, conference attendees from across Ohio have had opportunities to hear presentations from state and national MRDD professionals, meet other adult siblings, and explore areas of interest. Everyone who has a sibling with a disability is encouraged to attend this conference! Please visit www.ohiosibs.com for more information or e-mail Rachel Straus at straus.9@osu.edu or Tom Fish at fish.1@osu.edu.



4. National Disability Employment Month, October

This year's National Disability Employment Month theme is *"Workers with Disabilities: Talent for a Winning Team"*. The United States Congress has designated each October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and the Office of Disability Employment Policy within the US Department of Labor takes the lead in planning activities and preparing materials to increase public awareness of the contributions and skills of American workers with disabilities.

The [2007 National Disability Employment Awareness Month poster](#), depicting this year's theme is now available. In addition to its representation of the theme, this poster is popular for use throughout the year in connection with related events that foster employment opportunities for workers with disabilities. The poster is available at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/>



Each year, U.S. Department of Labor Secretary, Elaine L. Chao, selects the month's official theme, and the Office of Disability Employment Policy guides the national recognition. Public Law 176, enacted by Congress in 1945, established October as the official month to recognize contributions that individuals with disabilities have made to the workforce.



5. Activities Offer Opportunities for People with Disabilities to Prepare for Emergencies

September is... **National Preparedness Month**

**Get a Kit, Make a Plan,
Be Informed and Get Involved**

This year's National Preparedness Month efforts include a coalition of more than 625 national, regional, state, and local organizations pledging support. *The ODMRDD is among those supporting these efforts, focusing on what we can do to assist people with disabilities to be better prepared for emergency situations.*

ODMRDD Free Trainings

The ODMRDD is offering [free trainings to individuals and families](#) in each of the six Regions throughout the state. To register for trainings, [access our training and registration system](#), and follow the directions provided.

The 'Ready' campaign promotes activities that encourage individuals to have an *emergency supply kit*, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different threats that may affect them, as well as take steps to get trained and engaged in community preparedness and response efforts. Visit www.ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY to receive free materials.

The ODMRDD homepage features information about Emergency Preparedness Month at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/preparedness-month/september.htm>



Check Out 'MRDD Today' at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

Please see 'MRDD Today' (click on the green and yellow icon by that name) for more information and articles including feature stories from around the state.

Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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Visit us at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

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In this issue –

- 1. MRDD Futures Committee Begins Work
- 2. Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and Other Possible MUIs
- 3. Governor Strickland Supports Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Day
- 4. Month's Activities Offer Opportunities for People with Disabilities to Prepare for Emergencies
- 5. 2007 Williams Syndrome Conference, September 29

1. MRDD Futures Committee Begins Work



Work has begun...

The ODMRDD welcomed members of the Futures Committee (mandated in statute, H.B. 119)

<http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/docs/ORC337.20.20.pdf> to the group's first meeting, August 30, at the Columbus Developmental Center Training Room. Members <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/members.htm> were selected based on H.B. 119 guidelines, and represent various stakeholder groups, individuals, and families with an interest in the MRDD arena.



... And Committee member, Ernie Strickland, is ready to discuss the issues.

The 22 Futures Committee members began the organizational meeting by discussing the group's purpose, which is *to identify opportunities in the MRDD system to improve individual choice, support quality outcomes, and assure financially sound practices and sustainable funding resources.*

ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin addressed the group as its chairperson, reinforcing the stated purpose, and providing opportunities for each committee member to introduce themselves and their affiliation with the Committee. In addition, Director Martin reinforced that the tone of the Committee meetings would be one of civility and respect for all points of view.



Michael Rench (third from left) talks with Committee members about Director Martin's opening comments. It was agreed that the difference between chaos and creativity must be kept in perspective as the Committee proceeds.

Also addressing the group were Denise Kuhnheim and Terry Salyer, each parents of a young adult with a disability. Kuhnheim stated that for her, the waiver services her son receives have changed her life and her son's for the better, while Salyer noted that he has experienced great frustration with waiting lists. His son has yet to receive the waiver services that Kuhnheim described.

The difference between the two families has been ... some luck, some unfortunate circumstances, and some systemic issues that need to be resolved, not only in the case of the Salyer family, but in the case of many other Ohio families, as well. Salyer stated,

"I am the voice for my son, who is non-verbal. And you – members of the Futures Committee – you are the voice for me."



Denise Kuhnheim addresses the Committee from her perspective as a parent of a young man with a disability.

Following the two family members' comments, Director Martin shared a Powerpoint presentation <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/docs/Presentation08-30-07.pdf> which spotlighted areas for the Committee to address over the next several months, before the final Committee report to be prepared and presented to the Governor and General Assembly by March 30, 2008.

She notes, "There's always that unknown swimming under you, even though things may be going well on the surface. But, I'm here to tell you that some things do work! I don't know what I would do without waiver services for my son."

Chairs of the four subcommittees also were named:

Finance Subcommittee: *Bob Milliken, Ohio Assn. of County Boards of MRDD*

Accessing Services and Supports: *Michael DeFrancesco, Ohio Provider Resource Assn.*

Delivering Quality Services: *Laura Glenn, appointed by Governor Strickland*

Serving Populations with Special Needs: *Barbara Yavorcik, Autism Society of Ohio*

The group might be wise to consider an analogy made by one of the meeting attendees at the Futures Committee meeting. It may be the clearest, simplest description of approaching the work ahead for the Futures Committee.

“Sometimes trying to get our arms around the many issues involved in delivering services to people with disabilities throughout Ohio - in a fair and equitable way - is like trying to give a hug to an angry porcupine. It’s not easy, but it can be done with care.”

For updated information about the Futures Committee, please visit the ODMRDD website at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/odmrdd.htm>



2. Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be

times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



3. Governor Strickland Supports FASD Awareness



Did you know that September 9, 2007, has been designated “*National Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day?*”

The Resolution encourages citizens to observe September 9th as a date to promote awareness of the *dangers of women consuming alcohol during the entire nine months of pregnancy*. Highlighting the importance of this Resolution, Governor Ted Strickland recently signed a Proclamation, and officially designated September 9, 2007, as “Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Day” for Ohio.

FASD is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drinks alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications.

FASD is 100 percent preventable!

Early diagnosis and treatment for FASD can help children reach their fullest potential, lessen secondary disabilities and problems, and help families better understand and cope.

ODMRDD currently has an Interagency Agreement and a close working relationship with the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) in support of Ohio's FASD Initiative to promote a message of prevention, enhance early detection and referral for services, and increase effective and evidenced-based intervention strategies. In recognition of FASD Awareness Day, County Boards of MRDD children's programs, statewide, will be receiving from ODMRDD a copy of the Governor's Proclamation and FASD Awareness posters.

FASD website at www.notasingledrop.org

Under ODADAS' leadership, several other state agencies including the ODMRDD have formed the Statewide FASD Steering Committee. The Committee's primary goals are public awareness and service coordination. For more information and up-to-date FASD news and resources visit: www.NotASingleDrop.org.

The [FASD Statewide Steering Committee](#) is a partnership that includes representatives from 9 state agencies, 3 universities, providers, and parents. *The mission is to establish efficiency in state systems resource allocation, coordination of services, and augmentation of available resources to address FASD.*



4. Month's Activities Offer Opportunities for People with Disabilities to Prepare for Emergencies

September is... **National Preparedness Month**

**Get a Kit, Make a Plan,
Be Informed and Get Involved**



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security – and locally, the Ohio Department of Public Safety – sponsors National Preparedness Month (September) and encourages people to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities. This year's effort includes a coalition of more than 625 national, regional, state, and local organizations pledging support. *The ODMRDD is among those supporting these efforts and will focus on what we can do to assist people with disabilities to be better prepared for emergency situations.*

ODMRDD Free Trainings

The ODMRDD is offering [free trainings to individuals and families](#) in each of the six

Regions throughout the state. To register for trainings, [click here to access our training and registration system](#), and follow the directions provided.

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The ODMRDD homepage features information about Emergency Preparedness Month at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/preparedness-month/september.htm>



5. 2007 Williams Syndrome Conference, Sept. 29

The Nisonger Center-OSU, Columbus Children's Hospital, and the Williams Syndrome Association (WSA) will present the *2007 WSA - Great Lakes Regional Conference* at Fort Rapids Indoor WaterPark Resort, Columbus, Ohio, on September 29, 2007.

Williams Syndrome, Definition

According to <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001116.htm#top#top> Williams Syndrome is a genetic disorder characterized by mild mental retardation, distinctive facial appearance, problems with calcium balance, and blood vessel disease.

Causes, Incidence, Risk Factors

Williams Syndrome is a genetic disorder characterized by developmental delay, unusual facial appearance, narrowing of the aorta (large artery that pumps blood leaving the heart) and particular cognitive and personality profiles.

It is a rare condition caused by missing part of the genetic material on one copy of chromosome 7. The problem is usually caused by a random mutation, so parents may not have any family history of the condition. However, a person with Williams Syndrome has a 50% chance of passing the disorder on to each child. *It occurs in about 1 in 20,000 births.*

One of the 25 missing genes is the gene that produces elastin, a protein that gives elasticity to blood vessels and other tissues in the body. It is likely that having only one copy of this gene results in the narrowing of blood vessels seen in this condition.

Conference Information

This one-day conference will include ten sessions, and will provide opportunities for learning, networking, fun, and creating new friendships. The following experts will be a part of the conference curriculum:

Dr. Colleen Morris, *University of Nevada School of Medicine*
Dr. Carolyn Mervis, *University of Louisville*
Dr. Paige Kaplan, *Children's Hospital of Philadelphia*)
Dr. Elisabeth Dykens, *Vanderbilt University*

Presentations also will be given by David Zwyer, *Executive Director, Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council*; Michelle Self and Lisa Portune, *Parent Advocates*; Dr. Margo Izzo

Program Manager, Special Education and Transition, Nisonger Center; and, Dr. Tom Fish
Director of Social Work, Nisonger Center.

Fort Rapids is located at I-70 and Hamilton Road in Columbus, Ohio. *Attendees must make their own reservations: 1-877-337-7527.* For more information about the conference, contact:
Marilee Martens, Ph.D.

Nisonger Center - Ohio State University

357 McCampbell Hall

1581 Dodd Dr.

Columbus, OH 43210

Phone: (614) 688-3112

E-mail: martens.22@osu.edu

[The Williams Syndrome Program](#)

<http://www.williams-syndrome.org/>



As promised in [Pipeline](#), August 22, 2007, a new ODMRDD quarterly newsmagazine, [Pipeline Quarterly](#), premiered last week featuring articles on a broad range of topics. [Pipeline Quarterly](#) is in addition to – and not replacing – your regular [Pipeline](#) electronic newsletter, which will continue to publish every other Wednesday. You can read this publication at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/pipeline/odmrdd.htm>

Check Out 'MRDD Today' at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

Please see 'MRDD Today' (click on the green and yellow icon by that name) for more information and articles including feature stories from around the state.

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In this issue –

- 1. MRDD Futures Committee Begins Work
- 2. Waiver Reimbursement Transition, Status Update and Next Steps
- 3. Division of Community Services, Details of the July Restructuring



Special Announcement: A new ODMRDD quarterly newsmagazine will premiere within the next two weeks, featuring articles on a broad range of topics. *Pipeline Quarterly* is coming soon! This is in addition to – and not replacing – your regular *Pipeline* electronic newsletter, which will continue to publish every other Wednesday.

1. MRDD Futures Committee Begins Work



This Futures Committee image depicts a look to the future.

The ODMRDD welcomes the work of the Futures Committee, mandated in statute (House Bill 119) with the first meeting set for August 30 at the Columbus Developmental Center Training Room, 10:00 a.m. Members of the committee have been selected based on the guidelines set forth in HB 119 [statute \(H.B. 119\)](#)

Look for information about this group's work on our website at <http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov/futures> and listed on the homepage as 'Futures Committee'. We'll try to keep it simple yet informative.

Rolling up their collective sleeves, the 22 members of the MRDD Futures Committee will begin their work at an initial organizational meeting August 30. The group's purpose is to identify opportunities in the MRDD system to improve individual choice, support quality

outcomes, and assure financially sound practices and sustainable funding resources. The committee's membership and overall scope of the Committee's work is included in the information contained at <http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov/futures>, and we encourage *Pipeline* readers to review this information. It will be updated frequently.

“ We are grateful that the General Assembly and Governor Strickland have given us this opportunity to come together as a field to shape our future. ”

- John L. Martin, ODMRDD Director



2. Waiver Reimbursement Transition **Status Update and Next Steps**

Ohio is required to have a statewide MRDD Medicaid waiver reimbursement system in place by December 31, 2007.

Transition Status

When waiver reimbursement transition began in July 2005, more than 11,000 Ohioans were enrolled on the IO waiver. Reimbursement rates for their services were negotiated individually between County Boards of MRDD and providers. The federal government was concerned about inconsistencies in the negotiated system. As a result, all reimbursement rates were required to move to a new statewide rate system. The deadline for transition to occur was June 30, 2007.

As Ohio's families, providers and County Boards began to implement the agreed-upon changes, it became clear that there were several significant challenges created by the new system's design and development. For example, the new system requires providers to calculate homemaker/personal care service ratios for each 15-minute billing unit. This is complex and overwhelming to implement for settings where individuals are sharing homemaker/personal care services.

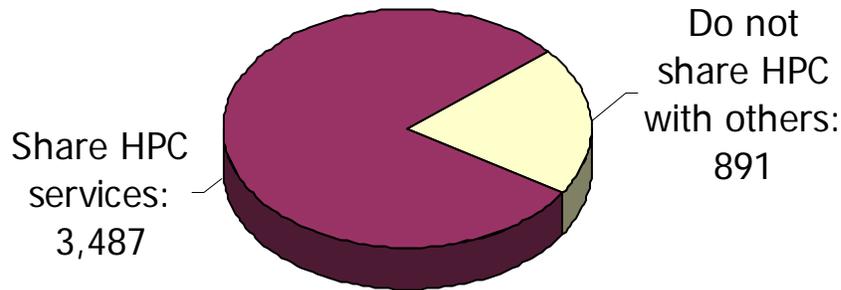
- Providers were concerned because a great deal of time that previously was spent with individuals now had to be spent calculating complicated ratios.
- Because the new system was complex and required so much additional documentation, there was a risk of increased audit findings due to a lack of understanding.
- There also were concerns regarding the new system's likely effects on the provider workforce. Would this be so difficult that people would simply look for other types of work rather than provide direct services to people served in our system?

These unintended consequences were of great concern to Governor Strickland and his then-new Administration. In February, Governor Strickland intervened, and a six-month extension was granted in order to provide the Governor's new team some time to develop and negotiate proposed changes with the federal government. *The new deadline to complete the transition is December 31, 2007.*

A Closer Look

When Governor Strickland took office in January 2007, waiver reimbursement transition was less than 40% complete for the IO waiver. The system is now approximately 60% transitioned. As of July 31, 2007, there were 4,378 individuals whose services have yet to transition:

Yet to Transition, July 31, 2007



Individuals who do not share Homemaker Personal Care (HPC) services – Transition Now

Approximately 2,700 Ohioans enrolled in the IO waiver who do not share a HPC provider with others have already transitioned to the new statewide reimbursement system. Examples include people who live alone or who live with their family and do not share HPC services with other IO waiver enrollees as a result. However, there are still 891 people in this situation who have yet to transition to the new reimbursement process. That transition should occur now. In these cases, reimbursement for services will continue via 15-minute unit.

County Boards of MRDD will be working with individuals, their families and guardians, and the provider community, to transition all remaining individuals who do not share HPC services to the currently approved statewide reimbursement system as soon as possible. Ideally, all 891 outstanding cases will be transitioned by September 30, 2007 so that attention can be turned exclusively to those individuals whose service reimbursement will be impacted by the forthcoming Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approval once that approval is received (hopefully in October.)

Individuals who share HPC services with others in their home – Plan to Transition by December 31, 2007

There are 3,487 Ohioans enrolled on the IO waiver who currently share HPC services with other IO waiver enrollees in their home and who have not yet transitioned to a statewide reimbursement system. It is these situations that were impacted most by the implementation challenges, and it is for these situations that Ohio is requesting some changes to the reimbursement process. The state has prepared and submitted to the federal government a waiver amendment containing proposed homemaker/personal care reimbursement process changes.

*Until CMS approves the proposed changes, though, we cannot transition people to the simplified reimbursement process.
As a result, it is not yet time to transition these situations.*

In situations where individuals share HPC services with others and the change already has been made to the new statewide reimbursement system (in other words, in situations where the HPC provider is calculating ratios for 15-minute billing units) please note that the forthcoming changes eventually will simplify the way that the provider is billing for the services. The conversion from the statewide reimbursement system that the federal government has already

approved and the improved system for which we're awaiting approval should be relatively seamless to individuals who have been transitioned to the statewide system.

Looking Ahead

ODMRDD is currently developing training materials that will explain the changes we have proposed to the federal government. These materials will be made available via the Department's website at www.mrdd.ohio.gov and there will be an announcement in *Pipeline* when the materials are available.

ODMRDD also recommends that County Boards work with individuals and their providers in order to continue planning for the transition to the statewide reimbursement system so that the transition can occur once federal approval is given. This will help Ohio accomplish its transition by December 31, 2007.

Lastly, we know that the work is not completed in terms of other improvements to our waiver reimbursement system. We will continue to address the need to make the system easier for families, County Boards, and providers, to provide and receive services. We appreciate your patience in this process and your commitment to ongoing improvements in our system.

If you have questions about the status of the homemaker/personal care waiver reimbursement transition, please email waiver.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us and an ODMRDD staff member will contact you.

Pipeline also invites you to contact us with your thoughts at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us



3. Division of Community Services Details of the July Reorganization



The July 13, 2007 issue of *Pipeline* provided a general overview of the Division of Community Services restructuring and the addition of the ten ODMRDD Developmental Centers under their service umbrella. Following is additional information regarding the responsibilities of the five offices within the Division of Community Services as a result of the reorganization.

Office of Provider Standards and Review (OPSR) –
Kelly Miller, Assistant Deputy Director, 614-728-2520 kelly.miller@dmr.state.oh.us

This office will continue to be responsible for:

- Conducting Licensure, Provider Compliance and Accreditation Reviews
- Reviewing requests for waivers of Licensure and County Board administrative rules
- Reviewing Licensure development applications
- Issuance of Residential Facility Licenses

Office of Special Investigations and Enforcement (OSIE) –
Ernie Fischer, Assistant Deputy Director, 614-644-5965 ernie.fischer@dmr.state.oh.us

This new office will provide more specialized oversight that focuses on those entities (licensed and certified providers, County Boards, County Board certified staff, persons certified for medication administration) that chronically fail to meet applicable standards and maintain appropriate qualifications. The office will provide and/or facilitate technical assistance to the provider, and may also conduct enhanced monitoring and take action to suspend and/or revoke a provider's license or certification or deny County Board accreditation when warranted.

Anyone who has a concern or complaint regarding the services or programs being provided by a licensed or certified provider or County Board should initially contact the appropriate Regional Manager in OPSR. The ODMRDD will evaluate the issue and determine the appropriate course of action.

Systems Innovation and Technical Assistance (SITA) –

Kevin Aldridge, Assistant Deputy Director, 614-466-7290 kevin.aldridge@dmr.state.oh.us

SITA continues to be responsible for providing and facilitating technical assistance to County Boards, providers and families.

- **Consultation and Technical Support:**
 - Regional consultants are available for a wide range of training and technical support. A map indicating Regional Consultants is attached.
 - A Nurse consultant is available for training and technical support related to medical issues. Medication Administration certifications are also issued through this office.
 - A Behavior Support consultant is available for training and technical support related to behavioral issues.

- **Children and Family Support:**
 - Early Intervention (EI) Consultation and Technical Support: EI consultants are available to provide technical assistance to County Boards regarding services to children from birth to age three.
 - Children and Families: Consultative support on issues related to children with disabilities (ages 3- 21) and their families is available.

- **Economic and Employment Development:** Consultative support is available for employment and economic self sufficiency and related issues such as health and transportation and other barriers to employment. OEDI/COEDI support and Title XX contracts are also managed through this office.

- **Certification Services:** This office issues and supports county board staff certification and certification of waiver and supported living providers, including:
 - Reviews and issues initial and reinstatement certification for HCBS waiver and supported living providers.
 - Recommends denials of certification.
 - Reviews and issues certification for County Board of MRDD employees.
 - Reviews and approves CEUs and training requests.

- **Interagency Collaboration:** Much of the ODMRDD's interaction and collaboration with other State Agencies is coordinated through SITA.

Quality Management, Planning & Analysis (QMPA) –

Kathleen Luebbert, Asst. Deputy Director, 614-728-2524 kathleen.luebbert@dmr.state.oh.us

QMPA responsibilities include:

- Maintenance of all data systems/applications assigned to the Division of Community Services, including the IIF.
- Research and development of Best Practices guidelines.

Developmental Centers (DC) –

Ginnie Whisman, Assistant Deputy Director, 614-752-0487 ginnie.whisman@dmr.state.oh.us

The DC office's responsibilities include:

- Oversight of 10 state-operated Developmental Centers – with more than 3,000 staff serving 1,600 individuals.
- Serving as a Regional Resource to other state agencies, County Boards and private providers.

Contact Information, General

Division of Community Services,

35 E. Chestnut Street,

5th Floor,

Columbus, OH 43215-2541

Voice: 614.466-7508 or toll free: 877.464.6733

Fax: 614.644.6676

For hearing impaired: 800.750.0750

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Pipeline ... Extra!

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor

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Friday, May 18, 2007

Budget Testimony, as Presented to the Senate Finance and Financial Institutions Committee, May 17, 2007, by ODMRDD Director John L. Martin

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Carey, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the Senate Finance and Financial Institutions Committee, thank you for giving me an opportunity to talk to you today about the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and the work that the Department does in conjunction with its partners, the county boards of MRDD, private providers, direct care workers, and other advocates, on behalf of nearly 75,000 Ohioans and their families.

I am the Department's director, John Martin, and I have had the pleasure of meeting several of you since my appointment four months ago. Thank you for welcoming me. I look forward to working with all of you on behalf of Ohio individuals and families who have been touched by developmental disabilities.

With one important exception that I will discuss in just a moment, the Department's budget was not amended by the House of Representatives. Therefore, it is my intent today to highlight the most pressing issues facing the ODMRDD, and then focus specifically on what we can do in this biennium. This approach is consistently reinforced this year by the statewide MRDD Awareness theme, "*Focus on what we CAN do!*"

Looking at the big picture, the last few years have seen profound changes in the MRDD arena. Those changes include:

- A movement toward development of more home- and community-based options, allowing for more choices for more individuals;
- Increases in the number of people on the Department's home- and community-based waivers, which is an increase of 189% since 2001 (from 5773 to 16,666);
- Major changes in the ways services are funded to ensure federal compliance; and,
- The establishment of a framework for shared responsibilities with our funding partners, the 88 county boards of MRDD.

Who Are We?

Before I go any further, let me describe who we are, and who we serve.

“We” are Central Office and Developmental Center employees of the ODMRDD who are engaged in serving nearly 75,000 Ohioans and their families. We perform a broad range of tasks:

- We license and oversee **approximately 1200** residential settings;
- We certify and review **more than 3000** service providers;
- We review and accredit **88 county boards** of MRDD;
- We process **about 5000** vouchers per month for Medicaid funded services;
- We monitor and track nearly **20,000 cases** involving individuals’ health and safety issues;
- We fund a broad range of unique services and supports to help people be successful in their communities; and,
- We advise and direct by listening to organized stakeholder groups, individuals and families.

Approximately 298 Central Office employees complete these tasks. In addition, we provide services for approximately 1600 individuals in 10 Developmental Centers throughout the state, with a dedicated team of direct-service staff, providing 24-hour care.

Who do we serve? The MRDD population includes a broad range of people ...

So, to invite you more personally into ‘our world’, I’d like to offer a few brief scenarios about the people we serve. Picture these, if you will ...

- Twin 6-year old girls ‘Amy and Julie’ with cerebral palsy have been brought into the home of their step-grandmother, Connie. She knows the exhaustion of providing round-the-clock care. She feels the desperation of trying to find and afford qualified nurses to provide care during the day so she can work. *Connie’s greatest need from the MRDD system is for help coordinating the seven different specialists who provide services for “her girls”.* She needs us to collaborate with other agencies so services and equipment can be supplied sooner and less expensively.
- Now, picture ‘Maura’, a 25-year old woman with self-damaging behavior so severe she cannot be left unattended for a single minute. Both of Maura’s parents have had health problems of their own and her behaviors are getting worse. While the family is able to sleep on weekdays when Maura is at the sheltered workshop, there is little other reliable respite. The strain of constant care and the toll it takes on the family is crushing. *Services funded through us are their lifeline.*
- And, picture ‘James’. He arrived at his grandparents’ home for a ‘Christmas visit’ last year with a one-way ticket. His mother said she couldn’t handle him anymore and not to send him back. Born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, the 27-year old man has violent outbursts that limit his employment options and exhaust his family’s ability to cope. *This family is among the many in Ohio headed by aging caregivers – many in their 70’s or 80’s -- who need to plan for their family member to move out of the home.* Currently, they are wait-listed for the waiver that would allow them to do this.

Amy, Julie, Maura, and James ... are your constituents. And, as we do for all Ohio citizens with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities, we are planning for the time when they will have more opportunities to experience lifestyles that offer improved personal

security, physical and emotional well-being, full community participation including employment opportunities, and equal rights as citizens.

The number of people served by Ohio's MRDD system has risen dramatically since 1999 – *from 56,079 people then, to more than 75,000 today.* To serve these individuals we have established a series of priority goals.

MRDD BUDGET INITIATIVES FOR 2008 AND 2009

We are grateful to the House for its endorsement of the Administration's funding recommendations. The biennial budget, as passed by the House, makes needed state funding investments in three main areas. I will highlight these investments in some detail, and then touch briefly on areas with modest inflationary increases. I will not review areas of flat funding unless you have questions. My testimony will conclude by explaining our Department's goals over the next year.

THREE AREAS OF FUNDING INVESTMENT

1. Martin v. Strickland Settlement

"Investing in what matters" is an important tenet of Governor Strickland's Turnaround Ohio plan and is a key reason for increasing ODMRDD's operating budget to fund the state's share of the *Martin v. Strickland* Settlement Agreement. In September 2006, an agreement was reached to settle the class action lawsuit, originally filed in 1989 on behalf of institutionalized citizens with disabilities, which mandated the expansion of community residential services.

The agreement offers new residential choices, including alternatives for individuals who currently reside in institutional settings, but does not require the closure of any public or private facilities. The settlement was negotiated among system stakeholders, and is conditional upon your approval.

The budget before you has a new GRF line item in it, called "*Martin Settlement*" funded at \$6.1 million in FY08 and \$29.0 million for FY09. These are new dollars, and largely the reason our Department is showing an overall increase from previous years. These dollars are intended to supply the state matching funds for a total of 1500 new Medicaid waiver slots for Ohioans to have home- and community-based services.

By funding the agreement, the Governor and the House have provided the opportunity for Ohio to cost-effectively settle the long-standing case and avoid costly litigation in the future. More importantly, the agreement will help many individuals who are on waiting lists for residential services, without requiring county boards of MRDD to take on greater than anticipated waiver match obligations.

If approved by the Senate, the funding will provide opportunities for an additional 1500 Ohioans with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities to be served through Medicaid funded home- and community-based waivers.

- *Of that 1500, up to 280 individuals currently living in Developmental Centers, Individual Care Facilities for people with Mental Retardation (ICF/MR), or in nursing homes, will have the opportunity to choose a waiver and move into a new environment.*
- *The 280 slots created by their movement will not be closed, but rather will be available for people requesting that service. We are in the process of evaluating the need in this area via a comprehensive survey.*

2. Waiver Reimbursement

The next investment I would like to mention is the proposed allocation under home- and community-based waiver services, and, more specifically, how those services are reimbursed.

Early last year the Department, along with county boards and providers, started to transition Ohio's waiver reimbursement system from a negotiated rate system to a new, federally compliant system for reimbursing private providers and counties for Medicaid waiver services. This transition started after three years of intensive work to design the new system.

We now know that, for the more than 5500 people who have been transitioned to the new system, the cost for them will be \$6.5 million more than was projected for FY05. The previous administration did not know how much this transition would cost, due largely to inadequate data.

It is still unclear what the entire transition will cost, however, we are committed to making the transition work with the \$6.5 million we are requesting. The waiver 'state match' line item in the executive budget therefore is increased by \$6.5 million in FY 08, to \$113.6 million, to fund the state's share of matching funds to support an approximately \$750 million dollar program. The GRF line item remains flat in the second year of the biennium.

Why are waiver matching funds a good investment? Over the past five years, 10,893 new waivers have been implemented with very little additional state money. Since 2001, our funding partners the county boards of MRDD have contributed state subsidy and local levy funds to provide match for waivers, which has helped Ohio to leverage approximately \$500 million in federal dollars. The state's provision of the additional \$6.5 million will help fund the waiver transition and bring us into federal compliance without adding to the county boards' expected contributions. *It is a good investment in order to protect the non-state money, supporting services for more than 16,500 people.*

3. Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc.

The third significant investment I would like to address is the proposed allocation under Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc. (APSI) for the people we serve. APSI is a non-profit organization which provides guardianship services for individuals for whom no other family member or guardian is available.

Ohio law mandates support of advocacy and protective services for people with developmental disabilities. Currently under the direction of **APSI**, this area of investment is to address a growing caseload of 4361 individuals represented by 76 Protective Services Representatives. These individuals maintain an average caseload of 57 people. APSI activated 433 new cases in FY 06 and has experienced an increased need to provide legal and other specific services to clients.

The ODMRDD budget includes a 13.4 percent increase (\$329,000) in line item 320-412 to support increased need in this area. The increase in GRF will help retain a professional workforce, and allow APSI to hire additional staff to manage their caseloads.

AREAS OF INFLATIONARY INCREASES

We have requested, and the House has provided, modest inflationary increases to two budget line items:

- The first is our Central Office operating expenses (320-321) where we request a 3% increase over the two-year biennium period. This will allow us to keep up with rising payroll costs.
- The second line item (323-321) funds a significant portion of our payroll costs for the ten Developmental Centers. It also allows us to keep up with inflationary payroll costs and has a 2.33% inflationary increase for the biennium. Without question, people who reside in Developmental Centers are the most difficult to serve, and also the most expensive. The ODMRDD will continue to operate regional Developmental Centers as long as there is market demand from individuals and their families needing and wanting this level of care.

LANGUAGE CHANGES

While our budget was being considered by the House, the Department worked with the county boards of MRDD and members of the House to arrive at agreed-upon language bringing into federal compliance statutes governing county boards of MRDD contracting with private providers for Medicaid-funded services. This also clarified the mutual obligations of the Department and county boards to provide non-federal matching funds supporting the waiver programs. The Amended Substitute H.B. 119 includes the agreed-upon language. The Department appreciates the efforts of members of the House in assisting us to achieve resolution on this issue.

The solution assures that matching funds will be available to draw down federal funding for Ohio’s citizens receiving home- and community-based services funded by Medicaid waivers. The agreement protects the ability of county boards of MRDD to monitor health and safety of individuals served through the county boards, and does not change county boards’ ability to contract with service providers for non-Medicaid services. The changes made to clarify matching funds obligations being shared by the state and county boards ensure that both the state and counties maintain their current funding commitments. The agreement reached is consistent with our guiding principles in providing services to people with disabilities.

GRF CONSOLIDATIONS:

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
322-417 Supported Living	\$43,160,198	\$0.00	\$0.00
322-451 Family Support	\$6,938,898	\$0.00	\$0.00
322-452 Service & Support	\$8,672,730	\$0.00	\$0.00
322-501 County Boards	\$31,296,087	\$90,067,913	\$90,067,913
TOTAL	\$90,067,913	\$90,067,913	\$90,067,913

You will notice that in the interest of reducing complexity and increasing local flexibility, we have consolidated many line items, including those providing state subsidies to the county boards. This reduces administrative complexity for the county boards, our funding partners. Since passage of the budget in the House, family advocates have requested that the Family Support line item remain separate, and not part of the consolidations. The Department and the county boards have agreed to that change, and will be working with the Office of Budget and Management to submit that change, along with some other technical corrections. Please note that overall funding amounts are flat from the current fiscal year through FY’09.

Federal Consolidations/ Line Items:

We consolidated the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council line items into one, and consolidated our community grants into one line item. These grants include Title XX and the Foster Grandparent program, as well as others. We will be submitting an amendment to increase the appropriation for the DD Council by \$300,000 to accurately reflect their anticipated federal grant.

We also consolidated federal Developmental Center line items in an effort to streamline the overall system. The future role of Developmental Centers is -- and has been -- a constant conversation in our field for more than 20 years. As noted earlier, this Administration plans to operate Developmental Centers as long as there is market demand for that level of care.

A QUICK LOOK BACK BEFORE MOVING FORWARD

Earlier in my testimony you learned a little bit about Amy, Julie, Maura, and James ... people served by Ohio's MRDD services. Their personal stories depict the need for early intervention services, for residential and respite care, and for services to assist aging caregivers.

But their stories are not as hopeful as some others I could share, and so allow me, please, to share Christy's story. Christy is a 32 year-old woman with traumatic brain injury, the result of a car accident when she was 18. A drunk driver crashed into Christy at a stoplight, and Christy ended up in a coma for six months. One day she woke up and began the slow road to recovery.

Christy sustained short-term memory loss and some damage to her nervous system, plus needed a walker. Now, at 32, following intensive speech therapy, physical therapy, and job skills training, Christy works at State Farm Insurance Co. in Newark, Ohio, and has held the job for four years. She doesn't need her walker any more and she doesn't need her job-coach any more. She is a taxpaying citizen today. Her income helps her parents with household expenses -- but they'll have to do without it soon, as Christy has met her fiance at a Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group meeting, and will move out of her parents' home this year. Christy's road to recovery was paved by a network of MRDD services and service providers. Stories like Christy's are why MRDD services are so important to 75,000 people in our state.

And now, our strategy for moving forward ...

STRATEGY FOR MOVING FORWARD

In our team's brief time at the Department, many issues have surfaced that we feel need specific attention. They are issues that can be solved only with extensive analysis and broad stakeholder input. We will be creating an *MRDD Futures Study* process. The House placed the parameters of this concept into temporary language as part of our recent agreement with the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD.

The MRDD Futures Study is a system-wide vision developed with stakeholders, and designed as a guide to continuous system improvements following 2007. It is a forum for the systematic study and development of recommendations to address various issues to improve service delivery, enhance the funding partnership between the Department and the county boards, and streamline system processes. The implications of the Futures Study are long-term.

The MRDD Futures Study project will address all of the following:

- Review the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of current uses of all funding sources for MRDD services;

- Propose alternatives for effectively funding the non-federal share and Medicaid expenditures for home-and community-based services for individuals with MRDD;
- Identify the potential for reducing administrative costs in the MRDD system;
- Propose alternatives for effectively balancing revenues available to county boards of MRDD to fulfill their responsibilities for funding, planning, and monitoring the delivery of locally administered MRDD services;
- Examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system of separate and concurrent accreditation, licensure, certification, quality assurance, and quality improvement activities and propose changes to improve that system;
- Recommend steps necessary to assure the long term financial sustainability of MRDD services to meet current and future needs while affording counties the ability to make local decisions about the priority uses of local tax levy funding;
- Determine the feasibility and potential benefits of regional planning approaches to meet specialized and intensive service needs;
- Propose improvements needed and action steps to fully realize the principle of self-determination by individuals with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities;
- Evaluate the effectiveness and equity of the system's uses of waiting and service substitutions lists, priority populations, and having separate acuity instruments that vary by service setting.

Our funding partners, the county boards of MRDD, and other key constituent organizations, have begun planning together for conducting this important work.

DEPARTMENT GOALS OVER THE NEXT YEAR

What can the people of Ohio, our service delivery partners, the Governor, and the General Assembly expect from us? Upon approval of this budget request, you can expect us to *effectively implement a fiscally responsible approach to providing continuous improvement in the quality of life for Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.* The MRDD Futures Study report, detailing the work of the Futures Study group, will be provided to the Governor and General Assembly in 2008.

We have established *five goals* for the coming year. These goals have been and will continue to be discussed and reinforced with all ODMRDD employees, and it is in the context of these goals that we will carry out our work supported by the budget.

- Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems;
- Good stewardship of limited resources;
- Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes;
- Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports; and,
- A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders.

As Governor Strickland said in his State of the State address: “*Where you grow up in Ohio should not determine where you end up in life.*” We couldn’t agree more. The budget before you underscores Governor Strickland’s commitment to serving our most vulnerable Ohioans. The House has concurred, and we urge your support as well. With your assistance, we can focus on what we CAN do, and invest in what matters.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you very much for your time and attention. I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.

Pipeline Extra feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

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Tuesday, June 26, 2007

Law Restricting Supported Living Provisions to Remain Unchanged

The Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) has received calls from several concerned constituents regarding an amendment to section 5123.165 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) that was approved yesterday (in the biennial budget bill) -- Amended Substitute House Bill 119 -- by the House-Senate Conference Committee. This Pipeline Extra is published to explain what the amendment does, and to help alleviate stakeholder concerns.

In the 2008-2009 Executive Budget as introduced, the ODMRDD had proposed in ORC 5123.165 to broaden provisions of existing law that prohibit a supported living provider from providing both a residence and supported living services to an individual with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities.

The law change would have expanded the same prohibitions to include other parties related to a supported living provider, including most relatives, employees, and certain business and governmental associates. *The intent of the proposed expansion language was to ensure that a supported living provider could not circumvent the spirit of the law by creating an affiliated entity.*

After receiving input from a variety of stakeholders, the ODMRDD determined that broadening the prohibition could have unintended consequences that could harm existing business relationships. To avoid the potential disruptions to these relationships, the ODMRDD requested an amendment to the proposed language that will not broaden the prohibition to include related parties. *The amendment does not change the general prohibition that applies to supported living providers, which will remain as set forth in current law.*

The ODMRDD believes this supported living issue is an important one that requires further evaluation, and it will be considered as a part of the MRDD Futures Committee. We hope this communication alleviates any concerns.

Pipeline Extra feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

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Thursday, March 15, 2007

ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, shared the information contained in this Pipeline Extra at the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD winter conference, today. It includes the foundation upon which the leadership of ODMRDD will base decisions and direction, and highlights of the biennium budget. Director Martin began his comments yesterday by sharing with conference attendees a personal view of services for people with developmental disabilities, based on issues and challenges faced by his own family in caring for his son, Joel, now a young adult.

ODMRDD Issues Priority Goals, Strategies, Action Steps ... Underscoring Core Areas of Interest

The Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) provides the following information to update stakeholders regarding overall planning efforts by key staff in the new Administration. This *Pipeline Extra* begins with a brief review of the basic foundation upon which the process is built, and continues to describe broad goals, strategies, and key action steps. More information will be provided regularly as progress is made, and your feedback is always invited at the end of each issue of *Pipeline*.

DEPARTMENT'S PURPOSE

The ODMRDD is responsible for overseeing a statewide system of supports and services for people with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities and their families.

MISSION

The mission of ODMRDD is continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.

VISION

Ohio citizens with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities will experience lifestyles that provide opportunities for personal security, physical and emotional well-being, full community participation, productivity, and equal rights.

VALUES

- Lead the development of public policy that supports the self-determination principles of freedom, support, authority, responsibility and confirmation

- Conduct business in an ethical manner and within a formally structured quality management system
- Develop sustainable resources that are consistently and equitably distributed and administered
- Increase the capacity of state and local systems to support individuals and families
- Work collaboratively with partners and stakeholders to positively affect the day-to-day lives of individuals and their families
- Communicate and promote, throughout the MRDD system, an environment of open dialogue about system issues and changes as they are developed and implemented.

THE FIVE GOALS

During Calendar Year 2007, the ODMRDD will strive to provide:

1. Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems
2. Good stewardship of limited resources
3. Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes
4. Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports
5. A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders

To support the Five Goals, the following *action steps* will be taken, in a manner that is consistent with the leadership values, listed earlier in this document. In addition, specific and more detailed steps on this path will be posted soon on www.mrdd.ohio.gov under “About Us” and on ‘Inside MRDD’ the employee intranet, under “Director’s Corner.”

Goal 1

Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems:

- Waiver reimbursement and transition

Action Steps

- Review transition (pause activity) in order to simplify waiver reimbursement (homemaker personal care/day habilitation)
- Address reimbursement methodology issues with stakeholder input, ODJFS, and CMS

Goal 2

Good stewardship of limited resources:

- Agree on approach to extend of all current County Board of MRDD/ Department agreements in collaboration with OACBMRDD and OASCBMRDD
- Prepare ‘Futures Study.’ Project, designed as a guide to continuous system improvements following 2007
- Reconcile any existing provider contract issues
- Consistent and clear communications with OBM and stakeholders
- Align resources for various specific programs and projects underway, including but not limited to:
 - Money Follows the Person (MFP)
 - Medicaid Administrative Claiming (MAC)
 - Preliminary Implementation Component Tool (PICT)
 - Targeted Case Management (TCM)

- Martin v. Taft settlement, if accepted

Goal 3

Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes:

- Develop processes that support continuous two-way constituent engagement
- Assess and improve technical assistance to stakeholders
- Address organizational issues to strengthen and improve intra-and inter-agency collaboration
- Re-focus Quality Management Initiative to permeate organization naturally
- Re-focus Interagency Agreements through Director's Office

Goal 4

Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports:

- Issues relating to Martin v. Taft settlement
- Issues relating to waiver reimbursement and other waiver options
- Operate Developmental Centers, explore regional planning for specialized and intensive service needs
- Review of Home and Community-based services
- Sharpen focus on health and safety monitoring

Goal 5

A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders:

- Launch MRDD Futures Study project, designed as a guide to continuous system improvements following 2007, including:
 - Developing an overall infrastructure to build a long-range strategic plan, define discussion/input and implementation venues, and prepare support materials for stakeholders;
 - Defining specific areas of impact for balancing available resources (funding, service systems etc.) in relationship to the needs of stakeholders.
 - Address need to ensure sustainability of services

Lastly, *Pipeline Extra* offers the following as a draft of what the "Futures Project," previously mentioned, may entail:

- Review the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of current uses of all funding sources for MR/DD services, including funding received from local tax levies, tax equity funding, the general revenue fund and other state-based sources, Title XX, and Medicaid.
- Estimate the effects on MR/DD services of phasing out the tangible personal property tax;
- Identify the potential for reducing administrative costs in the MR/DD system;

- Propose alternatives for effectively balancing federal, state and local tax revenues available to county boards of MR/DD to fulfill their responsibilities for funding, planning, and monitoring the delivery of locally administered MR/DD services;
- Examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system of separate and concurrent accreditation, licensure, certification, quality assurance, and quality improvement activities and propose changes to improve that system, including the potential uses of “deemed status” for county boards of MR/DD and public and private providers of service;
- Recommend steps necessary to assure the long term financial sustainability of MR/DD services to meet current and future needs while affording counties the ability to make local decisions about the priority uses of local tax levy funding;
- Determine the feasibility and potential benefits of regional planning approaches for capacity to meet specialized and intensive service needs;
- Propose improvements needed and action steps to fully realize the principle of self-determination by individuals with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities;
- Evaluate the effectiveness and equity of the system’s uses of waiting and service substitutions lists, priority populations, and having separate acuity instruments that vary by service setting
- Review other matters the director of the department considers appropriate for evaluation.

Budget Highlights, a Primer

Turn-Around Ohio Focal Point: Martin v. Strickland Settlement (*formerly Martin v. Taft*) “Investing in what matters” is an important tenet of Governor Strickland’s Turnaround Ohio plan and is a key reason for increasing the ODMRDD operating budget to fund the state’s share of the Martin v. Strickland Settlement Agreement. In September 2006, an agreement was reached to settle the class action lawsuit, originally filed in 1989 on behalf of institutionalized citizens with disabilities, which mandated the expansion of community residential services. The agreement offers new residential choices, including alternatives for individuals who currently reside in institutional settings, but does not require the closure of any public or private facilities. The settlement is conditional upon funding approval in Ohio’s next biennial budget and was negotiated among system stakeholders.

If approved by the General Assembly, the funding will provide opportunities for an additional 1,500 Ohioans with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities to be served through Medicaid-funded home- and community-based waivers. In addition, individuals living in institutions will be given the opportunity to make choices about their care and select the types of services they want and need.

Funding Martin v. Taft provides an incredible opportunity for Ohio to cost-effectively settle the long-standing case and avoid costly litigation in the future. More importantly, the agreement will help to alleviate Ohio’s long waiting list for residential services (projected between 19-20 thousand individuals, statewide) and expand waivers without a reduction to the

state's GRF subsidies to the County Boards of MRDD. To fund this settlement, the budget includes a new line item called Martin Settlement that provides \$6.2 million in FY 08 and \$29 million in FY 09.

Advocacy and Protective Services

Ohio law mandates support of advocacy and protective services for people with developmental disabilities. The ODMRDD budget includes a 13.4 percent increase (\$329,000) to support the increased needs in this area. Currently, Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc. (APSI) has a growing caseload of 4,361 individuals represented by 76 Protective Services Representatives (PSRs). These PSRs receive a starting salary of \$24,000 annually and maintain an average caseload of 57. APSI activated 433 new cases in FY 06 and experienced an increased need to provide legal services to its clients. The increase in GRF will help to retain a professional workforce and will offer improved assurances of health and safety with more manageable caseloads.

Waiver Reimbursement Transition

The budget reflects an addition of \$6.5 million each year for the transition of 11,000 waiver recipients to a new waiver reimbursement system. When the transition was undertaken several years ago, legislators were informed that the transition would be budget neutral. However, as of January 31, 2007, fiscal projections indicate that costs of services to waiver recipients are projected to be \$6.5 million more than projected by the previous administration.

Budget Summary

The proposed *total* biennial budget for ODMRDD decreases by 4.6 percent in FY '08 and includes a 6.7 percent increase in FY '09, much of which is to support the details of the Martin v. Strickland settlement agreement. The new Martin v. Strickland Settlement budget line includes \$6.2 million in FY '08 and \$29 million in FY '09.

Excluding funding for Martin, ODMRDD's proposal includes an additional \$8.8 million in *General Revenue Funds* (GRF) over the biennium, an increase of 2.7 percent. Including the Martin v. Strickland Settlement, the proposed GRF for 2008-2009 increases by 4.2 percent in FY '08 and 5.3 percent in FY '09.

Pipeline Extra feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

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Pipeline ... Extra!

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor John L. Martin, Director



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Wednesday, May 9, 2007

- May 8 Levy Results, County Boards of MRDD -

County / Issue Type / Millage / Results (rounded)

Fulton / Renewal / 2.0 mills – Passed, 63% FOR
Henry / Renewal / 1.9 mills – Passed, 63% FOR
Jefferson / Renewal / 1.7 mills – Passed, 76% FOR
Mahoning / Renewal / 2.0 mills – Passed, 73% FOR
Licking / Replacement / 1.0 mill – Passed, 64% FOR
Marion / Replacement / 1.35 mills – Failed, 59% AGAINST
Columbiana / Replacement / 1.5 mills – Passed, 52% FOR

Congratulations to all who passed their levies!

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Thursday, April 26, 2007

An Agreement Has Been Reached! Collaboration Results in a Repeal, an Amendment, And the Establishment of a Futures Study

What is the Agreement?

The agreement between the Ohio Association of County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OACBMRDD) and the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD), regarding a potential federal compliance conflict when County Boards of MRDD directly contract with service providers, now establishes proposed Ohio Revised Code (ORC) language to replace 5126.035 and 5126.057, and their companion language.

ORC 5126.035 spelled out the former arrangement for service contracting between county boards and service providers, which raised federal compliance concerns with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). This language was proposed to be rescinded in the current budget. The proposed new language also will consolidate the language in 5126.057 and clarify who is responsible for paying the non-federal portion of Medicaid-funded waiver services. The language outlines how state and local levy dollars are to be used, and will continue to allow county boards to determine the priority uses of these dollars in their communities.

In addition, the agreement outlined the decision to enact a law establishing the MRDD Futures Study Committee, to be comprised of individuals representing various governmental, stakeholder, and constituency groups. The Futures Study Committee will review various issues for Ohio's MRDD services system.

How was the Agreement Reached?

It was a very thoughtful process, reached by virtue of persistence, patience, respect for constituent concerns, and a good deal of creative thinking on the part of all parties involved. Many viewpoints were aired and discussed, bringing about an agreement which, according to Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director, ODMRDD, was a 'win-win' compromise. Patrick notes, "Throughout the discussion and negotiation process, I was struck by everyone's interest in resolving this issue in a short timeframe, and with an appreciation of all the responsibilities involved. Ohio's MRDD system stands in better stead because of the consensus agreement,

which was made possible because of the outstanding work of the MRDD legal, constituent services, and fiscal staff, Governor Strickland's Office, and the Office of Budget and Management.”

As noted, a number of individuals and groups came to the table to arrive at the agreement resolution. They include Representative Jon Peterson, who assisted in the negotiation process; Melissa Craddock, policy officer with the office of House Speaker Jon Husted; Governor Strickland's Office; and, the Office of Budget and Management. In particular, we would like to thank the OACBMRDD, and the Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD; internal staff at ODMRDD who reviewed various proposed solutions; and our many stakeholders, for their patience in allowing us to resolve this issue.

Dan Ohler, Executive Director of the OACBMRDD, confirms the collaborative effort involved in this process: “We are confident that the outcome of this difficult process will benefit not only the 17,000 individuals enrolled on home and community-based waivers, but also the 50,000+ individuals who benefit from services and supports that are not Medicaid-funded, and are coordinated by their local county boards of MRDD.”

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Wednesday, April 11, 2007

This Pipeline Extra provides the full text of the Budget Testimony delivered by Director John L. Martin, to the House Health and Human Services Subcommittee at the Ohio Statehouse on April 11, 2007.

ODMRDD Budget Testimony

Testimony of John L. Martin, Director

Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

April 11, 2007

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Stewart, Ranking Member Brown, Members of the Health and Human Services Subcommittee, thank you for giving me an opportunity to talk to you today about the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and the work that the Department does in conjunction with its partners, the County Boards of MRDD, private providers, direct care workers and other advocates, on behalf of nearly 75,000 Ohioans and their families.

I am the Department's director, John Martin, and I have had the pleasure of meeting several of you since my appointment twelve weeks ago. Thank you for welcoming me. I look forward to working with all of you on behalf of Ohio families who have been touched by developmental disabilities.

It is my intent today to highlight the most pressing issues, and then focus more specifically on what we can do in this biennium. This approach is brought home especially this year, as our statewide MRDD Awareness theme is "*Focus on what we CAN do!*"

Looking at the big picture, the last few years have seen profound changes in the MRDD arena. Those changes include:

- A movement toward development of more home and community based options will allow for more choice to individuals.
- Major changes in the ways services are funded to assure federal compliance;
- The establishment of a framework for shared responsibilities with our funding partners the 88 County Boards of MRDD; and,
- Increases in the number of persons on the Department's home and community based waivers an increase of 189% since 2001 (from 5773 to 16,666.)

Who Are We?

And before I go any further, let me describe who we are, and whom we serve.

“We” are Central Office and Developmental Center employees of the ODMRDD who are engaged in serving nearly 75,000 Ohioans and their families. And we perform a broad range of tasks. For example:

- We license and oversee approximately 1200 residential settings
- We certify and review more than 3,000 service providers
- We review and accredit 88 County Boards of MRDD
- We process about 5000 claims per month for Medicaid funded services
- We monitor and track nearly 20,000 cases involving individuals’ health and safety issues
- We fund a broad range of unique services and supports to help people be successful in their communities
- We advise and direct by listening to organized stakeholder groups, individuals and families.

Approximately 298 Central Office employees complete these tasks. In addition, we provide services for approx. 1600 individuals in 10 Developmental Centers throughout the state, with a dedicated team of direct-service staff, providing 24-hour care.

Whom do we serve? -- The MRDD Population

To invite you more personally into ‘our world’, I will begin with a few brief scenarios about the people we serve. Picture these, if you will ...

- Twin 6-year old girls ‘Amy and Julie’ with cerebral palsy have been brought into the home of their step-grandmother, Connie. She speaks of the exhaustion of providing round-the-clock care. She feels the desperation of trying to find and afford qualified nurses to provide care during the day so she can work. She worries about their welfare if she gets sick. Connie’s greatest need from the MRDD system is for help coordinating the seven different specialists who provide services for “her girls”. She needs us to collaborate with other agencies so services and equipment can be supplied sooner and less expensively.
- Now, picture ‘Maura’, a 25-year old woman with a self-damaging behavior so severe she can never be left unattended for a single minute. Both of Maura’s parents have had health problems of their own and her behaviors are getting worse. While the family is able to sleep on weekdays when Maura is at the sheltered workshop, there is little other reliable respite available. The strain of constant care and the toll it takes on the family is crushing. Services provided or funded through us are their lifeline.
- And please picture ‘James’. He arrived at the home of his grandparents for a ‘Christmas visit’ last year with a one-way ticket. His mother said she couldn’t handle him anymore and not to send him back. Born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, the 27-year old man has cognitive delays and negative behaviors that limit his employment options and exhaust his family’s ability to cope. This family is among the many in Ohio headed by aging caregivers – many in their 70’s or 80’s, who need to plan for their family member to move out of the home. Currently, they are wait-listed for the waiver that would allow them to do this.

‘Amy, Julie’, Maura, and James ... are your constituents. And, all Ohio citizens with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities ... will soon have more opportunities to

experience lifestyles that offer improved personal security, physical and emotional well-being, full community participation, including employment opportunities, and equal rights as citizens.

The number of people served by Ohio's MRDD system has risen dramatically since 1999 – from 56,079 people then, to more than 75,000 today. To serve these individuals we have established a series of priority goals. How our budget supports these goals will be addressed in my remarks today.

MRDD BUDGET INITIATIVES FOR 2008 AND 2009

The biennial budget, as proposed, makes significant state funding investments in three main areas. I will highlight these investments in some detail, and then touch briefly on areas with modest inflationary increases. I will not touch on areas of flat funding unless you have questions. My testimony will conclude by highlighting some language changes contained in our budget, brief comments on consolidation of line items and explaining our Department's goals over the next year.

THREE AREAS OF FUNDING INVESTMENT

1. Martin v. Strickland Settlement

“Investing in what matters” is an important tenet of Governor Strickland's Turnaround Ohio plan and is a key reason for increasing ODMRDD's operating budget to fund the state's share of the Martin v. Strickland Settlement Agreement. In September 2006, an agreement was reached to settle the class action lawsuit, originally filed in 1989 on behalf of institutionalized citizens with disabilities, which mandated the expansion of community residential services.

The agreement offers new residential choices, including alternatives for individuals who currently reside in institutional settings, but does not require the closure of any public or private facilities. The settlement is conditional upon funding approval in Ohio's next biennial budget and was negotiated among system stakeholders.

You'll note that the budget before you has a new GRF line item in it, called "Martin Settlement" funded at \$6.1 million in FY08 and \$29.0 million for FY 09. These are new dollars, and largely the reason our department is showing an overall increase from previous years. They are intended to supply the state match for a total of 1500 new Medicaid waiver slots for Ohioans to have home and community based services.

Funding the agreement provides an incredible opportunity for Ohio to cost-effectively settle the long-standing case and avoid costly litigation in the future. More importantly, the agreement will help many individuals who are on waiting lists for residential services, without requiring County Boards of MRDD to take on greater than anticipated waiver match obligations.

If approved by the General Assembly, the funding will provide opportunities for an additional 1500 Ohioans with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities to be served through Medicaid funded home and community based waivers. Of that 1500, up to 280 individuals living in Developmental Centers, ICF'sMR, or nursing homes will be given the opportunity to choose a waiver and move into a new environment. The 280 slots created by their movement will not be closed, but rather will be available for persons requesting that service.

2. Waiver Reimbursement

The next significant investment I would like to bring forward is the proposed allocation under home and community based waiver services, and, more specifically, how those services are reimbursed.

Early last year the Department, along with county boards and providers, started to transition Ohio's waiver reimbursement system from a negotiated rate system to a new, federally compliant system for reimbursing private providers and counties for Medicaid waiver services. This transition started after three years of intensive work to design this new system.

We now know that, for the 5572 people who have been transitioned, the cost for them will be \$6.5 million more than the projected FY'05 costs. Because of inadequate data, and the inability to separate rate adjustments from utilization adjustments, the previous administration did not know how much this transition would cost. It is still unclear what the entire transition will cost because until we are fully transitioned, accurate data does not exist. However, we are committed to making the transition work with the \$6.5 million we are requesting.

The waiver 'state match' line item in the executive budget therefore is increased by \$6.5 million in FY 08, to \$113.6 million, and it remains flat in the second year of the biennium.

Why is this a good investment? Over the past five years, 10,893 new waivers have been implemented with very little additional state money. Since 2001, our funding partners the County Boards of MRDD have contributed state subsidy and local levy funds to provide match for waivers, which has leveraged approximately \$500 million in Federal dollars. The state's provision of \$6.5 million will help fund the waiver transition and bring us into federal compliance without adding to the county boards' expected contributions. *It is a good investment in order to protect the non-state money, supporting services for more than 16,500 people.*

3. Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc.

The third significant investment I would like to address is the proposed allocation under Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc. (APSI) for the people we serve.

Ohio law mandates support of advocacy and protective services for people with developmental disabilities. Currently under the direction of APSI, this area of investment is to address a growing caseload of 4361 individuals represented by 76 Protective Services Representatives. These individuals maintain an average caseload of 57 people. APSI activated 433 new cases in FY 06 and has experienced an increased need to provide legal and other specific services to clients.

The ODMRDD budget includes a 13.4 percent increase (\$329,000) in line item 320-412 to support increased need in this area. The increase in GRF will help retain a professional workforce, and allow for hiring additional staff to manage increasing caseloads.

AREAS OF INFLATIONARY INCREASES

We are requesting modest inflationary increases to two of our budget line items. The first is our central office operating expenses (320-321) where we are requesting a 3% increase over the two-year biennium period. This will allow us to keep up with rising payroll costs. The second line item (323-321) funds a significant portion of our payroll costs for the developmental centers. It also allows us to keep up with inflationary payroll costs and has a 2.33% inflationary increase for the biennium. Without question, these individuals are the most difficult to serve, and also the most expensive. The ODMRDD will continue to operate

regional developmental centers so long as there is market demand from individuals and their families needing and wanting this level of care.

LANGUAGE CHANGES

The budget proposes that ORC 5126.035 be repealed, which governs contracts between County Boards of MRDD and Medicaid service providers. Implementing agreements made during the previous administration, the Governor's budget proposes to resolve the issue, following six years of controversy. The current statute has never been able to be implemented, litigation began in 2003 and continues unresolved, and the provision is a source of concern with CMS.

During the last biennium, ODMRDD and the county boards agreed to put in place written agreements between the county boards and the Department, in part to replace the contemplated contracts between County Boards and Medicaid waiver service providers. ODMRDD is working with Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD and the Ohio Superintendents of County Boards of MRDD to propose additional budget language being requested by the County Boards in connection with their support of the repeal of ORC 5126.035. As we have communicated to you, it is our hope that before the budget bill moves out of the House, we can provide you with agreed-to substitute language. In addition, we intend to address these issues of federal compliance and local authority as a part of our ODMRDD *Futures Project* to be discussed later on in my testimony.

We have been working closely with the county boards to arrive at an agreed upon approach to this issue. While there is not yet an agreed-upon proposal, there is increased understanding of the issues. The Department understands that if 5126.035 is removed, we need to assure that county boards have appropriate and effective tools to use in order to be accountable and to continue to assure health and safety. We are not in disagreement about this goal, but the ways we can accomplish this. Here are the principles we will use to know when we have arrived at an acceptable approach:

- Changes in legislation reinforce that individuals and families maintain control over who they choose to hire and fire as their own qualified provider
- Previous funding agreements between the county boards and the Department that are fiscally responsible for both should continue into the biennium while longer term solutions are examined in the MRDD Futures project
- Any agreed upon language should take into account other system stakeholders and the other state departments involved in the program
- Any agreed upon language should reduce ongoing conflicts over roles and responsibilities
- Agreed upon language should bring about stability during the biennium and not defer finality simply to avoid making tough decisions today.

We are encouraged by key legislators' interest in assisting us to achieve resolution and will continue our discussions, and remain hopeful that a solution consistent with these principles can be found.

GRF CONSOLIDATIONS:

You will notice that in the interest of reducing complexity and increasing local flexibility, we have consolidated many line items, including those providing state subsidies to the County Boards. This reduces administrative complexity for the County Boards, our funding partners.

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
322-417 Supported Living	\$43,160,198	\$0.00	\$0.00
322-451 Family Support	\$6,938,898	\$0.00	\$0.00
322-452 Service & Support	\$8,672,730	\$0.00	\$0.00
322-501 County Boards	\$31,296,087	\$90,067,913	\$90,067,913
TOTAL	\$90,067,913	\$90,067,913	\$90,067,913

Federal Consolidations/ Line Items:

We consolidated the DD Council line items into one, and consolidated our community grants into one line item. These grants include Title XX and the Foster Grandparent program, as well as others.

We also consolidated federal developmental center line items in an effort to streamline the overall system. The future role of developmental centers is and has been a constant conversation in our field for more than 20 years.

STRATEGY FOR MOVING FORWARD

In our brief time at the Department, many issues have surfaced that we feel need attention. They are issues that can only be solved with extensive analysis and broad stakeholder input. We will be creating a MR/DD Futures Study process. The MRDD Future Study is a system-wide vision developed with stakeholders and designed as a guide to continuous system improvements following 2007. It is a forum for the systematic study and development of recommendations to address various issues to improve service delivery, enhance the funding partnership between the Department and the county boards, streamline system processes, with implications beyond the biennium.

The MRDD Futures Study project will do all of the following:

- Review the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of current uses of all funding sources for MR/DD services, including funding received from local tax levies, tax equity funding, the general revenue fund and other state-based sources, the Social Services Block Grant of Title XX of the “Social Security Act,” 88 Stat. 2337 (1974), 42 U.S.C.A. 1397, as amended, and the Medical Assistance program of Title XIX of the “Social Security Act,” 79 Stat. 286 (1965), 42 U.S.C.A. 1396, as amended;
- Estimate the effects on MR/DD services of phasing out the tangible personal property tax;
- Identify the potential for reducing administrative costs in the MR/DD system;
- Propose alternatives for effectively balancing federal, state and local tax revenues available to county boards of MR/DD to fulfill their responsibilities for funding, planning, and monitoring the delivery of locally administered MR/DD services;

- Examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system of separate and concurrent accreditation, licensure, certification, quality assurance, and quality improvement activities and propose changes to improve that system, including the potential uses of “deemed status” for county boards of MR/DD and public and private providers of service;
- Recommend steps necessary to assure the long term financial sustainability of MR/DD services to meet current and future needs while affording counties the ability to make local decisions about the priority uses of local tax levy funding;
- Determine the feasibility and potential benefits of regional planning approaches for capacity to meet specialized and intensive service needs;
- Propose improvements needed and action steps to fully realize the principle of self-determination by individuals with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities;
- Evaluate the effectiveness and equity of the system’s uses of waiting and service substitutions lists, priority populations, and having separate acuity instruments that vary by service setting
- Review other matters the director of the department considers appropriate for evaluation.

DEPARTMENT GOALS OVER THE NEXT YEAR

As a Department, we have established five goals for the coming year. It is in the context of these goals that we will carry out our work supported by this budget.

1. Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems
2. Good stewardship of limited resources
3. Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes
4. Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports
5. A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders (Explained in the section above)

General Assembly Expectations

The General Assembly can expect from us, upon approval of this budget request, to effectively implement a fiscally responsible approach to providing continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio’s citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.

As Governor Strickland said in his State of the State address: “*Where you grow up in Ohio should not determine where you end up in life.*” We couldn’t agree more. The budget before you underscores Governor Strickland’s commitment to serving our most vulnerable Ohioans, and we urge its passage. With your support, we can focus on what we CAN do, and invest in what matters.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, thank you very much for your time and attention. I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.

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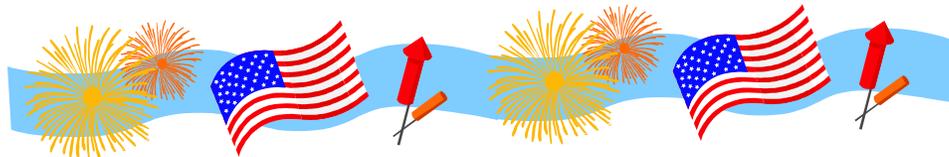


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Tuesday, July 3, 2007

2008-2009 Biennial Budget Primer Highlights Areas of Interest



The Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) is pleased to take this opportunity to provide simplified information regarding the just-signed biennial budget, highlighting those areas of interest to the MRDD community.

A hallmark of this budget process has been the solid support of our stakeholders.

Pipeline readers might expect to find a Budget Primer to be rather dry reading, however, the business of producing a budget is first and foremost a process of working with people to achieve results -- and in that there is no small amount of drama. Individuals providing testimony before the team of legislators were compelling, enthusiastic, and sincere in sharing their beliefs, and their lives. According to participants in the budget process who have been on hand during Governor Strickland's first few months in office, a hallmark of the new Administration has been the simple act of listening.

ODMRDD Deputy Director for Constituent Services, Renuka Mayadev, notes that, "The large number of people and organizations that have had opportunities to speak out about issues important to them is truly a measure of this Administration's interest in 'government by the people and for the people.' Individuals, parents, self-advocates, agencies, providers -- indeed any citizen with something to say -- they all were welcomed. It was exhausting as well as exciting to see this budget come together in an atmosphere of collaboration. It was also clear that the Administration was listening."

Consensus-building was the focus of budget hearings, and the MRDD arena emerged the better for it. In all, interpersonal relationships were strengthened across party lines. Now, let's look at what was accomplished.



"It was exhausting as well as exciting to see this budget come together in an atmosphere of collaboration."

Elements of the new budget that pertain to or affect people served by the ODMRDD include many that support the *Five Goals of the ODMRDD Administration*, which were outlined in the March 15, 2007 issue of *Pipeline*:

The Five Goals

1. Less complex service delivery, with fair and logical payment systems;
2. Good stewardship of limited resources;
3. Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes;
4. Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports;
5. A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders.

New Budget's Impact on the Five Goals

While a great deal of information may be gained by reading the entire budget document, http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/BillText127/127_HB_119_EN_N.pdf, we provide, below, a summary of budget items that impact the Five Goals in the budget as submitted by ODMRDD, as well as those issues that support the overall MRDD arena:

The main areas the ODMRDD addressed in its budget requests were:

- *Additional Waivers*: Funding of 1500 additional waivers for residential options as a part of the *Martin v. Strickland* Settlement. Funding approved in the budget provides opportunities for an additional 1500 Ohioans with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities to be served through Medicaid funded home- and community-based waivers. *Of that 1500, up to 280 individuals currently living in Developmental Centers, Individual Care Facilities for people with Mental Retardation (ICF/MR), or in nursing homes, will have the opportunity to choose a waiver and move into a new environment.* The 280 slots created by their movement will be open and available for people requesting that service.



A state-provided waiver project will be piloted at the Gallipolis Developmental Center, offering the ODMRDD an opportunity to experiment as a provider of ten community-based waivers.

- *Guardianship Issues*: The 13.4% increase approved under Advocacy and Protective Services, Inc. (APSI), a non-profit organization which provides guardianship services for individuals for whom no other family member or guardian is available, addresses a growing caseload of individuals served by APSI's Protective Service Representatives.



Ohio law mandates support of advocacy and protective services for people with developmental disabilities. With the additional budget allocation in this area, a more workable ratio of staff to people served can be provided. Clearly these needs were heard, and quality outcomes are expected.

- *MRDD Futures Study*: The budget sets forth in statute the development of a longterm plan to direct and focus resources in providing MRDD services, based on stakeholder input. During the first few months of the new Administration many issues have surfaced and need specific attention, but can be solved only with extensive analysis and broad stakeholder input.



The Futures Study will be a system-wide vision developed with stakeholders, designed as a guide to continuous system improvements following 2007. Participants in the committee will systematically study and develop recommendations to address issues to improve service delivery, enhance funding partnerships, and streamline system processes.

- *Waiver Reimbursement Transition:* The budget reflects an additional amount each year for the transition of 11,000 waiver recipients to a new waiver reimbursement system. The waiver ‘state match’ was increased by \$6.5 million in FY 08, to \$113.6 million, to fund the state’s share of matching funds to support an approximately \$750 million dollar program. It is a good investment in order to protect the non-state money, supporting services for more than 16,500 people.



Waiver reimbursement funding is a good investment in order to protect the non-state money, supporting services for more than 16,500 people. Less complex service delivery should result from this process.

Other Important Considerations

In addition to the items above, other important considerations in the new budget address the consolidation of line items to streamline service delivery; clarifying and simplifying the structure of supported living services using stakeholder input; and, agreed-upon language bringing into federal compliance statutes governing county boards of MRDD contracting with private providers for Medicaid-funded services. This also clarified the mutual obligations of the Department and county boards to provide non-federal matching funds supporting the waiver programs.

Budget Summary

ODMRDD’s budget includes an additional \$8.8 million in General Revenue Funds (GRF) over the biennium, an increase of 2.7% excluding the monies provided under the *Martin v. Strickland* Settlement. The total budget increase is 6.7% each year in 2008 and 2009, providing a total budget of approximately \$1.2 billion each year. It is important to note that this is the first time in several budget cycles that the Department has seen an increase in funding.

Other Key Elements of the New Budget

In addition to the items specific to the ODMRDD budget, the following key elements of other department’s budgets within the new Administration are important to the MRDD arena:

- *Medicaid Buy-In:* Allows individuals with disabilities to maintain their Medicaid eligibility and benefits while earning a living;
- *Help Me Grow:* An increase in funding underscores the Administration’s commitment to assisting in the earlier diagnosis and greater understanding of various MRDD-related health issues;
- *ICFMR Rate Increase:* Allows ICFMR providers to continue to provide quality services in the face of rising costs and staffing needs.
- *Autism Diagnosis/Education Pilot Program:* The creation of this program will help to make Ohio a leader in continuing efforts to identify autism at the earliest possible opportunity in young children.

The Administration doesn’t always say “yes.”

Governor Strickland carefully exercised his veto power to halt the forward motion on some health and human services-related issues of interest to the MRDD arena, including the proposed Special Education Scholarship. In this example, he stated that the Administration supported the basic concept, but the veto was chosen in order to allow the issue to be more clearly defined or consistent with the Administration's view of serving the public's interest.

According to the Governor, "The Administration believes that funding private schools with public tax dollars deprives the state and its taxpayers of proper oversight and accountability of these programs. Further, by draining funds that would otherwise be used to support public schools, such a program serves to harm the vast majority of students, including disabled students, who attend public schools."

He adds, "The Administration is committed to working with the Department of Education and parents to review alternative policies to best meet the needs of all children with disabilities. Indeed, the administration has increased funding for special education by more than 8 percent in each year of the biennium. However, this program does not serve that goal. Therefore this veto is in the public interest."

Administration's Leadership Style Reflects Thoughtful Approach to Governing

It is unlikely that anyone in state government can say that Ohio's Strickland Administration represents 'business as usual' at the Statehouse. It is clear from the many hours of careful listening to stakeholder testimony, and from one-on-one discussions with ODMRDD leadership during the budget process, that the Strickland team believes that people with disabilities are people who matter.



According to ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, "This budget was crafted with the input of the people for whom it is designed to work. We greatly appreciate the support we have received during the entire budget process, not only from the Strickland team, but from the many stakeholders who stood behind us. While there was disagreement at one point, involving a critical issue, the parties were interested in and able to come to agreement on that matter. The result was a testament to the collaborative environment fostered during the process."

The mission of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) is the continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.

Pipeline Extra feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

Questions? Comments? Pipeline (formerly 'Visions') Newsletter is a publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and is distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readership of time-sensitive, relevant, and important information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about Pipeline newsletter at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us, or contact Robert Jennings at robert.jennings@dmr.state.oh.us, phone (614) 644-0263.

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Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



Pipeline will be published at least twice monthly.

Visit us at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

Wednesday, April 18, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 6

We hope you enjoy Pipeline newsletter, and share your thoughts with us at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us
In addition, if you know someone who should be receiving Pipeline, but is not (for example, is new to your organization) please see the simple subscription information at the end of each issue.

In this issue –

- 1. April is Autism Awareness Month
- 2. ODMRDD Key Staff Profile, Renuka Mayadev
- 3. Public Hearings Scheduled for Administrative Rules
- 4. Governor Strickland's Budget Highlights

1. April is Autism Awareness Month

... Statehouse Rally set for Thursday, April 19, 11 a.m.

Autism Awareness Month, April, provides an opportunity for families, friends, and local communities to raise public awareness about autism. Sponsored by the Autism Society of America (ASA), the month-long activities throughout the state invite individuals and communities to get involved by participating in activities sponsored by their local ASA chapter, or by promoting services related to autism.

On Thursday, April 19, at 11:00 a.m., there will be a rally on the South Lawn of the Statehouse in Columbus, co-sponsored by the Autism Society of Ohio, and the Autism Society of America, Central Ohio Chapter. In addition, on that same day, they will be sponsoring a similar rally at 5:30 p.m. in Mansfield. (Contact for the rallies: Doug Krinsky, 614-554-0802)

Rally participants will be calling for legislative action to meet the needs of the growing autistic population, including an Autism Waiver, Health Insurance coverage, and a statewide early screening program.

Following is some basic information on the subject of autism. Much more is being researched, and here are two good sources for additional information:

National Autism Association at: <http://www.nationalautismassociation.org/>

Autism Society of Ohio at: www.autismohio.org

Email: askaso@autismohio.org

Barb Yavorcik, President

Phone: 330-376-0211 for regional or local group information

What is Autism?

Autism is a complex developmental disability that affects an individual's social interaction and communication. It is known as a 'spectrum disorder', because it affects each individual in different ways and to varying degrees – thus, the characteristics fall into a broad 'spectrum' of possibilities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, autism and its associated behaviors may be estimated to occur in as many as *1 in 150* individuals. Overall, the incidence of autism is four times more prevalent in boys than in girls, and typically appears during the first three years of life. In general, children and adults with autism tend to have difficulty with verbal and nonverbal communications, social interactions, and leisure or play activities.

What Causes Autism?

Despite a great deal of research, at this point there is no single known cause for autism. However, it is generally agreed that it is caused by abnormalities in brain structure or function. Brain scans have shown differences in the shape and structure of the brain in children with autism when compared to those without the condition. Researchers are investigating a number of theories, including a link between heredity, genetics, and birth-related medical problems. Psychological factors are not believed to be a cause of autism.

How is Autism Treated?

Experts agree that early intervention is important in addressing the symptoms associated with autism, and that much can be done to improve a child's chances of functioning better in social situations with regular attention from early intervention professionals. Most professionals also agree that individuals with autism respond well to highly structured, specialized education programs that are designed to meet the individual's particular needs.

As in any treatment plan, it is important for family members and treatment providers *to work together* to address and reinforce areas of social skill development, communication, behavior, and sensory integration.

2. Key Staff Profile, Renuka Mayadev, Deputy Director, Constituent Services

Pipeline will provide brief profiles of each ODMRDD Deputy Director, and other key staff, during the year. Currently we have profiled Michael Rench, Deputy Director, Community Services, and Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director, Special Projects. Renuka Mayadev joined the ODMRDD early this year as Deputy Director, Constituent Services.

Renuka Mayadev is the go-to person for a unique blend of staff functions, including Family Advocacy, Public Information, Administrative Rules, and liaison to Legislative issues. The combination of all of these activities within the Constituent Services staff of seven people means that Renuka and her team provide key resources for the Department, and for various stakeholders and constituents throughout the state.



Renuka Mayadev

“Right now, Constituent Services is very involved in shepherding the ODMRDD budget through the House and Senate,” says Renuka.

“Our job is to evaluate what information could be helpful to legislators, and then provide that information to them in an accessible fashion. Constituent Services has a priority responsibility to listen to our constituents, and to understand and address their needs.” She adds, “I have enjoyed meeting some of the families we serve, as well as stakeholders, and talking with them about their lives. I must say that I am very impressed by the support and teamwork I see from the various advocacy groups and self-advocates.”

Renuka came to the ODMRDD with a legal background, and most recently moved from California. She is quick to point out, “I am a hometown girl, hailing from the Columbus area, and I am *so* glad to be home. It is exciting to be a part of an organization that provides opportunities for people to be the best they can be. I am very pleased to see the strong support by self-advocates and their families for our proposed budget, and, indeed, self-determination strikes me as one of the most important aspects of moving the system forward. I am hopeful that my legal education, which trains students to be zealous advocates for their future clients, will be an excellent foundation for advocating for people with disabilities.”

“I am hopeful that my legal education, which trains students to be zealous advocates for their future clients, will be an excellent foundation for advocating for people with disabilities.”

Pipeline asked Renuka what may have most surprised or interested her in the first few months on the job as Deputy Director, Constituent Services. Her response was, “From my perspective, it has all been very interesting, however I will say that I am very impressed by the number of people in the ODMRDD organization, including Central Office and the ten Developmental Centers, who have many, many years with the organization, serving our community and making it their lifelong careers. It shows real care and dedication.”

And, asking ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, his perspective on Renuka’s addition to the team of key staff, he noted, “I appreciate the fresh, creative perspectives that Renuka brings to her position. She is not encumbered by the history of relationships and issues that many of us have, which makes her an especially valued asset to our team.”

Renuka may be reached at renuka.mayadev@dmr.state.oh.us

3. Public Hearings Scheduled for Administrative Rules

ODMRDD is proposing amendments to rule **5123:2-9-06** (*HCBS Waivers - Waiver Reimbursement Methodology*) to reflect the six-month extension for completing waiver reimbursement transition activities recently granted by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Previously scheduled for completion by June 30, 2007, transition is now scheduled for completion by December 31, 2007.

The public hearing on the proposed rule will be held on **May 17, 2007**, beginning at **1:30 p.m.** at ODMRDD Administrative Offices, 1810 Sullivant Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43223-1239.

ODMRDD is also proposing amendments to rule **5123:2-17-02** (*Incidents Adversely Affecting Health and Safety*). This rule establishes requirements for managing incidents adversely affecting health or safety and implements a continuous quality improvement process in order to prevent or reduce the risk of harm to individuals. Amendments are necessary to modify the requirements around reporting and analyzing major unusual incident trends and patterns, in accordance with Ohio's commitment to CMS.

The public hearing will be held on **May 18, 2007**, beginning at **10:00 a.m.** at ODMRDD Administrative Offices, 1810 Sullivant Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43223-1239.

For more details, visit the ODMRDD Rules Under Development website at: <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/rules/development.htm>.

4. Governor Strickland's Budget Highlights **... Living Within Our Means, Investing in What Matters**

Thanks to Governor Strickland's Communications Staff, Amanda Wurst and Jess Goode for providing these budget highlights. Pipeline provides these highlights as part of an ongoing effort to share information regarding the biennium budget.

Fiscal Responsibility: Slowest-Growing Budget in 42 years

Over the two-year span of the budget, spending will increase a modest average of 2.2 percent annually. That's lower than any budget in the last 42 years. Eleven state agencies will absorb a funding cut over the biennium, and 20 others will make do without any additional funding. Making these tough choices allows us to target our resources to address our greatest needs and our greatest opportunities.

Health Care: Access to Health Care for Every Ohio Child

Governor Strickland's budget provides Medicaid insurance coverage for Ohio children whose parents make up to 300 percent of the federal poverty line, and the opportunity for parents above the limit to buy into coverage. We will provide access to affordable health coverage for every single child in Ohio. The budget also provides for an expansion of Medicaid eligibility for low-income parents and pregnant women, and an expansion of the PASSPORT program.

Higher Education: Zero Tuition Increase in '08; Less Than 3% Increase in '09

Today, the state spends less on instructional support for our universities than it did in 2001. Governor Strickland's budget proposes a Higher Education Compact in which state will increase funding for the basic instructional subsidy by 5 percent next year, and 2 percent the following year and public universities and colleges will agree to no tuition increase in 2008 and less than a 3 percent increase in 2009.

Education: State Contribution to Local Schools Will reach 54%

Under Governor Strickland's budget, the foundation funding per pupil amount will be increased by 3 percent in each of the next two years. Second, the budget will focus the state's aid formulas to put the emphasis on meeting students' needs. Third, over two years, the budget increases parity aid by 8 percent, and targets it to the 60 percent of districts most in need. Fourth, the budget will increase poverty-based assistance by 22 percent over the biennium. And the budget increases access to early learning opportunities by opening programs to those whose families make up to 200 percent of poverty. Coupled with the homestead property tax expansion, the state contribution to local schools will reach 54 percent.

Property Tax Relief: Average 25% Property Tax Cut for 1 out of 4 Ohio Homeowners

Governor Strickland's budget will securitize Ohio's tobacco settlement funds and use the GRF freed up through the \$ 5 billion proceeds to finance a 20-year expansion of Ohio's homestead exemption, as well as to complete the construction commitments of the Ohio School Facilities Commission. \$2.2 billion will be used to meet School Facilities commitments. The remaining \$2.8 billion will be used to generate \$250 million in savings on debt service each year for the next 20 years, which will be dedicated to expanding the Homestead Property Tax Exemption so that homeowners 65 and older and disabled homeowners won't pay taxes on the first \$25 thousand of the value of their homes -- a property tax cut for one in every four Ohio homeowners.

Increased Funding for ODMRDD: Budget Includes Funding for Martin Settlement and Other Priority Issues

The proposed budget allows additional funding, largely to accommodate increases related to the Martin v. Strickland Settlement (formerly Martin v. Taft), Waiver Administration, and Advocacy and Protective Services Inc. Additional funding in these three areas are key to providing needed services to thousands of individuals and families throughout the state. (See Budget Testimony, *Pipeline*, April 11, 2007, at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/pipeline/odmrdd.htm>)

In Future Issues of Pipeline ...

In addition to feature articles, and state and national news, you may expect to read profiles of ODMRDD key staff, and information to help you understand key issues.

Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

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Wednesday, November 14, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 22

In this issue closest to the observance of Thanksgiving Day, we highlight a few of the many things for which we, at the ODMRDD, are thankful ... and that includes all of you, our Pipeline readers.



During the course of the year, ODMRDD Director, John Martin, has shared many of his beliefs and experiences with Pipeline readers. Grounded in the concept of Servant Leadership, he shares this thought in the spirit of Thanksgiving ...

Thankful for the Opportunity to Serve Others

1. Director Martin Gives Thanks for Dedicated Support Staff

One of the memories that continues to haunt me is from my days as a special education teacher many years ago. Two of my students, David and Molly, often would come into my room after lunch, crying and ask, "Mr. Martin, why don't the other kids like me? Why doesn't anyone want to be my friend?"

A number of years ago our agency used a national consultant who referred to mental retardation as a "disease of loneliness." Indeed, it is a fitting description of the isolation so many feel each day.

Thanksgiving, like all holidays, is time for us to be with family -- a time that many of us look forward to. However, these holidays are often painful and difficult for people who are lonely and without friends. Instead of it being a time of celebration and happiness, it becomes a time when the absence of friends or family becomes accentuated.

Many of you who read this *Pipeline* are people who will give up at least some of your Thanksgiving holiday to provide services in one of many settings around the state. For that day, and probably many other days throughout the year, you become family and friend to a person who -- without your presence -- would be alone.

So, when I think about what I am thankful for, it is for each of you direct service workers, and for your commitment and caring. I am thankful for your sacrifice to be away from your family on these special days. May God bless each of you, and your work and home families.

Thanks for what you do on a regular basis, so the Davids and Mollies in our care don't feel alone, but, instead, feel like a member of a community.

-John L. Martin



Last month at the OPRA Conference, these comments were presented by Pat Cloppert, parent of an individual whose home was engulfed in flames, and whose caregiver perished as a result. The first Peggy Porter Award will be given at next year's OPRA Conference.

Thankful for the Dedication of Direct Service Staff

2. Peggy Porter Award, Introduction by Parent, Pat Cloppert

- Comments, reproduced as written, for the October OPRA Conference -

Thank you to the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) for this opportunity to share my thoughts on the initiation of the Peggy Porter Award.

It's a cliché to say "It's not a job, it's a calling," but that was exactly the attitude Peggy Porter had towards her care of my son, John, and Brenda Braithwaite's late son, Tony.

Peggy had been married and had been pregnant several times, once with twins, but she never carried to term. She told me that she decided that caring for our sons was part of God's plan for her. While this belief was certainly paramount in shaping her exceptional approach to caring for my son, there were other characteristics she possessed that also made her an outstanding caregiver. Peggy brought a number of notable strengths with her to this task.

Peggy had been the director of housekeeping at several large hotels before seeking what she thought might be a less stressful job environment. The keen observational skills that noticed an extra washcloth was missing also meant she picked up the sometimes subtle cues given by individuals with limited ability to communicate.

She Paid Attention to the Details

In the weeks before our sons moved into their Creative Housing home, she watched what Brenda and I fed them, asked where we bought their clothes, what they liked to wear, picked up on what was appropriate for various family functions, saw how we and when we prepared their meals. She accompanied us to medical appointments and then often took the young men by herself to doctors' appointments.

After they moved into their home, she alerted me and John's then pediatrician to the need for his hernia surgery. She noticed that the medication from his dermatologist had the same label, but that the pharmacy had given out pills with a different color – a mistake that meant an unintended dosage.

When John moved on to our family physician, he was very impressed by her involvement with John and Tony and told her what a great thing he thought she was doing for our young men.

A former professional seamstress, Peggy worked to decorate their home as if it were her own. She covered chairs and made draperies. She shopped for knickknacks and wall hangings. She told me when John's bedspread looked tired, although I strongly suspected that the "tired" part was that she was tired of looking at it!

We had different cultural backgrounds, and hers was a bit more direct. I came to value that, because when she gave you a compliment, you knew she really thought you deserved it. My husband Fred, Brenda, and I would sometimes go to Peggy's 3rd or 4th of July parties. We were made as welcome as the many family members and friends she always seemed to entertain. Her hospitality meant her house was the gathering place.

She Was A Superior Advocate

I'm an only child. After four or five years with our sons, when Peggy left me a message at home, my husband would say, "Your sister called." We developed quite a bond in our common focus.

Sometimes, she was a more ardent an advocate than I was. Sometimes she advocated to me. I have seen that in one or two providers since then, and have come to appreciate the kind of courage that it must take in that position to say in effect, "Have you thought this through?" "Are you sure your son is still the person who would want this done this way?" Sometimes it is merely a question of a misunderstanding between two people, but sometimes it is taking the risk of challenging a family's opinion in the interest of the consumer. I have come to respect that greatly. And,

" Even if we don't agree, the direct care provider who will advocate to me for my son can certainly be counted on to look out for him should the unanticipated happen. "

This litany of praiseworthy characteristics pales in the face of the circumstances that took Peggy from us. She gave that "last full measure of devotion" with courage that I don't know that I have and pray that might never be tested. If she wanted to get out of that house as the smoke and heat enveloped them, she certainly could have done so. She knew Tony's health was not good and John's coordination was very poor, so she stood her ground to protect them. What set her apart was not only her professionalism, but her love for those who couldn't defend or protect themselves.

Brenda and I had so incorporated her into our thoughts that for weeks afterward we would look at something or hear something and think we must tell Peggy, she would like that or find that amusing, or want to go see that. Now our sister sees whatever she wants to see and knows what we will never know while we are on Earth.

May this award inspire other direct care professionals to exemplify those qualities of compassion and caring above and beyond what could possibly be expected.

As her minister nephew eulogized his Aunt Peggy,

" Greater love hath no one than this: that she lay down her life for her friends. "

Thank you again -- *Pat Cloppert*



Submitted recently to the ODMRDD intranet (staff) website 'Inside MRDD' as a 'Kudos' for several staff members, this example of people working together to accomplish a person's life goal, speaks universally to the spirit of our organization's Mission ... continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.

Thankful for People Who Make our Mission a Reality

3. California - Bound, with a Little Help from His Friends

It's a perfect illustration of the ODMRDD Mission Statement.

Dustin W. and his dedicated team of professionals at the Gallipolis Developmental Center (GDC) worked hard to make a major life-goal a reality. Their success in doing so is just one example of how individuals, staff, and others in a person's circle-of-support, can work together to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities ... something for which Dustin, in this case, is very thankful.



Dustin, a 21 year old man residing at GDC, wanted to return to California, to be nearer to his family. He has many challenges and great potential. He also has a deep sense of love for his family but has been separated from them for more than six years. Dustin lived in California with his family until age 14, and then resided at adolescent facilities in Colorado and Ohio for the next six years before coming to live at the Gallipolis Developmental Center in May 2007.

On November 7, after five months of planning and progress, Dustin boarded a plane bound for California to reside at Porterville Developmental Center, near his family. Those instrumental in Dustin's successful transfer and relocation include Sarah Jordan, QMRP; Tom Kimball, Chief Psychologist; Sherry Sexton, Social Worker; Jewell Williams, Residential Supervisor; and all of Dustin's direct care staff and team members. That's quite a circle of support!

In addition, special thanks goes to Bob Hamilton of the *Lawrence County Board of MRDD*, and Dustin's *Advocacy and Protective Services Inc. (APSI)* Guardian, Joe King, both of whom accompanied him on his trip to California.

Before leaving, Dustin stated, "I'm real happy to be going home to California, but I'll miss all the good people I met here in Ohio - I think I learned some good stuff to help me stay on the right track - you guys really helped me out a lot."

PostScript: According to Eric Young, program director at GDC, Dustin has called a few times – at some rather odd hours due to the time differential! – to thank everyone again for helping him.



Artistic talent is a richly rewarding gift developing daily in many of the people we serve. We are thankful that these artists are offered opportunities to express themselves, and we appreciate the staff and organizations that foster them ...

Thankful for Artists and Their Opportunities

4. Support for Artists with Disabilities is Driven by Talent

Visitors to the ODMRDD website at www.mrdd.ohio.gov have learned to expect an array of pretty classy artwork on the homepage, courtesy of artists with disabilities throughout Ohio. This is just one way we can support and share the amazing work of hundreds of artists who participate in specialized arts programs, developing their individual talents.

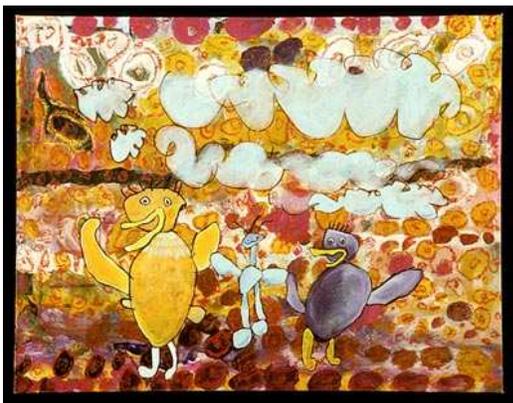
How sad would it be to have such talent with no outlet? How sad would it be to feel these feelings and not be allowed the opportunity share them? Yet this is as it was years ago, when many of the people with disabilities creating art today would have been thought incapable of such work, such imaginings. Can you imagine?

Can you imagine not seeing *Thanksgiving/Halloween* through the eyes of *Kim Wolfe*, of the Champaign County art program, *Art on Main*?



' Thanksgiving/Halloween ' ... by artist Kim Wolfe, Art on Main, Champaign County

Or, can you imagine not seeing Thanksgiving through the eyes of David Dewey, Athens County, whose *Three Birds and a Blue Guy* may be one of the cleverest takes ever on Thanksgiving and turkey-time?



' Two Birds and a Blue Guy ' ... by artist David Dewey, PassionWorks Studio, Athens Co.

From all of us at the ODMRDD, thank you, Kim, and Champaign County! And, thank you, David, and Athens County!

Hundreds -- maybe thousands -- of artists with disabilities throughout the state have been ready to share their talents for years, and we are thankful that the opportunities to do so are growing. If you click on <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/arts/artprgms.pdf> you will find a fairly comprehensive listing of such programs, and more new opportunities are cropping up all the time. Information about additional or new programs will be added any time we receive it. Simply email sherry.steinman@dmr.state.oh.us .

The ODMRDD also encourages all to support the various art and craft fairs in your communities, sponsored by County Boards of MRDD and others in the disability services arena. You will find much to be enjoyed, and, in many cases, you will have an opportunity to meet the interesting and talented artists who have created and shared their original works.

Look under the special topic area on the homepage at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/arts/odmrdd.htm> for more information.



The Franklin County Board of MRDD is just one example of a County Board that hosts a special event thanking people who make extra efforts to help people with disabilities live successfully in the community. It is important for all of us to remember to thank people for what they do on a regular basis ...

Thankful for Extra Efforts by Everyday People

5. Franklin County Board of MRDD Recognizes Several at Annual 'Community Star Awards'

Thanks to FCBMRDD Superintendent, Jed Morison, for sharing these excellent examples of people who do so much for which to be thankful:

Thanks to Virginia Ryder: A volunteer with FCBMRDD'S senior program (operated by Goodwill Columbus via a contract), Virginia is 89 years old, and takes a bus *every morning* to assist clients who are senior citizens. *We are thankful for volunteers like Virginia!*

Thanks to Ted and Jean Williams: Ted and Jean are parent advocates, who donated their home to Creative Housing Inc., and initiated a new supported living arrangement where they will live in a connected yet separate apartment, and their son and two other individuals will live in the existing house, located in Clintonville. Jean and Ted also have been long-time supportive parents in many other ways. *We are thankful for parents like the Williams'!*

Thanks to Bruce Burns: FCBMRDD Board Member and parent of a son who passed away several years ago, Bruce was recognized for his excellent leadership and 12 years of service to the Franklin County community. *We are thankful for board members like Bruce Burns!*

Thanks to Michael Rigo: Michael works at Home Depot, sharing his expertise in the tool department. He is also an honorary police officer with the Worthington Police Department. Michael knows the value of hard work and helping others. *We are thankful for the people we serve who take opportunities for success and make them excellent examples for others.*

In addition to Virginia, Ted, Jean, Bruce, and Michael, several other individuals, staff, and organizations were recognized at the recent Community Star Awards event, with nearly 800 people attending. ODMRDD Director, John Martin, also attended and helped to present the awards to all recipients.

This issue of Pipeline is a celebration of what Webster's Dictionary describes as the original meaning of Thanksgiving – being thankful for what one has, and the bounty of the year. We would like very much to hear from you, our *Pipeline* readers, regarding what you are thankful for. Please contact us with your thoughts on this at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us and we will share them with readers of 'MRDD Today' at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/today/odmrdd.htm> beginning next week.



Reminder

Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

Questions? Comments? Pipeline is a publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and is distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about Pipeline newsletter at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us, or contact Robert Jennings at robert.jennings@dmr.state.oh.us, phone (614) 644-0263.

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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



Pipeline will be published at least twice monthly.

Visit us at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

Wednesday, October 17, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 20

We hope you enjoy Pipeline, and will share your thoughts with us at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us

In this issue –

- 1. Dan Housepian Earns PAR Lifetime Achievement Award
- 2. Family Advisory Council (FAC) -- The Movers and Shakers
- 3. Key Staff Profile, Kevin Aldridge, Assistant Deputy Director, SITA
- 4. Reminders: Toll-Free Hotline; October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

1. Dan Housepian Earns PAR Lifetime Achievement Award

PAR, formerly known as the Professional Association for Retardation, provides professional training for those who serve people with disabilities.



“ It’s one of those things that acts as a milestone in your life, and for me it is like a halfway mark. I am very much looking forward to the second half of the game. ”

- Dan Housepian

“He likes to combine personal insight, humor, and role-play demonstrations during his training sessions. Most people comment on the training style as ‘energetic and real’. No one ever falls asleep in his sessions – ever!” That’s what they say about Dan Housepian, ODMRDD Coordinator of Developmental Center Services, and recent recipient of a PAR Lifetime Achievement Award.

At the 39th Annual PAR Convention October 2, the award was presented to Dan as an individual who has . . . spent a great deal of his life working in the field of MRDD; has made a positive impact on individuals with developmental disabilities; and, is a leader. Dan has devoted more than 30 years of his life to the MRDD arena, and in his many years of experience he has assisted countless others in doing the same.

Dan has served as a superintendent of the Northwest Developmental Center since 1999 and also currently serves as ODMRDD Coordinator of Developmental Services, working with Assistant Deputy Director, Ginnie Whisman. She remarks, "I cannot think of one person more deserving of this award than Dan. It is an honor and privilege to work with such a caring and dedicated professional."

The distinction from PAR also notes that Dan developed the proven programs known as, 'Right Way Training,' 'Right Way Leadership,' and 'Right Way Crisis Prevention/Right on Time.' He has presented at PAR conferences for more than 10 years as an Encore Presenter, and, at the 2007 convention, again received rave reviews.

When asked about his reaction to being presented a PAR Lifetime Achievement Award, Dan responded, "Well, of course I'm very excited about it. It's one of those things that acts as a milestone in your life, and for me it is like a halfway mark. I am very much looking forward to the second half of the game."

Past recipients of the prestigious PAR award include Kim Linkinhoker, Pat Keel, Mary Mihelcic-Jones, Virginia Mitchell, Bob Morgan and Cheryl Phipps.

Congratulations, Dan!

" Dan is self-less and dedicated in his service. He has a deep respect for the individuals and the families our system supports. At the heart of his work is an abiding understanding that what gives our service purpose is how well we work to improve the quality of life by supporting people's choices as they pursue their hopes, dreams, and fullest potential. Mr. Housepian is truly a role model for us all." – Director John Martin



2. Family Advisory Council (FAC) – The Movers and Shakers

October 16 Meeting Gives Future Committee Feedback on Waiting Lists, SSA's and More



Individuals and families who comprise the FAC provide information to policy makers who impact direct services. It is important that policy makers are informed of issues/concerns that are statewide. The FAC provides a forum for direct dialogue and the exchange of information about programs, services, and options available to families who have members with disabilities.

Chris Clayton, center, participated thoughtfully and enthusiastically in the day's discussion, at one point commenting, "Director Martin, about these waiting lists – if you sign up for them, I think you

need to be evaluated to see if you really need the services. You shouldn't be taking up space on a list for someone else who really needs it." - Chris Clayton



The Council's family network reaches as many other families in Ohio as possible. The FAC has regular access to Department leaders who are committed to hearing what families think. On October 16, the meeting room at the Columbus Developmental Center was packed wall-to-wall with family members and advocates sharing their perspectives on several topics.

For example, Ernie Strickland, (below left, in yellow jacket) made his belief clear that when it comes to working with Service and Support Administrators (SSA's)...

" What we need is stability. We need stability in our SSA's so they are there when we need them. When we turn around and need to have help with something or get information, they are there. That's what we need."
- Ernie Strickland



" There are pluses and minuses to any decision about the management of waiting lists. The main thing is that the system in Ohio needs to get caught up with the 25,000 or so people who are already on the list – already waiting for services. - Bob Mathews

Behind Ernie, gesturing, is Bob Mathews, who added his response to the question of "Waiting Lists – Should priority categories be done away with and should we go with a first-come-first-served system?" posed by Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director for Special Projects. Bob's perspective is as a parent advocate and as an employee of Tuscarawas County MRDD.

Family Advisory Council members have long known that they are 'movers and shakers' in the MRDD system, and they were certainly a-movin' and a-shakin' on October 16. Peggy Martin, ODMRDD's Family Advocate, welcomed the roomful of participants, and introduced a packed agenda to a "packed house" with nearly fifty consumers and families who were the focus of

attention. The agenda included an open discussion on the dual subjects of Waiting Lists, and Improving the Role of the Service and Support Administrator.

ODMRDD Deputy Director, Patrick Lanahan, posed four questions to the group, and there was no shortage of responses, ideas, and challenges discussed. ODMRDD Futures Committee 'Accessing Services and Supports Subcommittee' members also attended this portion of the FAC meeting to learn first-hand from the attendees. Family Advisory Council members were not shy about sharing their views, and that's the way the Futures Committee likes it. Futures Subcommittee members shared their comments about how useful the session was for them. At one point there were 81 people in the capacity crowd, and nearly all offered an opinion on one subject or another.

" My concern about SSA's is that some are not advocates for the clients, but are there for the system, just doing the paperwork. I want a case manager – someone who will work for my son, not just for the system. " - Chuck Beatty

Other parents and advocates noted the need for perseverance, and the responsibility of everyone in the system to work hard at improving how it works. One parent noted,

" The parent can't be shy. You have to keep calling and keep digging for information."

By a show of hands, many individuals and families expressed their satisfaction with their Service and Support Administrators, while also offering suggestions for improvements.

Patrick Lanahan observed, "I'm really pleased with the amount of input we received today, and with the number of people who took their valuable time to come here and have this conversation with us. This is how we learn to make good policy choices, based on hearing first-hand what people tell us they need and want our system to do."

The meeting also included an SSA Director's Panel representing several different counties, discussing the role of the SSA, and managing waiting lists. Counties presenting their various perspectives included Cuyahoga, Union, Hamilton, Vinton, and Medina.

Following the panel was an informal question and answer opportunity with ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin. This is a regular standing agenda item for the FAC. Director Martin made sure that each inquiry was met with as much information as possible. For example, when one family member asked, "What will happen when the Futures Committee work is done? How will we know it will change anything?" Director Martin responded, "You can be assured that we are doing this for a reason. We're committed to looking at the Committee's recommendations, and it will become our Department's workplan for the next three years."

Certain themes threaded their ways through the meeting, and will be addressed either within the Futures Committee framework, or as a function of one of the department's divisions. Among the themes were the need for specific and structured training and mentoring opportunities for SSA's, statewide, and the need for parents and self-advocates to be well informed and pro-active when it comes to getting the services they want and need.

While there are no easy answers to how all of this can be accomplished, meetings such as this one will help to assure that solutions to challenges and issues are arrived at by listening to and learning from the people who deal with those challenges and issues every day – the individuals and families who are the movers and shakers in the MRDD arena. Meeting participant, Chris Clayton shared this important thought ...

“ One thing I want to say to you all, and I say this from the heart – is that if you’re a parent of a child with a disability, or a person with a disability yourself, I commend you for sticking with it. You need to stick with it. Thank you. ” - Chris Clayton

The contact person for the Family Advisory Council is Peggy Martin. She may be reached via email at peggy.martin@dmr.state.oh.us; by phone at (614) 466-8706, or by writing to her at ODMRDD, Division of Constituent Services, 1810 Sullivant Ave., Columbus, OH 43223.



3. Key Staff Profile

Kevin Aldridge, Assistant Deputy Director, Systems Innovation and Technical Assistance (SITA)



“We’re the front door to the organization for many people,” explains Kevin Aldridge, as he describes the functions of SITA – one of the areas under the larger ODMRDD umbrella of Community Services. “We are the front door for questions from County Boards, service providers, and other service partners in the MRDD arena. We serve as a kind of overall Help Desk.”

Simple answers to complicated questions come easily to Kevin ... and that’s a good thing.

He explains further that the 30 employees who report to him include nine Regional Consultants (<https://odmrdd.state.oh.us/counties/sita.htm>) and a range of employees who specialize in everything from Early Intervention Services to Employment Opportunities for people with disabilities. Under SITA you will find functions that provide opportunities to build stronger organizations through technical assistance, as well as help with conflict resolution and problem-solving.

Kevin joined the ODMRDD at the end of April, and was previously employed with Dungarvin, a provider. He notes that his major interest in the operation of SITA is, “... Ensuring that the people we serve are the primary focus in all we do.”

He adds that a secondary and also very important focus is ...”Assisting as much as we can with local administration of services through County Boards of MRDD and the provider community, to make services as strong and as consistent as possible. I am really looking forward to what the Futures Committee recommends in the coming months, and am confident that their recommendations will help us to focus on areas that will most greatly benefit the people we serve.”

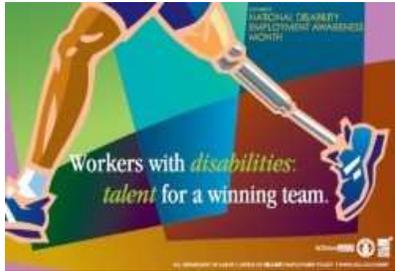
“ I am really looking forward to what the Futures Committee recommends in the coming months, and am confident that their recommendations will help us to focus on areas that will most greatly benefit the people we serve. ”

Deputy Director for Community Services, Michael Rench, praises Kevin's leadership style and explains, "Kevin has brought a wealth of experience and common sense to his role in leading SITA. He is quickly becoming the lead consultant when it comes to assisting the field, and we are glad he is on the team."



4. Reminders

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month



As sponsors of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) notes that this year's theme is 'Workers with Disabilities: Talent for a Winning Team.' The [2007 poster](#), (left) is available at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/> and may be used in connection with events that foster employment opportunities for workers with disabilities.

Learn more at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/awareness-month/month.htm>

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What's New at www.mrdd.ohio.gov?



Planning for the Future

Click on the topic areas listed to the left of the artwork to 'learn more about' special topics. The *ODMRDD Futures Committee* is the most recent Special Topic area to be added, and takes you to a 'sub-site' devoted only to the activities of this Committee. Information in this area is constantly updated, and includes a great deal of new information this month.



Check Out 'MRDD Today' at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

Please see 'MRDD Today' (click on the green and yellow icon by that name) for more information and articles including feature stories from around the state.

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Wednesday, October 31, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 21

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In this issue –

- 1. Remembering an Important Anniversary
- 2. Ohio Provider Resource Assn. (OPRA) Fall Conference
- 3. The Road to Freedom, Paved by Voting (Includes Nov. 6 MRDD Issues)
- 4. Homestead Exemption Property Tax Relief Proves Popular
- 5. Campaign Aims to Reduce Stigma for Addiction, Mental Illness
- 6. Briefly: Toll-Free Hotline; National Disability Employment Awareness Month Ends

Remembering An Important Anniversary

1. Senate Bill 169 Created County Boards of MRDD

October 25 was the 40th anniversary of Senate Bill 169, which established County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities in each county in Ohio. In 1967, SB 169 spelled out the formation of 88 County Boards of MRDD, and thus, the Boards were for years known as ‘169 Boards’.

According to ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, “This legislation has enabled services to evolve in unique and creative ways for the benefit of Ohio’s citizens with disabilities. It seems important that we take this opportunity to reflect on those who built this system and worked tirelessly to provide leadership and direction over the past 40 years.” He adds,

“ I am sure much of the work in the early days was slow and difficult; yet it was the perseverance, vision, and commitment that built the base from which we continue to build on today. ”



Forty years later, the Ohio MRDD service delivery system’s annual budget is approximately \$2.5 billion to fund services for more than 80,000 individuals with developmental disabilities

and their families. County Boards are the most significant funding source for these services, and collectively, raise approximately \$800 million annually through local property tax levies.

The ODMRDD salutes the staff at all 88 County Boards of MRDD, and acknowledges their many contributions to helping people with disabilities be as successful as possible in their communities.

Speaking of which, Pipeline shares the information below, just received:

OACBMRDD Annual Convention Art and Product Show and Sale
Hilton at Easton Town Center
December 5, 2007 4:30 – 6:30 PM

This year's Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD (OACBMRDD) annual convention will include an opportunity for individuals with disabilities to showcase and sell artwork and/or products that they have created. This will take place on the first day of the convention.

If you know of interested individuals or businesses that would like to participate, please contact Kim Linkinhoker at 614-431-0616 or email klinkinhoker@oacbmrdd.org.

2. Ohio Provider Resource Assn. (OPRA) Fall Conference Covers Topics from Ethics to Safety, and Beyond



Judy Leasure discusses the film documentary, 'Lest We Forget'.

“From behind the walls -- to the long journey home -- heard now in their own voices, history as it can be told only by those involved in the last years of institutionalization of those labeled mentally retarded ...”

That was the intro to Program #17 in the OPRA Conference guide, and those who chose to attend left looking for a tissue to dab their eyes, and with a resolve to remember how far we've come in that journey.

Judy Leasure, Executive Producer/Director of the “Lest We Forget,” documentary, represented Partners for Community Living in Dayton, Ohio, and one of 28 interesting venues offered during the October 30-31 conference.

ODMRDD Director, John Martin, also was on the docket, providing a ‘State of the State’ address, punctuated by his now-legendary anecdotes that -- while alluding to something about the MRDD system -- begin as simple homespun stories, until the last minute, when you arrive at the significant point he so simply states. “Somehow we got from a story about fixing a flat tire on his car to addressing waiting lists,” noted one conference attendee. He added, “In the end, he made his point quite memorably, and it was a lot more interesting than just talking about the numbers.”

OPRA's Spring Conference is scheduled for March 19-20 at the same location -- Embassy Suites in Dublin, Ohio.

3. The Road to Freedom, Paved by Voting



The Road to Freedom Bus is touring the United States, promoting the Americans with Disabilities Act and disability rights, and featuring The Road to Freedom Bus Presentation. The presentation includes displays of disability history; photos by Tom Olin; remarks by community leaders; voting information and resources; refreshments ... and much more!

All events are part of the Ohio Disability Vote Coalition's (ODVC) statewide Get Out the Vote activities in October to encourage people with disabilities, their families and friends to VOTE.

The ODVC launched its "Feel the Power of the Disability Vote" celebration in August at the Ohio Statehouse Atrium. The coalition, which is a collaboration of some 30 organizations from throughout the state, encourages Ohioans with disabilities to register and vote so that their voices are heard as a stronger and more effective voting bloc.

Sue Hetrick, director of advocacy and public policy for the Ability Center of Greater Toledo, and a coordinator of ODVC, explains why a coalition is needed. "People with disabilities represent the largest minority in this country, and they vote with the least frequency," she said. "People who are elected are interested in staying in office, so they pay attention to the people who put them there (voted for them). We can develop numbers and we can develop a voting strength." She added,

" We are at the very beginning of a very important coalition movement. "

People with disabilities and those who work with them are encouraged to vote on November 6, and to report any barriers to their voting experience to the Secretary of State's Office -- phone 614.466.2655, or toll free, 877.767.6446.

For more information, phone Sue Hetrick at 614.575.8055; email shetrick@abilitycenter.org; or, visit the website at <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/index.aspx>

*Speaking of voting, here's what's on the ballot in Ohio's MRDD arena on November 6.
A Pipeline Extra will report results of the election day on November 7.*

- Ohio's MRDD Issues on Election Day, Nov. 6 -

Voters in nine Ohio counties will decide on November 6 whether or not to support MRDD issues that help maintain facilities and support critical programs and services, including the operation of schools, sheltered workshops, training centers and residential facilities.

For example, after a one-year hiatus following its first levy passage in 12 attempts, the Morrow County Board of MRDD will ask voters to support a 1.31 mill renewal for 5 years. If passed, the owner of a \$100,000 home would be assessed \$41.27 per year.

The board has chosen the theme “*Reach out – and make a difference*” adapted from the story *The Star Thrower* by Loren Eiseley. The moral of the story is that whatever effort it takes to make a difference in just one life, it is worth it.

Maggie Clark, Adult Basic Education Manager for the board, commented that the *Reach out—and make a difference* theme has been a positive one, and well-received in the community.

On the far eastern part of the state, Columbiana County is seeking a 2.5 mill additional levy for 10 years. If approved, the new levy would generate \$3.5 million per year and cost the owner of a \$100,000 home an estimated \$76 per year.

Board Superintendent, Bill Devon, believes that if people could see what the board does on a daily basis, there would be no question about the need for passage of the levy. “Right now it’s just too close to call,” said Devon. “I’m just hoping for warm weather and a large voter turnout so we have a better chance of getting this issue passed,” he said.

Devon went on to say that if the ballot fails, the board may have to consider eliminating school services for children ages 6 to 22 years old.

The full slate of MRDD Levies on November 6 are:

Clermont County seeks a .75 mill renewal for 5 years.

Clinton County seeks a 1.5 mill replacement.

Columbiana County seeks a 2.5 mill additional for 10 years.

Defiance County seeks a .85 mill replacement for 5 years.

Montgomery County seeks a 5.21 combined human services replacement.

Morrow County seeks a 1.31 mills renewal for 5 years.

Muskingham County seeks a 3 mill replacement.

Paulding County seeks a 1.4 mill renewal.

Preble County seeks 1 mill additional.

Information obtained from the Ohio Secretary of State website at: <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/>



4. Homestead Exemption Property Tax Relief Proves Popular

Governor Ted Strickland has announced that about 566,000 additional homeowners applied for the newly-expanded homestead exemption during a special sign-up period earlier this year from July 2 to October 1.

The result is that as many as 788,000 homeowners stand to receive hundreds of dollars worth of property tax relief on bills payable next year. This figure includes about 222,000 homeowners who were already enrolled under the old homestead exemption law and did not need to reapply.

Strickland noted, "County auditors and state officials have done a tremendous job reaching out to Ohio's seniors and educating them about this additional tax relief available to them." He added,

"The expansion of the homestead exemption offers meaningful tax relief for every senior citizen and permanently disabled homeowner in Ohio."



The figures, based on an October 12 survey of county auditors throughout Ohio, show that roughly 97 percent of the homeowners thought to be eligible for the newly-expanded homestead exemption are in line to receive it. The department had estimated that about 775,000 senior citizens would be eligible as well as an additional 40,000 permanently and totally disabled Ohioans, for a total of 815,000.

The legislation generally allows all senior citizens and permanently and totally disabled Ohioans, regardless of income, to exempt \$25,000 of the market value of the home they owned and lived in on January 1 from property taxes. The exact amount of savings from the exemption will vary from community to community, based on local tax rates. On average across Ohio, homeowners enrolled for the homestead exemption are expected to save about \$400 next year.

Homeowners who missed the deadline to have the homestead exemption applied to their 2007 property tax bills (payable in 2008) will get a second opportunity to sign up during the normal enrollment period, which will begin January 8, 2008, and end June 2, 2008.

For these late sign-ups, county treasurers will either apply the full value of the 2007 exemption to the second-half property tax bill or award it in the form of a refund.

A county-by-county summary of the number of homeowners who have applied for the homestead exemption is available at:

http://tax.ohio.gov/divisions/communications/documents/homestead_summary.pdf

Note: The State of Ohio received net proceeds of \$5.05 billion on October 29 as a result of the tobacco securitization authorized in the FY 2008-2009 Executive Budget. This was the largest tobacco bond sale in history. The tobacco securitization will allow approximately 566,000 additional people to receive the Homestead Tax Exemption.



5. Campaign Aims to Reduce Stigma for Addiction, Mental Illness

The ODMRDD serves many people who have a dual diagnosis of mental retardation and mental illness or addiction issues. Improving the public's perception of people who have these issues is of great importance to their opportunities for successful lives in the community. We hope you'll ...



The Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS) this week launched the *"Think Outside the Stigma"* campaign as part of a Legislative Day event at the Ohio Statehouse. The awareness campaign is aimed at changing the negative perceptions associated with mental illness and drug addiction and is intended to encourage those suffering in silence to undergo treatment, get well, and contribute to society.

Says ODADAS Director, Angela Cornelius, "The bottom line is treatment works, people recover, and Ohioans are worth the investment." No one chooses to have diabetes, heart disease or cancer, she said in a written statement. And they don't choose addiction or mental illness, either." She adds,

"Alcohol and other drug addictions and mental illnesses are treatable, and can affect anyone."

Former Rhode Island State Senator Tom Coderre, a spokesperson for the organization, Faces & Voices of Recovery, joined Ohio legislators and a member of Governor Ted Strickland's Cabinet in rolling out the key messages that will be used in conjunction with the "Think Outside the Stigma" campaign. They are:

- Alcohol and other drug addictions and mental illnesses are brain diseases.
- Alcohol and other drug addictions and mental illnesses can affect anyone.
- Alcohol and other drug addictions and mental illnesses are treatable.
- Individuals with brain diseases should not be discriminated against.

During the event, four Ohio legislators also received recognition from the Ohio Citizen Advocates for Chemical Dependency Prevention and Treatment organization for their efforts in reducing the stigma associated with these often misunderstood diseases. They are: State Senator Ray Miller (D-Columbus), State Representative Ted Celeste (D-Grandview Heights), State Senator John Carey (R-Wellston), and State Representative Jim Carmichael (R-Wooster).

For more information on the "Think Outside the Stigma Campaign", visit the ODADAS website at <http://www.odadas.state.oh.us>



6. Briefly ...

National Disability Employment Awareness Month Ends



Today is the last day of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The ODMRDD salutes the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission's (RSC) many celebration events, and this year's theme, 'Workers with Disabilities: Talent for a Winning Team.'

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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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Wednesday, October 3, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 19

We hope you enjoy Pipeline, and will share your thoughts with us at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us

In this issue –

- 1. RSC Hosts National Disability Employment Month Celebration
- 2. September Offered Opportunities for People with Disabilities to Prepare for Emergencies
- 3. Funds Released to Improve Housing Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
- 4. ‘Money Follows the Person’ Initiative Re-Named HOME Choice
- 5. What’s New at www.mrdd.ohio.gov?
- 6. Reminders: Ohio Sibs Conference, October 12 & 13; ODMRDD Toll-Free Hotline

1. October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month RSC Kickoff Spotlights Workforce Talent

The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) partners with individuals with disabilities to achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes. Created by the Ohio Legislature in 1970, the seven-member commission is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.



The Ohio Statehouse Atrium was an ideal accessible venue for the RSC celebration of *National Disability Employment Awareness Month*. Sponsored by the organization’s Employer Advisory Committee and Consumer Advisory Council, the event’s theme, ‘*Workers with Disabilities: Talent for a Winning Team*,’ was on display in print, via audio, and available in other inclusive and visual formats.

Opening remarks by RSC’s James Clinkscale reinforced the theme and reminded attendees that while RSC has assisted nearly 8500 Ohioans with disabilities in securing employment, that still means that about 70% of the available pool of talent in the overall disability community is unemployed. He noted,

“This segment of the workforce is made up of people who refuse to be defined by a prefix. They refuse to be defined by the ‘dis’ in disability.”

Clinkscale also introduced several examples of building Ohio’s workforce through teamwork, including employer/employee partnerships throughout the state. Presenters and speakers

during the kickoff event included Ohio Lt. Governor and Director of Development, *Lee Fischer*; State Senator *Steve Stivers*; and RSC Executive Director, *John Connelly*. Connelly noted that last year alone, \$3.6 billion was earned, nationally, by people with disabilities who entered the workforce.

Following the event was the introduction and passage of a resolution ([SCR 17](#)) to declare October as "Disability Employment Awareness Month." After the adoption of Sen. Stivers's resolution, Governor Ted Strickland and Lt. Governor Lee Fisher issued a proclamation to do the same.

The ODMRDD supports National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities and will post information related to these efforts at www.mrdd.ohio.gov



The [2007 National Disability Employment Awareness Month poster](#), is now available at <http://www.dol.gov/odep/> and may be used during the year in connection with related events that foster employment opportunities for workers with disabilities.



2. September Offered Opportunities for People with Disabilities to Prepare for Emergencies

The ODMRDD strongly supported National Preparedness Month (September) efforts, focusing on what we can do to assist people with disabilities to be better prepared for emergency situations. Free trainings were held in each of the six ODMRDD Regions throughout the state, reaching people receiving MRDD services, their providers, and related staff.

In addition to instructional videos and printed presentation materials, Emergency Preparedness Kits were brought to each meeting for participants to review contents and discuss how they might personalize their kit to include specific items that they may need in an emergency. The basic kits were assembled by the Vinton County Board of MRDD/Vinton Industries, Inc. and are available for ordering by contacting tami@vintonmrdd.com.



Be Prepared! Vinton County Preparedness Kit team members shown here are: (left to right) Tammy Stapleton, Habilitation Specialist; Alva Mount, Stacker; Amber Radune, Quality Assurance; Tonya Brickles, Assembly; Jenessa Meadows, Assembly.

During a presentation held in Region 5, at Mount Vernon Developmental Center, ODMRDD Review Manager, Ann Weisent, explained,

“You might even think about making two of these for yourself. One for your basement or safe-area in your home, and the second to keep in a vehicle you would be using in the event of an evacuation.”

The ‘*Ready*’ campaign promotes activities that encourage individuals to have an *emergency supply kit*, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different threats that may affect them, as well as take steps to get trained and engaged in community preparedness and response efforts.

ODMRDD’s overall efforts in reaching people with disabilities with preparedness information targeted to their needs has been highlighted on the national Department of Homeland Security (DHS) weblog at <http://www.ready.gov/america/npm07/index.html> and will be featured in the winter issue of *Pipeline Quarterly*, to be published in November/December. To request free materials from DHS, visit www.ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY.



3. Funds Released to Improve Housing Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

A total of \$14.5 million has been released to improve housing opportunities for adults with mental retardation and developmental disabilities across Ohio.

Specifically, more than \$6.3 million will be used to help reimburse counties for the purchase of housing for adults with developmental disabilities. In July 2005, as part of the ODMRDD community capital assistance housing program, 55 counties in Ohio applied and were approved for financial assistance to expand housing options for adults with disabilities in their communities. The program calls for each of the 55 counties to receive 75 percent of the average cost of a home in that county.

In addition, the Controlling Board approved the release of more than \$8.1 million to assist counties with the acquisition and/or renovation of property that will house adults with developmental disabilities who are receiving an Individual Options (IO) waiver as part of the *Martin v. Strickland* settlement. An IO waiver is a home and community-based Medicaid-funded waiver that provides federal reimbursement for certain Medicaid services in non-institutional settings.

In October 2006, a settlement was reached in the federal class action case of *Martin v. Strickland*, which sought to give Ohioans with developmental disabilities the option of receiving care in a home-based setting as opposed to a traditional institutional setting. Under the settlement, the state is funding an additional 1,500 IO waivers over the next two fiscal years for individuals who are currently in an institution and choose to move, or who are at risk of being institutionalized but who would choose to be served in a community setting.

Michael Rench, ODMRDD Deputy Director, Community Services, notes, “Safe, affordable, and accessible housing is a growing need for Ohio citizens with disabilities. This 14.5 million dollars is an investment in creating a pool of decent housing suited to the needs of these Ohioans. Many of these citizens will be moving out of institutions and into homes in the community for the first time in their adult life. This is not only an investment in housing but also in building stronger local communities.”



“ This is not only an investment in housing, but also in building stronger local communities. ”



4. ‘Money Follows the Person’ Initiative Re-Named HOME Choice

In January 2007 Ohio was one of 17 states awarded funding for the ‘Money Follows the Person’ (MFP) demonstration project enacted by Congress as part of the Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005. Ohio is expected to receive up to \$100 million in enhanced federal matching funds over five years. The funds will be used to relocate approximately 2200 seniors and individuals with disabilities from institutions to home and community-based settings, and to help Ohio balance its long-term service and support structure.

Following the award, Ohio established workgroups to identify issues, develop recommendations, and design processes to implement the project. The Consumer Outreach and Identification (COI) workgroup decided that the initiative would benefit from a specific identification which has consistent recognition separate from MFP.

“The initiative’s name must accurately reflect the intent behind ‘balancing the system’ by expanding choice,” said Susan McKinley, Consumer Relations Coordinator with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and COI subcommittee facilitator. “Certainly, Money Follows the Person is not widely identified with transitioning persons from long-term care into the community,” she added.

For that reason, the brand name, *HOME Choice – Helping Ohioans Move, Expanding Choice* was selected, and will be used to identify the MFP initiative in all future references.

In addition, a HOME Choice logo was developed that features those words and a house with an open, welcoming door.



For more information about HOME Choice, visit
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/OHP/infodata/MFPGrant/info.stm>



5. What's New at www.mrdd.ohio.gov?



Click on this icon for updated news briefs



'No Place like Home' artwork introduced www.mrdd.ohio.gov on launch day, July 12, '06



'Sunny' pops up to assist in your web surfing. If all else fails, contact us at webmaster@odmrdd.state.oh.us

Mission

Launched in July 2006, the mission of the ODMRDD website is, "To create and maintain an easy-to use and accessible website that is a primary vehicle for the ODMRDD to communicate effectively with the MRDD community."

While we strive to make sure that this mission is apparent every day to every user, we also know the site contains a lot of information to be discovered and digested. Briefly, here are a few things to look for:

Homepage

Click on the topic areas listed to the left of the artwork to 'learn more about' special topics. The *ODMRDD Futures Committee* is the most recent Special Topic area to be added, and takes you to a 'sub-site' devoted only to the activities of this Committee. Information in this area is constantly updated.

At the top of the homepage screen, click on *About Us* and you will find our *Table of Organization* at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/about/organization.htm> and other helpful information. Also at the top of the homepage, under *Contacts*, look for a comprehensive listing at <http://mail.mr.state.oh.us/cdo/>

In addition, a helpful *Glossary* of often-used acronyms is located at the bottom of the homepage, at http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/apps/internet/WDS/WDS_Glossary.aspx

More website information in a future Pipeline.



6. Reminders

Ohio Adult Siblings Conference October 12 & 13



OHIO SIBS

SIBS
SPECIAL INITIATIVES BY BROTHERS & SISTERS

The Seventh Annual Ohio Adult Siblings Conference is at the Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel, October 12 and 13, 2007. Please visit www.ohiosibs.com for more information or e-mail Rachel Straus at straus.9@osu.edu or Tom Fish at fish.1@osu.edu.

Toll-Free Hotline for Reporting Abuse, Neglect, and other Possible Major Unusual Incidents (MUIs)



The ODMRDD toll-free hotline number for reporting abuse/neglect and other MUIs is **1-866-313-MRDD (6733)**. Please note that MUIs are to be reported to the local County Board of MRDD, however, it is understood that there may be times an individual, staff member, or family member may feel it is a conflict -- or that, potentially, a County Board may be involved in the allegation. In those instances it is important to remember that the hotline number exists, and is to be used for reporting concerns in these situations.



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Monday, February 26, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 3

We have revamped 'Visions' electronic newsletter to provide a more frequent and consistent flow of information from the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) to you, and back again. If a portable digital file (pdf) of Pipeline is attached to this email, please open it to enjoy accompanying photos and other graphics in a more traditional newsletter format. We hope you will enjoy the new Pipeline, and share your thoughts with us at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us

In this issue

- 1. Quality Initiative Update
- 2. Special Needs Program, Delaware County's Liberty Township
- 3. Waiver Transition, Frequently-Asked Questions
- 4. MRDD Awareness Month an Opportunity to Focus on What We Can Do

1. Quality Initiative Update

... Direction Under New Administration Further Defined ...

We share the following next steps in the ODMRDD Quality initiative to provide an update on its direction under the new Administration.

The ODMRDD Department of Community Services is currently reviewing the Quality initiative to determine the most effective use of available resources, and move forward with the original intent of the Real Choice Systems Change (RCSC) Research and Demonstration Grant. The decision also has been made to suspend certain activities related to the quality initiative, and redirect energies to accomplish specific outcomes, as outlined in the workplan below.

In this process, the Department will develop an analytical infrastructure using computer-based tools to facilitate ODMRDD's collection, organization, and analysis of data, prior to moving on to other activities.

According to Michael Rench, Deputy Director, Community Services, "We are committed to the overall concept of quality, and want to be sure our focus is on measures that matter most to citizens with disabilities and those who support them. To that end, we will ask our stakeholders to guide us in the next steps."

"We want to be sure our focus is on measures that matter most to citizens with disabilities and those who support them."

Plans will progress in conjunction with stakeholders' input, and the Department will provide information to the field as developments occur.

If you have specific questions that are not answered by the information in the workplan below, please contact leslie.minnich@dmr.state.oh.us.

	Task	Responsible	Estimated Timeline
1	Finalize Framework	ODMRDD	2/26/07
2	Identify ODMRDD data sources for use (select Performance Measures that for which data currently exists in CART)	ODMRDD	2/26/07
3	Perform detailed data mapping	ODMRDD	2/28/07
4	Populate and validate data warehouse and data marts	ODMRDD	3/23/07
5	Develop Cognos cubes and reports	ODMRDD	4/13/07
6	Schedule and conduct Cognos training for five demonstration counties	ODMRDD	4/20/07
7	User testing	Demonstration Counties	5/4/07
8	Modification feedback and recommendations	Demonstration Counties	5/4/07
9	Adjust Cognos cubes and reports	ODMRDD	5/28/07
10	Conduct second training and group feedback session with five demonstration counties	ODMRDD	6/8/07
11	User testing	Demonstration Counties	6/29/07
12	Modification feedback and recommendations	Demonstration Counties	6/29/07
13	Update QIMS Performance Measure implementation plan and proceed with Phase II.	ODMRDD	7/16/07
14	Evaluate "next steps", future system needs	ODMRDD, Demonstration Counties, QMAC	7/27/07

2. Special Needs Program, Liberty Township ... Addresses Specific Safety Issues ...

ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, recently visited Delaware County, and was made aware of this exciting program, designed to improve safety issues for people in that community who may need special attention during emergencies. Thanks to Director Martin for sharing this information with Pipeline.

Emergency Medical Service providers in southern Delaware County's Liberty Township have found a unique way to serve the special safety needs of residents in this community.

The Special Needs Program was developed to assist emergency responders with vital information regarding citizens who have conditions that require special assistance from the medical community, including serious conditions and illnesses, ambulatory issues, etc. According to Lt. William Piwtorak of the Liberty Township Fire Dept., people who qualify for the program include:

- Any child or adult who has an illness or condition that requires medical specialists to be involved for an extended period of time
- Any child or adult who is non-ambulatory and needs assistance for mobility purposes.

Liberty Township residents are encouraged to visit www.libertytwp.org and complete a Special Needs form. Then, a team, including a medical doctor, reviews pertinent information such as medical history and list of medications, and enters it into a database to be accessed by emergency responders. Registration is voluntary, and can be completed online or at the Fire Dept.

The residents' address and phone number are then flagged in the county's 911 call-center database, so dispatchers can inform emergency squad members. Due to privacy concerns, the only information the dispatchers have is that it is a 'Special Needs' house, and the facts that the on-site emergency responders need are accessed differently.

"We were looking at our communities, and how we could serve them better."

The registry system provides additional support beyond that of a medical alert bracelet, which many individuals wear. According to Lt. Piwtorak, "The website was also designed to help kids who are coming home early from the hospital. Hospitals are cutting costs and kids are coming home sicker. We were looking at our communities, and how we can serve them better."

ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, notes, "I was impressed with this program when I heard about it through the first-hand experience of a family I was talking with in Delaware County. It hits home for me, as my son has special needs, and his mobility would be a concern in any emergency situation."

Special thanks to ThisWeekNewspapers for some of the information contained in this story.

3. Waiver Transition, Frequently-Asked Questions

... Check www.mrdd.ohio.gov for updates ...

The information below contains Frequently-Asked Questions on the subject of the current "pause" in Waiver Reimbursement Transition activities. These will be refreshed often, at the ODMRDD website www.mrdd.ohio.gov, as needed.

Why has a "pause" been recommended by the Department?

Over the past 20 months, Ohio's MRDD system has been working to design and implement a transition to a new waiver reimbursement system. This change is necessary because the federal government requires a statewide approach to Medicaid reimbursement and did not support Ohio's previous system of individually negotiated rates. Ohio negotiated a twenty-four month transition period, from July 2005 to June 2007, to transition all MRDD waiver consumers to this new statewide reimbursement system. This implementation period was phased in, in order to work out all of the complex details and provide training to individuals and their families, County Boards of MRDD and providers.

Unfortunately, a number of complex details remain unresolved, and these are hindering progress on some of the later transition phases. The Department, under new leadership of Director Martin, recognizes the importance of creating a reimbursement system that works. At the same time, any changes to the new reimbursement system must be approved by the federal government. The Department has made the suggestion to the field to "pause" the transition so that Ohio can develop and propose some changes to the federal government, with the goal of improving our new reimbursement system.

How will the “pause” affect individuals who have already transitioned to the statewide system?

The federal government continues to require Ohio to transition payment for all waiver services to a statewide reimbursement system. Over the course of the past twenty months, many individuals have transitioned to the new system. This “pause” will not affect transitions that have already occurred, and the existing service levels that have already been established for many individuals. In other words, during this “pause” period, no one who has been transitioned to the new system should be returning to the former system of negotiated rates.

Will there be any formal guidance about how long the "pause" will be?

Working with staff from the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services, the Department plans to offer a detailed proposal to the federal government by the end of March. This will include a new timeline proposal. Any and all changes to the existing system – including the timeline - must be approved by the federal government. Until feedback from the federal government is received, the Department cannot offer a viable estimate regarding the length of the “pause.” However, given the Department initiated the “pause,” we will not hold county boards accountable to previously stated deadlines in light of this.

Does this “pause” apply to all transitions?

The Department is recommending a “pause” for all transitions with the following guidance for exceptions:

- If the county board of MRDD has made a financial commitment related to an individual’s transition service plan (example: negotiated a new lease for an apartment for a person who is scheduled to move in the short term);
- If a county board of MRDD is enrolling a new individual on the waiver;
- If a prior authorization request is pending, please see question #6; or
- Other extenuating circumstances as identified by the County Board of MRDD.

Does this "pause" include Adult Day Services?

The Department will be examining opportunities to improve Ohio’s approach for reimbursement of Adult Day Services; thus, the “pause” is recommended to apply to Adult Day Services, as well.

What happens if the county board of MRDD has already submitted a prior authorization request for an individual whose transition is scheduled to occur within the next few weeks?

No later than March 2, 2007, the Department will provide each County Board of MRDD with a list of all prior authorization requests currently pending for that county. If a county board wishes to move forward with any of the pending prior authorization requests, the board must contact Dan Gazdik, a Waiver Unit Manager (dan.gazdik@dmr.state.oh.us) with that direction. Otherwise, the requests will be held pending feedback from the federal government on any potential system improvements. Further direction regarding the “paused” prior authorization requests will be issued at that time.

How will this “pause” affect any state hearings that are pending?

All administrative state hearings related to transitions that have already occurred will continue to be processed without interruption.

How is this fair to those who have already transitioned and had to get a new roommate or lose some staffing time?

The federal government is requiring Ohio to implement a statewide reimbursement system for MRDD waiver services. That requirement has not changed. Ohio's current request to CMS to "pause" implementation in order to make some improvements will not "stop" or "reverse" progress made to date.

Over the past twenty months, various individuals and their families, providers, and county board staff have expressed concerns about different components of the new reimbursement system. This "pause" is an attempt to address some of these concerns in a manner that builds upon much of the foundation that has already been established. In order to negotiate any changes with CMS, it will be imperative to focus on only a few areas and then show discernable results. That said, it is virtually guaranteed that some concerns that have been voiced to the Department will remain unaddressed. We apologize for that, but at the same time, we must acknowledge our inability to construct a system that meets the ideal of every stakeholder in light of limited financial resources.

Where should I direct any additional questions regarding this "pause?"

The Department encourages all stakeholders to send questions to the following email address: waiver.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us. *Department staff will review questions sent to this email box at least twice per weekday throughout the duration of the "pause" and will manage responses in one of two ways:*

For questions asked by more than one person, both the question and a response will be posted on the Department's web page. A link will be available on Monday February 27, 2007, via <http://mrdd.ohio.gov>

For questions that are specific to an individual situation, Department staff will follow up directly with the person who poses the question. For this reason, it may help to include your name and a telephone number where you can be reached.

The Department will attempt to respond to questions within three working days.

4. MRDD Awareness Month Focuses on What We Can Do *... Statehouse Event, March 2, Promises Strong Kickoff ...*

Celebrating March as MRDD Awareness Month, the March 2 statewide kickoff event at the Ohio Statehouse will focus on what people with disabilities *can do*, and highlight the active participation of individuals with disabilities. The event will run from 10 a.m. until noon.

Members of ODMRDD's Constituent Services group note that a strong MRDD community is excited about bringing their ideas and enthusiasm for new opportunities to the Statehouse this year. "We have had several phone calls from counties throughout the state asking how many individuals they can bring to the event, said spokesperson, Robert Jennings. People arriving in a van or bus may wish to drop off their participants on Third Street side (main entrance to the Statehouse) and then park around the block on State Street, where an area will be clearly marked for that purpose. In the event that the State Street area is full, local parking lots would be the next choice for larger vehicles."

The ODMRDD, Ohio Public Images (OPI), and the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) co-sponsor the Statehouse event each year. This year's MRDD Awareness Month theme is, 'Focus on What we Can Do.'

For additional information about MRDD Awareness Month events and promotional items, visit the OPI website at www.publicimagesnetwork.org.

In Future Issues of Pipeline ...

In addition to feature articles, and state and national news, look for profiles of ODMRDD key staff, and a look at an international team from Russia, visiting Ohio to learn about how people with disabilities receive services and live in our communities.

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Wednesday, June 13, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 11

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If you know someone who should be receiving Pipeline, but is not (for example, is new to your organization) please see the simple subscription information at the end of each issue.

In this issue –

- 1. Decision Made on Framework for Simplified Reimbursement System
- 2. Senate Expected to Provide Widespread Support for State's Biennial Operating Budget
- 3. Professional Advancement through Training and Education in Human Services (PATHS)
- 4. Finance Funds Extends Partnership

1. Decision Made on Framework for Simplified Reimbursement System

ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin notes, "Our commitment is to fine-tune and make this proposed system simpler and more efficient over time. We now have an agreement on format, and are still working with the field to obtain feedback and firm up details."

Overview of Homemaker Personal Care Proposal to CMS

Ohio has committed to transition its reimbursement approach for MRDD waiver services from individually negotiated rates to a new, consistent statewide approach. Per an agreement with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), this transition was scheduled to occur between July 2005 and June 2007. As Ohio's families, providers and county boards of MRDD began to implement the agreed-upon changes, they began to wrestle with some significant challenges that were not contemplated earlier in the new system's design and development.

For example, the new system requires providers to calculate homemaker/personal care service ratios for each 15-minute billing unit. This is complex and overwhelming to implement for settings where individuals are sharing services.

Other concerns and complexities of the system included:

- Providers were concerned that a great deal of time previously spent attending to the needs of individuals would now be spent calculating complicated ratios.
- The new system was so complex and required so much additional documentation that ODMRDD was concerned about the risk of increased audit findings.

- There also were concerns regarding the new system's likely effects on the provider workforce. For example, would this be so difficult that people would look for other jobs rather than provide direct services to people in our system? Anecdotal evidence suggested that this might be the case.

These unintended consequences were of great concern to Governor Strickland and his new Administration. On March 30, 2007, CMS staff notified Ohio that a six-month extension had been granted in order to provide Governor Strickland's new team some time to develop and negotiate proposed changes with CMS.

Community Involvement

A work team was established to focus on targeted improvements to the Homemaker Personal Care (HPC) reimbursement process. *The charge of the work team was to identify specific areas of the HPC documentation that could be resolved in the near term, and recommend solutions on how to do so.*

This team was chaired by the ODMRDD and included active participation by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), providers, and county boards of MRDD. Because of the technical (claims documentation) focus of this work team, individuals who are receiving waiver services were not active participants -- however, status reports and the final recommendations of the work team were shared with the field at various conferences and parent advisory meetings, and via the ODMRDD regular electronic newsletter, *Pipeline*.

Discussion at work team meetings was candid and constructive. Everyone was committed to reaching a viable, long-term solution within the CMS-approved timeframe and through the use of a consensus approach whenever possible. The Strickland Administration appreciates the collaboration demonstrated by all team participants.

Everyone was committed to reaching a viable, long-term solution within the CMS-approved timeframe and through the use of a consensus approach whenever possible.

Core Philosophies

The following philosophies were central throughout the proposal development process:

- Changes will apply only to situations where individuals are sharing HPC services (i.e., roommate situations.)
- Documentation burdens should be lessened to the extent possible so that providers can spend more time focusing on the individuals they serve;
- No additional costs should be added to the system;
- The reimbursement approach should result in a person's ability to know what level of resources are available in the event that the person wishes to leave a current setting/ move to a new place;
- Audit expectations must be straightforward;
- Improvements must be sufficiently straightforward so that Ohio can gain CMS approval as soon as possible and begin training immediately, allowing the entire transition to be complete by December 31, 2007.

Proposal Highlights

Ohio is building on concepts that already have been approved by CMS.

To expedite federal approval and accomplish the transition within the allotted timeframe, Ohio simply could not afford to reinvent the wheel. The following components of our current reimbursement approach will remain consistent:

- The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Profile (ODDP) – Ohio’s assessment instrument that is used to assign individuals’ funding ranges for the IO waiver.
- The Individual Service Plan (ISP) – This personalized service planning tool is developed and modified annually for each waiver enrollee.
- “20/20” and other validated local planning tools – These are used by county boards of MRDD to build service ratios and cost estimates for each setting, based on the needs of each individual in the house. Each person’s ISP is used during this site-specific planning process.
- CMS approved base rates for HPC
- Medicaid Administrative Authority – All delegation arrangements are included in the “Firewalls” document.
- Payment Authorization for Waiver Services (PAWS) – This software enables the state to authorize a ceiling on the total amount of waiver service units and cost for each person enrolled in the IO waiver.
- Medicaid billing processes – Providers will continue to submit claims on an individual basis for the exact amount of services rendered.

Additional benefits relative to the current system

This proposal positions Ohio to perform future analysis and make data-informed decisions.

- Simplifies documentation requirements for providers while maintaining fiscal accountability;
- Establishes a web-based data interface tool that will be used by the state, county boards of MRDD, and providers;
- Reimburses for the exact number of service hours rendered without requiring reconciliation;
- Creates new reporting capabilities that will enable Ohio to evaluate the long-term success of the reimbursement system, based on analytical benchmarks.

Proposed Details

Components of the proposed process that are **different** from what CMS has approved previously are **shown in bold**.

1. An individual service plan (ISP) is developed for each individual who shares services. The ISP ...
 - Identifies the person’s homemaker/personal care (HPC) service needs
 - Outlines the person’s schedule, staffing patterns, and shared service ratios
 - Includes the need for awake or asleep night time supervision
 - Indicates whether or not the person qualifies for either the medical and/or the behavior support rate modification
2. An ODMRDD-approved and validated cost projection instrument (such as the 20/20) is used to calculate the annual HPC cost for each person who shares services and the total annual HPC cost for the group of individuals. These calculations incorporate:
 - The base 15-minute unit rates from the waiver reimbursement rule
 - Shared service ratios
 - Behavioral and/or medical rate modifications, as applicable
3. The cost projection instrument calculates the total annual direct service hours needed to meet the service ratios for the shared services.

4. Total annual HPC cost for the group of individuals is proportionally allocated to the individuals sharing services based upon each individual's estimated share of service.
5. **County board staff enter the following data into the ODMRDD online application:**
 - **Site identification**
 - **Names of individuals sharing services at this site**
 - **Span dates for the HPC services**
 - **Total allocated HPC cost for each individual (#4)**
 - **Total direct service hours for the site**
6. **The online application calculates an hourly direct service rate for the specific configuration of services that will be provided in that setting to that group of individuals.**
 - **Total annual HPC cost of the shared services (#2) is divided by the total annual direct service hours (#3)**
 - **This hourly direct service rate and the actual direct service hours provided are used to calculate individual specific daily rates**
 - **This hourly direct service rate would be recalculated when significant changes occurred in the configuration of services for the group of individuals**
7. **Provider enters the following data into the ODMRDD online application:**
 - **Actual direct service hours provided in a seven day period**
 - **The days of service for each person for the seven day period**
8. **The online application calculates total weekly reimbursement owed to provider and the corresponding individual specific daily rate.**
 - **Multiplies hourly direct service rate times the actual direct service hours provided**
 - **Apportions weekly reimbursement to each individual based on ODDP percentage**
 - **Divides each individual's weekly apportionment of reimbursement by the days of service to calculate the daily rate for each person for that week of service**
9. Provider submits claims for each person using this calculated daily rate.
10. **Provider will maintain documentation regarding specific service hours rendered (e.g., payroll data) and also specific days in which each individual received services. This will be made available for audit purposes.**

Additional Improvements

To support the targeted changes outlined above, ODMRDD will commit additional staff resources to improve the timeliness of waiver match obligation reconciliations with county boards of MRDD. This will enable the boards to make more efficient use of their resources in support of individuals' service needs.

Additionally, ODMRDD and ODJFS will commit to improving the timeliness of the MRDD waiver prior authorization process. This effort will be undertaken with the input of all stakeholders and will include enhanced training and technical assistance.

For additional information as it becomes available, visit the ODMRDD website at www.mrdd.ohio.gov, or contact Tracy.Williams@dmr.state.oh.us



2. Senate Expected to Provide Widespread Support for State's Biennial Operating Budget

The Ohio Senate is expected today to moved forward with the state's two-year operating budget (House Bill 119) which includes language that supports the ODMRDD Futures Study, additional waivers for services defined under the terms of the *Martin Settlement*, increased guardian and protective services and other MRDD system enhancements.

ODMRDD's portion of the budget for fiscal years 2008 and 2009, totaling more than \$1.1 billion in state and federal funds, has received a tremendous level of support from the General Assembly, which is expected to fully fund the Department's requests. Most important in the budget has been \$35 million over the biennium for settlement of the *Martin* lawsuit. ODMRDD will use the additional resources to provide the state match for some 1,500 new IO waivers, to be rolled out over the next two years.

"We are gratified by the support we have received from the Governor, the House, and now by the Senate," said State MRDD Director John Martin. "We also really appreciate the many stakeholders and constituents who supported our budget throughout the process."

The final two weeks of June will see a set of negotiations between the House of Representatives and the Senate as the two bodies resolve differences between their two versions of the bill. Governor Strickland must sign the final version of the budget by June 30, 2007.



3. Professional Advancement through Training and Education in Human Services (PATHS) Boasts Statewide Framework, Coordinated Curriculum, Qualified Graduates

PATHS, a program of the Ohio Association of Direct Support Professionals, is an award-winning voluntary credentialing program for direct support professionals who work with individuals with MRDD in Ohio. According to PATHS project manager, Amy Gerowitz, approximately 40 people will graduate, statewide, during the next few months, and in total there have been about 300 graduates earning the PATHS Certificate of Initial Proficiency.

Gerowitz also noted that at a recent event in Dayton, twelve students were graduated, and congratulated by ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin. Director Martin provided the keynote address, and the luncheon was catered by the Montgomery County Board of MRDD Food

Service Division employees. Attending the graduation ceremony were more than 50 self-advocates, parents, staff, families, administrators and agency board members.



PATHS grads (l. to r.) in Dayton, congratulated by ODMRDD Director John L. Martin (far left): Pamela Taylor, Beverly Bradsher, Brian Hughes, Nafeesa Huff, Jill Johnson, Tracey Johnson, Michelle Hunter, Craig Burns, Lisa Barnes, Karen Gabbard, Jeannette Wehrle, Angel Robinson, and Patty Blanton.

PATHS graduates are very enthusiastic about this training. As Dayton graduate Beverly Bradsher commented,

“PATHS is an excellent training program, as it gives an extensive overview of this field. It has given me a new perspective on how to provide the best care for the people I support.”

Graduate Nafeesa Huff stated,

“PATHS helped me gain confidence to pursue a management position, and it is helping me succeed in that position.”

And, Stacey Krohn (BitterSweet Farms) shared these thoughts:

“First off, I just want to tell you that this program has completely changed the way I do my job. I have learned new skills that have made me a better direct care staff person. I have found a voice that I thought I lost.”

PATHS began in 2001 as a result of a grant from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council that continued through 2006. PATHS also received financial support from the ODMRDD in 2001, and again in 2006-07, along with support from the Department of Labor in 2004. Significant in-kind support also has been received from agencies and individuals.

Gerowitz explains that PATHS, “... provides an opportunity for direct support professionals to participate in a credentialing program that offers state of the art, person-focused knowledge to help support people with disabilities wherever they live and work. It also provides a career ladder so that direct support professionals will be more likely to stay in this field, gain professional knowledge and stability, and have a long lasting career with advancement opportunities, rather than ‘just a job.’ In addition, staff turnover may be reduced and funds allocated to creating a competent career force, rather than on turnover and recruitment activities.”

PATHS provides an opportunity for direct support professionals to participate in a credentialing program that gives them state of the art, person-focused knowledge so that they can help support people with disabilities wherever they live and work.

For more information about PATHS, please visit, www.ohiopaths.org or contact Amy Gerowitz at agerowitz@ohiopaths.org , phone 513-484-2772.



4. Finance Funds Extends Partnership

The Ohio Community Development Finance Fund has now made its third grant to assist Creative Housing in the development of accessible housing in Franklin County. The \$20,000 grant will be utilized to offset predevelopment costs at Creative Housing's *Apartments at Stoneridge* under development in Gahanna, Ohio.

The Gahanna site is one of three accessible apartment sites currently under development by Creative Housing. Funding for these projects is being provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Franklin County Board of Mental Retardations and Developmental Disabilities. More information on the Finance Fund programs is available at www.FinanceFund.org

The Apartments at Stoneridge



Changing Housing. Building Hope.
www.creativehousing.org



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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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We hope you enjoy Pipeline, and will share your thoughts with us at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us. To add someone to the Pipeline distribution list please see the simple subscription information at the end of each issue. In addition, we have identified each acronym at its first usage, and invite you to look up any additional information about them at http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/apps/internet/WDS/WDS_Glossary.aspx.

In this issue –

- 1. Martin Settlement Rollout ... Where It's At, Where It's Going
- 2. Governor Signs Executive Order
- 3. Help Offered to Hearing Impaired re: Theft of Data Tape

1. Martin Settlement Rollout – Where It's At, Where It's Going

For background information on the *Martin v. Strickland* Settlement and other information on the subject, please visit the ODMRDD website at ... <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/martin/settlement.htm>

1500 Waivers – Martin v. Strickland settlement activity timeframe now underway

The state budget bill for Fiscal Years '08/'09 included funding for the *Martin v. Strickland* settlement, which will enable an additional 1500 eligible individuals to choose community-based waiver services over a two-year period. The budget includes plans to enroll 600 individuals in Individual Options (IO) waivers between September 2007 and June 2008, and then an additional 900 individuals between July 2008 and June 2009. Enrollment will be phased, with 60 to 75 people enrolling each month.

Simply stated, that's 1500 lives changed. And, changing 1500 lives is no small matter. The process by which this occurs must be well-conceived, methodical, and applied consistently statewide. What follows is a description of the process that has been developed, including the information that is being presented to stakeholders at meetings this month.

Changing 1500 lives ...



is no small matter.

Concepts included in the allocation formula

The ODMRDD is the state agency responsible for implementation of the *Martin* settlement. During the planning process, staff requested ideas from families, advocacy organizations,

providers and County Boards of MRDD. Many of these ideas were included in the final allocation plan.

In addition, ODMRDD staff used statistical analysis to examine different factors related to the demand for waivers. These factors included county-specific waiting list information, the poverty level in each county, and the available tax assessments in each county. While developing this model, the ODMRDD analyzed responses to the survey of institutional residents that was conducted this spring. Lastly, the ODMRDD asked County Boards of MRDD about their administrative capacity to support additional waivers. *For more information about the model and the allocation methodology, please send questions to Frank Blair: franklin.blair@dmr.state.oh.us*



Implementing the allocation formula

Each County Board of MRDD is assigned a specific number of waivers to allocate to residents who live in that community. Each county will receive between 2 and 201 waivers over the two year period. While all 1500 waivers technically could be used to support individuals who are leaving institutional settings, a *minimum* of 280 waivers will be used for this purpose statewide. Each county board will receive a ‘base’ allocation that could be used to serve anyone (either currently living in the community or in an institutional setting). Then – depending on the size of the county and the statewide results of the survey of institutional residents – a county may receive an additional specific number of waivers to enroll only individuals moving from institutional settings.

Please click on this link <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/martin/settlement.htm> to view the county-by-county waiver allocation plan. In this document you will notice columns for each fiscal year, as well as county-specific requirements to serve a number of people from Developmental Centers (DCs) or Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded (ICFsMR) and Nursing Facilities (NFs).

Pilot Project, Gallipolis Developmental Center

The FY ‘08/’09 budget bill also includes a special pilot project for employees of the Gallipolis Developmental Center to provide waiver services to no more than ten individuals if the individuals select the DC as their waiver provider. This program will be developed this fall and requires federal approval before implementation occurs in 2009. Due to the number of details yet to be developed, the Martin waiver allocation formula *does not* contemplate retaining a ‘reserve’ number for this project. The ODMRDD will identify waivers for the project at a later date.

Planned Timeframe of Waiver Allocation

In order to allocate the 1500 waivers over the two-year span, ODMRDD will work closely with County Boards of MRDD to plan the phased enrollment process. It is very important that the statewide enrollment progress matches up with the estimated timeframe for expenditures.

The ODMRDD will monitor each county’s progress very carefully and provide regular reporting to the public. If a county board is not enrolling according to its projected timeframe, ODMRDD will work with that county board to assist them in remedying any issues. In the event of special circumstances, the state reserves the right to reallocate the waiver to a different county if the original county board is unable to use the waiver within the expected timeframe.

More information related to *timeframe milestones* is located on the ODMRDD website at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/topics/martin/settlement.htm>

Criteria for Selection of Enrollees

Named plaintiffs in the lawsuit: It is important to note that named plaintiffs in the *Martin v Strickland* lawsuit will be guaranteed access to waivers, and county boards have been informed of the names of these individuals and instructed to enroll them.

Minimum 280 enrollees moving from institutional settings: Each county board may be provided a minimum number of individuals to be served from ICFsMR and from nursing facilities. (*Note: Not every county has a specific minimum number for these categories.*) In order to enroll individuals for these waivers, each county will have the ability to examine its waiting list information as well as the list of individuals who live in nursing facilities, ICFsMR or Developmental Centers who indicated that they would be interested in an IO waiver opportunity. County boards will then identify individuals who may use the Martin waivers. *Please note that an individual who indicated on the survey that he or she would like to move is not automatically entitled to a waiver.*

Other enrollees: County Boards of MRDD have been given flexibility to serve the most pressing needs in its community. *While a person's position on the waiting list must be considered by the county board, it is not the sole determining factor for a waiver enrollment.* In other words, the Martin waivers present an opportunity for each county to serve the special needs of that community. Examples may include children with special health care needs, individuals with elderly caregivers, additional people moving from institutional settings, etc. Individuals now enrolled on Level One waivers are eligible to be considered to receive an IO waiver through the Martin Settlement.

Payment Information

The waiver services for all 1500 waivers will be funded by the ODMRDD. It is our objective to enroll 1500 people over this two-year period. After that point, any additional waivers added will be subject to the availability of state appropriation.

In other words, if the General Assembly and the Governor authorize an increase, more individuals may be enrolled. If funding is held flat in Fiscal Year 2010 or beyond, then the ODMRDD will have to manage enrollment to a level that is affordable – and perhaps waivers would not be refilled when someone disenrolls. There is no guarantee of what will happen in the future, but ODMRDD will seek to advocate for funding to continue 1500 waivers (and possibly more.)

If one of the 1500 named individuals disenrolls from a Martin Settlement IO waiver, the determination to provide a replacement enrollment opportunity to another individual in the same county will be made by the ODMRDD, based on the availability of enough general revenue funds to provide waiver services necessary to assure the individual's health and safety.

These IO waivers are portable, and remain with the individual even when the individual moves from county to county. *The ODMRDD will manage waiver availability to the level of the appropriation available.*

In addition, at the time of their initial enrollment on the IO waiver all individuals participating in this initiative shall receive state matching funds for IO waiver services in amounts indicated by their Ohio Developmental Disabilities Profile (ODDP) scores and, if receiving Adult Day waiver services, with their Acuity Assessment Instrument (AAI). This funding covers any

services approved through the Prior Authorization process, as long as the services are medically necessary. The ODMRDD has committed to providing increased matching funds over time if the needs of individuals increase as reflected in their AAI and ODDP scores and/or as approved through Prior Authorization.

In addition, no individual enrolled in a Martin waiver shall reside in an unlicensed setting serving more than three other individuals with mental retardation or developmental disabilities.

Pipeline will provide more information on the Martin Settlement waiver rollout in the near future.

An action plan is being developed to identify specific ODMRDD staff for specific responsibilities, and to determine steps to be taken and implementation timelines to be met when expected enrollment lags or expenditure forecasts exceed projections. Please refer to www.mrdd.ohio.gov for more information soon. Specific questions should be referred to Nancy McAvoy at nancy.mcavoy@dmr.state.oh.us



2. Governor Signs Executive Order – Grants the right to certain home care providers to collectively bargain

Acknowledgements to Kristen Rankin, Labor Counsel, Office of Collective Bargaining, Department of Administrative Services, for this information.

On July 17, 2007, Governor Strickland signed an Executive Order granting the right to collectively bargain to certain independent home care providers who are paid by the state through Medicaid waiver programs.

The Order is intended to foster professional standards and conditions for all independent home care providers in the industry as it takes on a growing share of the state's health care burden. As the choices for Ohio's senior citizens and citizens with disabilities are expanded, there must be a qualified work force to support their long-term care needs. Allowing the providers access to a collective bargaining process will help them gain effective representation when negotiating for work-related benefits.

The independent home care providers (IHCPs) referred to in the Executive Order are not state employees or providers employed by home health care agencies. The Order does not create state employment status, nor does it alter the unique relationship between IHCPs and in-home care recipients. The IHCPs provide ongoing Medicaid-reimbursed, direct-care services administered by the departments of Aging, Job and Family Services, and MRDD. The Executive Order does not require the providers to collectively bargain, but rather states that Ohio will recognize a collective bargaining representative if they choose one.

The Office of Collective Bargaining (OCB) is the Governor's designee for purposes of collective bargaining, including any representation election. OCB will be working closely with the departments of Aging, Job and Family Services, and MRDD throughout this process. As the Governor's designee, OCB will solicit input from many stakeholders, agencies, providers, and advocates prior to any collective bargaining process.

Below is an explanation of the process by which the IHCPs may choose a bargaining representative. In the event a bargaining representative is selected, more information will be provided at that time.

- A labor organization may request through OCB a list of Independent Home Care Providers eligible to vote in a representation election. The list will be valid for 90 days from the date issued.
- The labor organization must demonstrate to an election monitor that it has the support of 30% of all eligible voters.
- Once the election monitor has determined that there is a 30% showing of interest, the election monitor will call for a secret ballot election, which will be completed by mail.
- Any other labor organization that can demonstrate at least a 10% showing of interest may also request to participate in the representation election.
- The election monitor has 30 days to complete the secret ballot election. A majority of the IHCPs voting will determine whether there will be an exclusive bargaining representative.
- If an exclusive bargaining representative is selected, the parties have 90 days to begin bargaining.

If you have further questions, please email your request to DAS.ocbinfo@das.state.oh.us for more information.

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has submitted a request to OCB for a list of Independent Home Care Providers eligible to vote in a representation election. SEIU and OCB will work together to choose an election monitor to administer the representation election. SEIU must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the election monitor that 30% of IHCPs on the eligible voter list request an election to select SEIU as their exclusive bargaining representative.

“ The Order is intended to foster professional standards and conditions for all independent home care providers in the industry as it takes on a growing share of the state's health care burden. ”



3. Help Offered to Hearing Impaired re: Theft of Data Tape

Reprinted from Gongwer News Service, Wednesday, July 25, 2007

The state has contracted with a company to provide free identity-theft protection and prevention services to people who are deaf/hearing impaired, whose personal information is on a backup computer tape stolen from a state intern's car last month. The vendor the state has been using to provide those services cannot accommodate this segment of the population, so the state has contracted with Identity Safeguards of Beaverton, Ore., to provide these services.

Starting at 5 p.m. today, residents who are deaf or hearing impaired who received a notification letter with an activation code can call the company with TDD and TTY communications capability at 1-800-981-7576.



Corrections: In a recent issue of *Pipeline* we misrepresented the acronym for ICFMR. It stands for Intermediate Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded. Also in a recent issue we incorrectly identified Steve Hansen, Deputy Director/ Human Resources, as previously serving as Superintendent of the Northwest Ohio Developmental Center. He did not serve as Superintendent there, rather as Director of Human Resources.

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In this issue –

- 1. Director Martin Addresses County Board Superintendents
- 2. Key Staff Profile, Ginnie Whisman, Asst. Deputy Director, Developmental Centers
- 3. Ohio Dept. of Public Safety Ramping Up for National Preparedness Month, September

1. Director Martin Addresses County Board Superintendents 'Some Help and Some Hope'

As excerpted from a speech by Director Martin to the Ohio Association of Superintendents of County Boards of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OASCBMRDD) 8/6/07.

Preparing the Foundation

The ODMRDD is preparing carefully for the work of the Futures Committee. This has been an educational process for many of us who are new to the department, as we learn about the information and systems from which to build the overall scope of the project.

It also has helped us to learn more about each other, our roles, how the work of one person affects others, and our system's strengths and weaknesses in terms of information, systems, funding streams, and other essential business processes. This is valuable work, and if something was to happen on August 29th and the Futures Committee was abolished -- never to meet -- we will have learned much.

There are many perspectives from which we could lead the MRDD Futures Committee. I have chosen three that I think will increase the likelihood of success. They will provide the framework for our approach.

- **Self-Examination:** The MRDD field has been in a state of conflict for some time. In times of conflict we become accustomed to pointing out the faults of others or the problems created by others. We look for weaknesses that can be exploited and publicized. In this scenario the focus is on others rather than on ourselves, and we tend to attribute negative motives to behaviors we observe. In this situation we also see change as the responsibility of others, because in times of conflict each of us is certain we are right and the other is wrong.

The approach I would prefer to take is first, to focus on what we, ourselves, can and cannot do -- before focusing on others. Instead of strategizing about what tactics to use so that we can achieve victory over others, it is important to be thinking in a different way, such as, "What do I need to do to make the system better?" ... "What barriers to system improvement can I remove?" ... "What system resources am I using or am I responsible for that could be better utilized to serve others?" ... "What might I be willing to give up to make the system better?"

All of us who care about MRDD services in Ohio should be asking ourselves these kinds of questions as we think about how to build a better future.

If the foundation is true self-examination, the MRDD Futures Committee will be a success. The Department's role is to provide the environment and information about our system for this to occur.

A foundation of self-examination also provides us with opportunities for early success, because changing one's own behavior is easier than changing someone else's.

- **Creativity versus Standardization:** All of us are part of a system of some kind. We have 88 County Boards ... 1200 agency providers ... 2000 independent providers ... ten developmental centers ... three state departments ... and eight advocacy organizations representing nearly 80,000 people who receive services. Plus, we have seven unions representing certain employees in various parts of the system. With all of these varied systems come different approaches, and people must navigate these systems to have their evolving needs met.

As part of our self-examination/system evaluation we will be asking ourselves, "Which of our areas of variability are essential to keep so that creative options evolve, and what would benefit from standardization and reduce waste, complexity, and confusion?" ... "Of the complexities in our system, what is the cost/benefit of those complexities?" ... "How do our different systems favor some and disenfranchise others?" ... and more.

We need to decide what things should be made the same everywhere in the system, and what things should be more flexible, so that creativity can point the way toward better outcomes.

- **Fairness In and Across Communities – Some Help and Some Hope for Everyone:** The state, the federal government, and County Boards of MRDD all have platforms - and rules they must follow - to distribute money. Nearly 80,000 individuals are officially registered in our system and are either receiving or waiting for services paid for by these platforms. Thousands of persons earn a living providing these services either directly or indirectly to the people we serve.

Funding Platforms

The amount of money being spent on MRDD services in Ohio is staggering -- approximately 2.5 billion dollars. And this does not include hundreds of millions more spent on Medicaid-covered health care and other services for the individuals we serve.

Yet, when you look at how much of this funding is distributed through state and local distribution platforms, we find the distribution occurs in many ways that create significant inequities in our system. These inequities are felt by the people served, the providers of the services, and the County Boards serving their communities. Is it equitable – and sustainable – that an individual living in one community or supported by one system, can receive services that add up to double or triple what they are in another community or another system?

And we must acknowledge that inequity is felt by people on waiting lists, and by other disability-focused systems of care in Ohio, such as mental health. Some are receiving significant amounts of money, while others are receiving little to nothing. It is not just the amount of money delivered that is different from system to system, but how it is delivered that affects people.

Despite these differences, there is a lot that is good about our system. A lot of services are being delivered that create opportunities and possibilities for people. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that cultures evolve around funding streams, making change sometimes painful.

It will be the goal of our work to deal with some immediate issues in our financial infrastructure. We also hope to set some longer-term goals to be addressed well after the work of the MRDD Futures Committee work is completed, March 31, 2008. We hope to set in motion an evolutionary process that will move our systems in directions that remove barriers and result in a more equitable distribution of resources. To do this we all need to gain a better understanding of how the various systems work.

A Simple Goal – Some Help and Some Hope for Everyone

I would like us to work together toward a simple goal. Early in my tenure I heard an interesting statement -- something to the effect that the waiting lists are deceiving. That if we just talked to folks, in many cases we could support them with just a few resources that could make a significant impact on their lives, and the waiting lists would not seem so overwhelming.

Wouldn't it be a great accomplishment if, out of the Futures Committee, came a commitment that we were going to touch everyone on our waiting lists, and offer everyone something – some help and some hope? One County Board superintendent challenged me when I was in his county to, "...make dealing with the waiting lists the legacy of the Strickland administration."

I propose that his challenge to me become *our* challenge as a community. Are there ways to better use approximately 2.5 billion in resources, so everyone in need gets a share?

We need to ask ourselves what we could do together to achieve this simple but important goal.

Every family and individual needing us deserves some help and some hope. I believe we can do this, if we focus on self-examination, examine where creativity versus standardization makes the most sense, and by making a commitment to this concept:

Fairness in and across communities ... and some help and some hope for everyone.

To get there we continue to focus on the *five goals* we established in the first month of our administration. Those goals are imbedded in the three perspectives from which we will work;

- Less complex services, with fair and logical payment systems
- Good Stewardship of limited resources
- Quality outcomes, through a combination of people and processes
- Service delivery models designed in response to choices made by the people served, in alliance with community supports
- A system-wide vision developed with stakeholders

The ODMRDD looks forward to hearing what you think about our approach as we lead the MRDD Futures Committee's work to build a better future for Ohio's MRDD system of services and supports for individuals, families, and communities.

*We invite you to contact us with your thoughts at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us
Director Martin may be reached at john.martin@dmr.state.oh.us*



2. Key Staff Profile

Ginnie Whisman, Asst. Deputy Director, Developmental Centers



Ginnie Whisman is barely a month into her position and already has the scope of it in perspective. As *Assistant Deputy Director, Developmental Centers*, Ginnie's perspective is focused on overseeing the ten ODMRDD Developmental Centers which are a part of the Division of Community Services. She brings with her more than 25 years of experience in the field of residential services for people with disabilities. "I started out at Orient Developmental Center and have always had my hand in residential services one way or another," notes Ginnie.

She adds, "This is what I most enjoy doing, as home is important to everyone. Direct service – that's where it all happens. The people we serve in Developmental Centers need our services, and the reward for the work we do is there every day – it's the people. That's what keeps me going, and I think it's that way for most people in direct service."

Ginnie is headquartered at the Columbus Developmental Center and has visited six of the ten Centers during the past 30 days. "I'll get to all of them before much longer, and I really look

forward to meeting the staff and residents,” she comments, adding that the staff serve more than 1600 people throughout the Developmental Center system.

**“ This is what I most enjoy doing, as home is important to everyone.
Direct service – that’s where it all happens. ”**

Michael Rench, Director, Community Services, is enthusiastic about Ginnie joining the team, and comments, “Ginnie brings with her a wealth of residential service experience and the maturity and wisdom needed to work with people in residential settings. The move to have Developmental Centers play an integral role as a resource center in their larger communities is right up her alley, so I’m excited about her leadership in this area.”

Wrapping up the interview for *Pipeline*, Ginnie made it clear that the strength of the team she joined was a big draw in her decision to take the position. “You don’t get any better than Dan Housepian, our Coordinator of Developmental Center Services, and all the support staff here are just excellent. This administration has put a great team together, and to be a part of it – well, it feels like a very good fit.”

Welcome aboard, Ginnie!



3. Ohio Dept. of Public Safety Ramping Up for National Preparedness Month, September



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security – and locally, the Ohio Department of Public Safety -- will sponsor the fourth annual National Preparedness Month this September and encourages people to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities. This year’s effort has a coalition of more than 625 national, regional, state, and local organizations pledging support. The ODMRDD is among those supporting these efforts and will focus on what we can do to assist people with disabilities to be better prepared for emergency situations.

For the first time, the month will focus on different areas of emergency preparedness.

- September 1-8; Back-to-School (*Ready Kids*)
- September 9-15; Business preparedness (*Ready Business*)
- September 16-22; Multicultural preparedness (*Listo*)
- September 23-30; Home and family preparedness, including pets, older Americans and individuals with disabilities and special needs (*Ready America*)

The *Ready* campaign will promote activities across the nation that will encourage individuals to have an emergency supply kit, make a family emergency plan, and be informed about the different threats that may affect them, as well as take steps to get trained and engaged in community preparedness and response efforts.

Pipeline will provide more information about National Preparedness Month in September, and notes that organizations can register to become National Preparedness Month coalition members by visiting www.ready.gov and clicking on the National Preparedness Month banner.

Visit www.ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY to receive free materials.



Check Out 'MRDD Today' at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

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Ted Strickland, Governor

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Wednesday, April 4, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 6

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Corrections /Clarifications: Please note that Michael Rench, ODMRDD Deputy Director, profiled in Vol. 1, Issue 5 of Pipeline (March 21, 2007), prefers the given name of 'Michael', rather than the shortened form, Mike. The editor regrets the error.

In this issue

- 1. Director's Open Letter to Families and Self-Advocates
- 2. Nursing Recertification Notice
- 3. ODMRDD Key Staff Profile, Patrick M. Lanahan
- 4. The ARC/ DD Council Rally Draws Support
- 5. Notice for Healthcare Providers

1. Director's Open Letter to Families and Self-Advocates **... You, the waiver owner, have the control...**

Dear Families and Self Advocates:

We have heard from some of you that you are concerned and have been asked to call legislators about what the future holds for your loved ones in our system. We also understand that some of you have been told that I have taken action that would weaken the provision of health and safety to you or your family member. As a parent of a child within the system, I can assure you that nothing is farther from the truth. The health and safety of every individual we serve is our primary concern and our actions support that priority.

I want you to know that ODMRDD is not proposing to change or weaken a single health and safety protection in the law.

Please allow me to provide a description of how the system works.

First, as a family member or self-advocate, you control the waiver system, and it is you – as a waiver owner – who holds the greatest power in our system. That is, you have the power to choose your service provider. If at any point you are unhappy with the services your family member is receiving, you have the power to terminate, with or without a contract, the

relationship with your provider. You do not have to give a reason. No due process is required. No waiting period is needed.

Any time you have health and safety concerns with your provider, you can inform your Service and Support Administrator and they will work with you to immediately find a new provider. This is the ultimate in local control, and the federal government has given this local control to you. *That is why the federal government does not want county boards to contract with providers, because those contracts could get in the way of your control, your choice of who provides service to your family member.*

“ That is why the federal government does not want county boards to contract with providers, because those contracts could get in the way of your control, your choice of who provides service to your family member.”

You are not alone in the system, and have partners that support you or your family members. Your provider works hard to provide the proper training and oversight, as required by regulations, to help ensure a safe environment. Your local county board is a critical partner. The primary tool for insuring health and safety is the health and safety plan that is developed by the board and put into action by board staff in the targeted case management program. The board monitors the plan to insure health and safety.

The board also investigates any unsafe situation, and is charged with taking action to remedy the situation. The board’s service and support administrators make regular visits. The board’s quality assurance department surveys each environment. The board has an investigative unit that investigates each unusual incident and forwards the results of those investigations to my department for review and action. Every incident is reviewed for follow-up action.

In addition, Ohio law provides that the county board can intervene immediately when health and safety issues are apparent and can take action to immediately remove your family member from a situation the county board considers unsafe. Our current written agreements with county boards for waiver administration, which we are working to extend, addresses some financial matters when there are health and safety issues that the county board tells the Department cannot be resolved under all of the other components of the system. It is a testament to the effectiveness of this comprehensive health and safety system that a county board has never used this particular contract provision since it was put in place two years ago.

Lastly, the Department partners with you and the county board to ensure health and safety and our actions support that statement. We have the responsibility to license and certify providers, and to remove that license or certification if conditions warrant such action. Over the past two years the Department has initiated revocation of certification on providers serving individuals, and has initiated revocation of licensure for settings serving individuals.

Our mission is to *continuously improve the quality of life for Ohio’s citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.* With this in mind, the Department will not ignore any allegation that the system has broken down and is not fully supporting families and self-advocates. Therefore, if shortcomings are found, more specifically, situations where the health and safety of individuals has been compromised, the Department will investigate and take action to rectify the problem.

We are in the process of reviewing how we can make Ohio’s MRDD system even better. You may have heard about our MRDD Futures Project that we described for you in a recent issue of

Pipeline. I can assure you that families and self-advocates will have leadership roles in developing the recommendations of this important effort to improve the system.

All of us here at ODMRDD are focused on serving and most importantly, listening to you. We are a public entity, and as we have stated in our Department goals, the people we serve deserve the best listening skills we can offer. Our commitment to families and self-advocates is the only reason we are here. With that said, please contact my team and me if you have any questions or concerns. Our ears are open.

Sincerely,

John L. Martin
Director

2. Reminder to Nurses: Certification Renewal Notice

... Recertifications must be in by August 1, 2007 ...

Please note that the link at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/health/medadmin/nrsecertrenew.pdf> will open the form by which you can *renew your certification to be a trainer of medication administration, health related activities, gastrostomy/jejunostomy feedings, and medication administration and insulin administration, which expires August 1, 2007.* Please print this form, complete the information, and return it to:

Moseneice Thomas
ODMRDD
35 East Chestnut Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

This form **must** be completed and received by ODMRDD *no later than August 1, 2007*, in order for your certification to continue via the renewal process. If this is **not** received by August 1, 2007, your certification, as a trainer will lapse. After that date, if you desire to be a trainer, you will be required to repeat the entire class.

As a bit of background, beginning in 2003, the ODMRDD had certified Nurse Trainers. These registered nurses could intern, train, and certify unlicensed personnel to administer medications and complete health-related activities. As part of the rules that guide this process, the nurses themselves must renew their certificate on a regular basis. That process coincides with the time when registered nurses renew their actual nursing license. *Both the nursing license and certificate to train Medication Administration are due in August 2007.*

Each registered nurse who is currently a trainer should have received the renewal application via email. If you know of a certified trainer who did not receive the renewal application, he or she can secure one from the ODMRDD website. To locate the application on the web page first go the "Health and Safety" link at the top of the homepage, and then click on the "Medication Administration" button at the left of the next page. There, you will find this link: <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/health/medadmin/nrsecertrenew.pdf>

These forms should be printed, completed, and received by ODMRDD no later than August 1, 2007, to the address noted above.

If you have questions concerning this process, please contact Moseneice Thomas moseneice.thomas@dmr.state.oh.us; phone 614-466-6690, or Donna Maloney donna.maloney@dmr.state.oh.us; phone 614-752-7392.

3. Key Staff Profile, Patrick M. Lanahan, Special Projects ... And there are Plenty of ODMRDD Special Projects ...



Patrick Lanahan

A unique set of skills, combined with the energy to get the job done, has brought Patrick M. Lanahan to the ODMRDD administrative team, as Deputy Director, Special Projects. Patrick is an honors graduate of Ohio Dominican University, majoring in Political Science and English, and received the Juris Doctorate at the Capital University School of Law.

Most recently, Patrick served as President of Health and Human Services Consulting, LLC, which provides technical assistance to state and local governments and other health system stakeholders throughout the nation.

According to ODMRDD Director John L. Martin, “Patrick has the ability to synthesize complex information in simple ways. He also has excellent mediation and problem-solving skills, and the unique ability to summarize issues in a single sentence.” (Clearly, this gift will be welcome in government circles!)

Patrick’s list of accomplishments in the government/ health services arena is impressive both in terms of depth and variety, including assisting the Ohio Medicaid Administrative Study Council to plan for a proposed Ohio Department of Medicaid, and serving as National Program Director for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Resource for Recovery substance abuse financing program, working with 15 states to improve access to treatment.

“ Patrick has the ability to synthesize complex information in simple ways. He also has excellent mediation and problem-solving skills, and the unique ability to summarize issues in a single sentence.”

Special projects Patrick has been involved with so far include distilling the goals and action steps which will guide and focus the administration over the next year, and craft the Futures Project previously discussed in Pipeline Extra, which will set more long-range strategic policy.

In addition to Patrick’s professional credentials, he understands many of the issues faced by families of children with disabilities due to his experience as the parent of a child with multiple disabilities. Patrick notes, “Everything I do in public policy is rooted in something I firmly believe: whatever we do, remember who ‘the system’ is for, and act accordingly.”

4. ARC/DD Council Rally Draws Support

An estimated 200 self-advocates and advocates for people with disabilities gathered March 28 on the grounds of the Ohio Statehouse to hear comments from legislators and professionals in

the MRDD arena, on subjects ranging from the ‘Money Follows the Person’ initiative, to the basics of ‘making our voices heard’ as unified disability issues activists.

The gathering was sponsored by The Arc of Ohio, and the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), with additional support from the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD, the Autism Society of Ohio, and others.



For example, comments by Gary Tonks, Executive Director of the Arc of Ohio, (see photo) addressed issues ranging from the 1500 additional waivers anticipated as a result of the *Martin v. Strickland Settlement* (formerly *Martin v. Taft*), to the many budget-related questions raised by supporters of greater access to services for the disability community. “I get a little emotional about it, sometimes,” says Gary. “So many thousands of people are

waiting for services throughout Ohio and many County Boards have simply run out of money to serve them. These 1500 state-matched waivers finally will be able to help families in the poorest areas of Ohio.”

As with any good rally, there were plenty of self-advocates carrying colorful signs and otherwise speaking out about issues important to them. One in particular, “Let’s *Focus on What We CAN Do* - the theme for MRDD Awareness Month, 2007 - summed up the formal comments and general rally conversations around the Statehouse. And, as with any good rally, the weather was excellent for lingering and allowing a natural flow of conversation among attendees.

5. Notice for Healthcare Providers

... National Provider Identification Number Needed

According to federal regulation 45 CFR § 162.404, all eligible healthcare providers are required to obtain a ten-digit National Provider Identifier (NPI) number from the National Plan and Provider Enumeration System (NPPES). Please see *Ohio Medicaid Provider Update* (a publication of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Office of Ohio Health Plans, Winter 2007) for further information.

Additional information surrounding NPI and definition of healthcare providers may be found at the CMS website located at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvIdentStand/>. Each provider is responsible for its own decision concerning the need for an NPI.

Effective May 23, 2007, if the provider has obtained an NPI, all claims submitted to the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) using the electronic data interchange (EDI) 837 format must contain the NPI. Claims submissions to ODMRDD using the sequential file layout do not allow for the NPI at this time. ODMRDD providers are identified by unique ODMRDD contract numbers. We will continue to assign seven-digit contract numbers to providers through the ODMRDD provider certification process. Seven-digit Medicaid provider numbers will also continue to be assigned

by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services as part of the ODMRDD enrollment process.

If the NPI is applicable to you as a health care provider, you must report the NPI when submitting electronic claims to ODMRDD via the 837. These electronic claims via the 837 should include both the ODMRDD contract number and the NPI. The following identifies the Loops, segments and elements where the NPI is included. Any one of these Loops can be used to include the NPI. With cooperation in this process, a successful transition to NPI is anticipated.

Billing Provider

Loop 2010AA : NM1

When NM108 ='XX'

Then NM109 is required

OR

Pay-to-Provider

Loop 2010AB : NM1

When NM108 ='XX'

Then NM109 is required

OR

Rendering Provider

Loop 2310B : NM1

When NM108 ='XX'

Then NM109 is required

OR

Rendering Provider

Loop 2420A : NM1

When NM108 ='XX'

Then NM109 is required

For questions about billing with the NPI, please send e-mail to NPI.support@odmrdd.state.oh.us

In Future Issues of Pipeline ...

In addition to feature articles, and state and national news, look for information on recent surveys, profiles of ODMRDD key staff, and information to help you understand key issues.

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In this issue –

- 1. Community Services Division Completes Restructuring
- 2. Key Staff Profile, Steve Hansen, Deputy Director, Human Resources
- 3. Federal Funds to Boost Polling Place Accessibility

1. Community Services Division Completes Restructuring

Five groups within the division work together to support direct services



Key staff in the restructured Division of Community Services (l. to r.): Kelly Miller, Ernie Fischer, Kathy Luebbert, Kevin Aldridge, Ginnie Whisman, and Michael Rench.

When asked to provide updated information for *Pipeline* about the status of the Community Services Division restructuring activities, Deputy Director Michael Rench enthusiastically responded with a brief description of who's doing what, how, and why. He began by stating, "I think the structure we have now places people with the right sets of skills in the areas where we need them. For example, our whole intent in restructuring Community Services over the past few months, and bringing under its umbrella the ten Developmental Centers, was to create one seamless entity that included all of the people involved in the support and delivery of direct

care. The way I think about it is that Community Services now has a stronger statewide perspective by including the ten Developmental Centers.”

Resources now are grouped in this way:

- **Assistant Deputy Director, Kelly Miller:** Kelly’s group is the *Office of Provider Standards and Review*. This group, appropriately named, assures that service providers know what standards they must adhere to, and assists them in doing so through assigned staff representatives and training. Staff includes six managers and 30 reviewers to cover the entire state.
- **Assistant Deputy Director, Ernie Fischer:** Ernie’s group is the *Office of Special Investigations and Enforcement*. This is the one group within Community Services that has a new name and a slightly different focus than before. In this group one manager and seven reviewers work to assure that county boards of MRDD and providers who are experiencing challenges that may jeopardize their accreditation -- or have other major issues that need immediate attention -- receive the information and support they need.
- **Assistant Deputy Director, Kathy Luebbert:** Kathy’s group, *Quality Management Planning and Analysis*, includes all the elements necessary to determine and define standards for quality programming, and develops or provides the measurement tools needed to plan for and keep community services consistent, statewide. Staff includes one manager and two reviewers. The group’s focus will be on collecting and analyzing relevant data to attain desired measurable outcomes.
- **Assistant Deputy Director, Kevin Aldridge:** Consultants in Kevin’s group, the office of *System Innovation and Technical Assistance*, provide support to county boards of MRDD and Providers, statewide. Staff are assigned to Ohio’s six county board regions, and are available to assist them in providing the best possible care to Ohio’s citizens with MRDD and their families.
- **Assistant Deputy Director, Ginnie Whisman:** Ginnie’s group includes all staff dedicated to serving the ten Developmental Centers operated by ODMRDD. Formerly, Developmental Centers were grouped in a division named State Operated Services and Supports. Now a part of Community Services, this group will benefit from the additional leadership of **Dan Housepian** as *Coordinator of Developmental Center Services*, and is, by far, the largest of the groups under Community Services. This includes approximately 3500 staff, many of whom are Therapeutic Program Workers.

In addition to the five Assistant Deputy Directors reporting to Michael Rench, **John Sommer** serves the Division as *Manager of Facilities Development*. Aptly named, this position helps to physically plan and operate ODMRDD facilities in an efficient and cost-effective manner, as well as providing capital dollars for the purchase of new housing and the renovation of existing housing in the community.

Returning to Michael Rench’s overview of the restructured Community Services Division, he reminds us that while the initial focus was to bring together under one umbrella all the elements listed above, the immediate benefit of the restructuring will be to support the Futures Study Committee in their efforts to assess opportunities for improvement in the ODMRDD system.



He notes, “For example, Provider Certification would be an area of discussion for the Futures Study, and we would delegate staff to assist in clarifying issues, and studying specifically what needs to be done to streamline or otherwise improve the certification process.” Michael adds,

“ The main thing to remember here is that in all we do, Community Services staff will strive not to be compartmentalized or fragmented. That means that even if a person is a part of one group under an Assistant Deputy Director, his or her expertise may stretch across several areas, and using that is where our real strength will lie. This depth of human resources will be what makes the structure work.”

According to the team of Assistant Deputy Directors, the overall goal -- to which they have committed -- is to operate the Community Services Division using staff expertise to pool resources and respond to the needs of the individuals and families we serve, and the stakeholders who depend on us to do so.



2. Key Staff Profile

Steve Hansen, Deputy Director, Human Resources

Key Staff Profiles are a frequent feature of Pipeline, designed to introduce new faces at the ODMRDD.

Steve Hansen joined the ODMRDD Central Office staff in January as Deputy Director, Human Resources. His schedule is an interesting one with part of the time split as Human Resources Administrator at Northwest Ohio Developmental Center (NODC) and at Tiffin Developmental Center. The two developmental centers are about an hour apart from each other, and Steve makes the most of his time at each location, keeping up with Central Office via email and phone calls.



Steve explains, “It is very important to me to keep that connection with the people we serve and with the direct service staff, and to take that perspective back to the Central Office. In taking the Deputy Director job my primary interest was to bring that perspective to Central Office. The people I see in the developmental center environment reinforce why we do what we do at ODMRDD, and it’s an outlook I like to keep grounded in.”

During the first few months as Deputy Director, Steve and his staff have been heavily involved assisting in organizational restructuring activities. With that activity mostly in place now, Steve notes that they will be focusing on developing more consistent and structured ODMRDD

policies and procedures, and working toward continued improvement of labor/management relationships.

Steve resides in Maumee, Ohio, and has been employed by the State of Ohio for more than 30 years. Most recently, Steve was Superintendent at Northwest Ohio Developmental Center, and prior to that he was with the Ohio Department of Mental Health. He notes, "I have such tremendous respect for the staff across the State of Ohio who daily serve the individuals entrusted into our care. I am equally impressed by the efforts of our staff in Central Office and in the Developmental Centers who demonstrate a genuine and continuous commitment to customer service."

"The people I see in the developmental center environment reinforce why we do what we do at ODMRDD, and it's an outlook I like to keep grounded in."



3. Federal Funds to Boost Polling Place Accessibility



Equal Access at the Polls

County election boards may apply for more than \$360,000 in federal grants to improve access to polling places for people with disabilities, Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner announced this week. According to *Gongwer* news service, the \$360,128 funding for Ohio came through the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Election Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities grant program. Congress approved a total of \$10.8 million for the program.

"This money will help Ohio fulfill its goal to be a national leader in providing accessible polling places and in offering a broad array of educational materials and poll worker training to ensure ballot access for all Ohio voters," Secretary Brunner said in a news release.

The secretary of state's office said the grant money could be used for:

- Expanding polling place accessibility to voters with disabilities;
- Promoting equal access and participation for voters with disabilities;
- Providing poll worker training on issues connected to voters with disabilities.

Local allocations have yet to be determined, and county Boards of Election may apply for the funds directly. For more information go to the website at <http://ohio.gov/government/> and select the Secretary of State section.



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In this issue –

- 1. Update on the Independence Plus Waiver
- 2. Key Staff Profile, Lisa Walsh, Assistant Deputy Director, Special Projects
- 3. Unique Audio Conference Opportunity Spotlights ADA 17-Year Anniversary
- 4. Health & Safety – Governor Encourages Weather Safety, Preparedness

1. Update on the Independence Plus Waiver

Background

The ODMRDD received a grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in 2003 to establish a consumer-directed waiver to be known as Independence Plus. The ODMRDD still is committed to creating this waiver, and is working to construct it in such a way as to be acceptable by stakeholders as well as by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and CMS.

The waiver is different from others, in that individuals (with their circle of support) are empowered to ‘drive their own plan’ based upon their individual needs. Specifically, individuals are given an amount of money with which to plan, and have control over how those funds are spent on services and supports.

At a past statewide collaborative group meeting, the consensus from attendees was that they would prefer the group not meet again until the ODMRDD had a final version of the Independence Plus waiver ready to be reviewed. The ODMRDD agreed, and continued working on the waiver appendices while also holding weekly meetings with ODJFS to discuss our progress.

In September 2006, CMS requested that we re-send them all of the appendices that we had completed, still in draft form, because they wanted to read through the entire document rather than separate parts of it. We complied. In December of that year, CMS sent back to us a four-page list of comments regarding the draft appendices. Some of their questions have been answered, and some issues remain unresolved.

Current Status

In February 2007, Governor Strickland requested that CMS focus attention on Ohio's Medicaid program in order to make some specific improvements to the MRDD Waiver Reimbursement system. Given that, our conversations with CMS regarding Independence Plus have been put on hold until Waiver Reimbursement system issues are resolved. Nevertheless, our work continues on the Independence Plus waiver application, and Grant Coordinator, Christina Miller, continues to develop a consumer-directed waiver application that will meet everyone's requirements.

The ODMRDD plans to continue to meet with ODJFS and will send the 'final draft application' to stakeholders prior to its submission to CMS. Our goal is to have the application formally submitted to CMS by fall of 2007.

Special thanks to Tracy Williams and Christina Miller for this updated information.



2. Key Staff Profile

Lisa Walsh, Asst. Deputy Director, Special Projects

Key Staff Profiles are a frequent feature of Pipeline, designed to introduce new faces at the ODMRDD. In July, Key Staff Profiles will include new staff involved in the restructuring of the Community Services division. See [Pipeline Volume 1 Issue 10](#) May 30, 2007.



Lisa Walsh joined the ODMRDD staff in June as Assistant Deputy Director, Special Projects. Her main focus, initially, is to organize and keep on track the MRDD Futures Committee project, which includes a statutory long-range planning committee comprised of various stakeholders who will work to develop solutions to prescribed issues.

Most recently, Lisa was a Medicaid Health Systems Administrator for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, where she enjoyed using her project management skills in the Medicaid arena.

Throughout her career, Lisa has worked collaboratively with advocates, individuals and families--as well as with providers, state agencies, and local entities--to achieve desired results. Lisa explains, "I am particularly excited about joining ODMRDD at this point because I know that the leadership of the Department is interested in tackling key issues in a pro-active and pragmatic way, and focused on results. I like finding do-able opportunities and working through the details."

Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director, Special Projects, adds, "I am very enthusiastic about Lisa coming on board. I know her capabilities are an excellent fit with the work we have ahead of us on the Futures Committee. It is a challenge for which Lisa is well-suited."

" I like finding do-able opportunities and working through the details."



3. Unique Audio Conference Opportunity Spotlights Americans with Disabilities Act, 17-Year Anniversary



If you live outside Columbus, Ohio, anywhere in the U.S., please use the contact information at the end of this article to find an ADA Audio Conference Series session within your area of the country. The session will be held on Tuesday, July 17, 2007, 2-3:30 P.M., EDT, and will be presented by the DBTAC - Great Lakes ADA Center in Chicago, IL, via speaker phone

In recognition of the 17th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and in celebration of the ongoing efforts of federal agencies to enforce the rights of individuals with disabilities, an update on ADA enforcement activities during the past twelve months will be the subject of a unique audio-conference opportunity on July 17, 2007.

Speakers during the audio conference will include John L. Wodatch, Chief, Civil Rights Division, US Department of Justice, and Sharon Rennert, Senior Attorney, EEOC/ ADA Division. Cost for the session is \$25 for nonprofits and \$40 for other entities for each location, regardless of the number of participants at each location (multiple people can attend at one location for the same flat fee).

There is *no charge* to participants who come to the following locations in Ohio: Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC) in Columbus, OH; Linking Employment, Ability & Potential (LEAP) in Cleveland, OH; and Southeastern Ohio Center for Independent Living (SOCIL) in Lancaster, OH. For other free locations outside of Ohio contact Great Lakes at adagreatlakes.org

Sessions delivered via audio conference are 90 minutes in length and participants are in a "listen-only" mode until the question and answer period. In addition, the sessions will be offered real-time captioned on the Internet, and a transcript is developed and posted to the Internet following the session. A digital recording of the session also is archived on the DBTAC - Great Lakes ADA Center web site at adagreatlakes.org

To participate at no charge at ORSC in Columbus, please send an email before July 10 to adaohio@aol.com or call one of the numbers listed below. Provide your name, organization, address, email address, and telephone number. To participate at no charge at LEAP in Cleveland, call 216-696-2716, ext. 129, for more information. And, to participate at no charge at SOCIL in Lancaster, call 740-689-1494 for more information.

Contact Information:

ADA-OHIO (The Americans with Disabilities Act)
700 Morse Road, Suite 101
Columbus, OH 43214
800-ADA-OHIO (800-232-6446)
800-ADA-ADA1 (800-232-2321) TTY
614-844-5537 FAX
adaohio@aol.com



4. Health & Safety

Governor Encourages Weather Safety, Preparedness During Lightning Safety Awareness Week, June 24-30



Governor Ted Strickland, in coordination with the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness, reminds every Ohioan to be cautious and safe when there is a greater likelihood for both lightning and severe thunderstorms.

“During these warm summer months, I encourage you to take advantage of Ohio’s tremendous recreational resources,” said Governor Strickland. “Please remember though, to be alert for any risk from severe weather.” In conjunction with the National Weather Service’s proclamation of National Lightning Safety Awareness Week, Governor Strickland has issued a resolution proclaiming June 24-30, 2007 as “Lightning Safety Awareness Week” in the State of Ohio.

The purpose of National Lightning Safety Awareness Week is to help safeguard people from the hazards of lightning and to lower deaths and injuries due to lightning strikes. According to the National Weather Service, nation-wide in 2006 there were 47 confirmed deaths due to lightning strikes and 246 confirmed injuries. Because lightning usually claims only one or two lives at a time and does not typically cause mass destruction of property, it is underrated as a risk.

The National Weather Service says: “When thunder roars, go indoors!”

Safety and preparedness tips promoted by the Ohio Committee for Severe Weather Awareness are as follows, and are of particular importance to individuals with mobility issues that may require extra care or time to respond safely:

- *Watch the sky for developing thunderstorms.* Several different processes can start air rising and then cumulus clouds can form. Under the right conditions, these clouds can grow vertically into towering clouds -- often the first sign of a developing thunderstorm. Listen to your Weather Radio or local television or radio station to receive up-to-date information on weather conditions and storm watches and warnings.
- *If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance.* Seek safe shelter immediately. Lightning can strike as far as 10 miles from the area where it is raining. If the sky looks threatening, take shelter before thunder and rain begin.
- *While indoors during a thunder and lightning storm, stay off corded telephones, computers and other electrical equipment that would put you in direct contact with electricity.* Also avoid water. It is an electrical conductor. Do not shower or wash dishes during storms.
- *If you are outside and a thunderstorm is imminent, seek shelter immediately.* Never use solitary trees for shelter, and stay away from metal objects such as fences and poles.

- *If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and get medical care immediately.* It is safe to treat people struck by lightning. They don't carry an electrical charge. Cardiac arrest and irregularities, burns and nerve damage are typical life-threatening injuries when a person is struck. Knowing first aid measures such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can help lightning-strike victims survive.

For more information on lightning safety and severe weather preparedness, go online to: www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov or www.weathersafety.ohio.gov.



Read 'MRDD Today' at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

Please see 'MRDD Today' (click on the green and yellow icon by that name) at www.mrdd.ohio.gov for more information including feature stories from around the state.

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Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



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Wednesday, May 16, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 9

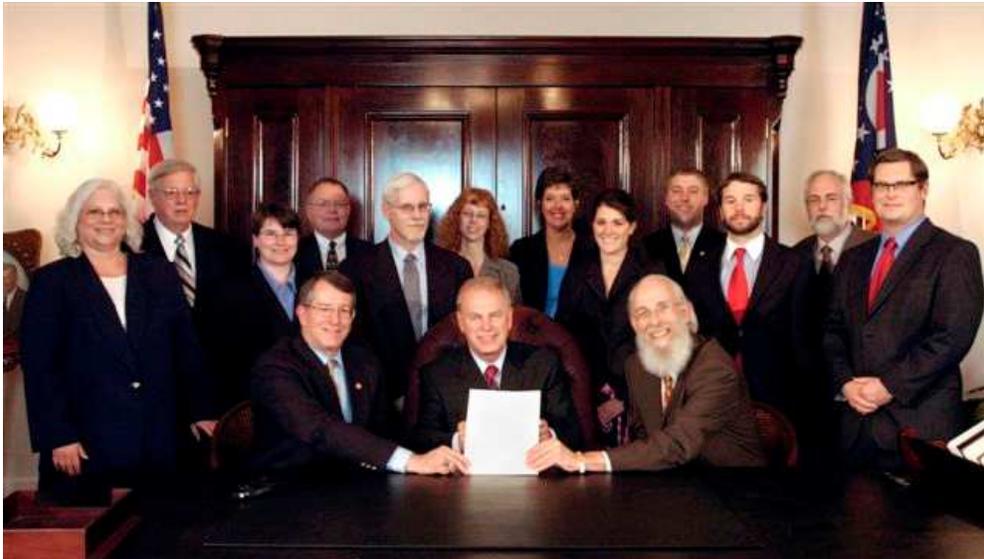
In this issue –

- 1. Governor Strickland Signs Bill Eradicating Antiquated Language
- 2. A Look Back at the May 8 Levies
- 3. Key Staff Profile, Kate Haller, Deputy Director, Legal Services
- 4. Legislative Line
- 5. Solidarity 2007, Abilities in Motion Conference

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1. Governor Strickland Signs Bill Eradicating Antiquated Language Outdated terms describing people with mental illnesses will be replaced

Acknowledgements to the Associated Press for some of the information contained in this article.



Among the attendees at the bill signing were (front row) Senator Robert Spada; Governor Ted Strickland; Representative Jon Peterson, and, (second from right, second row) ODMRDD Director John L. Martin.

Outdated terms including ‘imbecile,’ ‘lunatic,’ and ‘idiot,’ will be purged from the Ohio law books following the signing of a bill by Governor Strickland on May 8. According to lawmakers, the signing of House Bill 53 rides a wave of national momentum to determine which words most sensitively describe people with mental illnesses and developmental disabilities.

The Bill was prompted by a chance encounter with the former language still on the law books, by the nonprofit organization, *Ohio Advocates for Mental Health*, in the process of some legal research. The resulting legislation, which deletes the outdated labels or replaces them with updated terms, cleared both the House and Senate unanimously.

The ODMRDD was particularly interested in this Bill, because language describing people with mental retardation and developmental disabilities -- and in particular, the use of the terminology ‘mental retardation’ -- has been reviewed recently for appropriateness, and is still used as a clinical description of a person’s diagnosis.

John L. Martin, ODMRDD Director, who attended the Bill signing, responded to questions regarding accepted terminology, pointed out, "One of the differences with the term 'mental retardation' is that it is still a clinical term. It still is used in the field and it has clinical implications -- unlike the language being removed here today -- which is language that it is not used anymore."

During the Bill signing, Governor Strickland said, "The language in some of our state's legislation was hugely out-of-date," adding that the measure removes, inappropriate and demeaning terms from law. He continued, “What this act does is provide, within Ohio's laws, appropriate nomenclature so that individuals are referred to in a way that is accurate, appropriate, dignified, and shows value."

“What this act does is provide, within Ohio's laws, appropriate nomenclature so that individuals are referred to in a way that is accurate, appropriate, dignified, and shows value.”



A Look Back at the May 8 Levies

2. Voters Approve Six of Seven MRDD Issues

As reported in *Pipeline Extra*, May 9, 2007, six of seven MRDD ballot issues passed on May 8, with Fulton, Henry, Jefferson, Mahoning, Licking, and Columbiana counties passing their levies, and Marion County not passing their issue. Aside from the collective sigh of relief we heard from the six counties, and the sigh of frustration from Marion County, we learned from a few Superintendents some specifics that marked their levy campaigns this year.

As quoted in the *Herald Star*, Jefferson County Superintendent, Rick Pfannenschmidt said he was humbled by the overwhelming support of the levy renewal. “I want to thank the people of Jefferson County for their continued support of residents with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. We will continue to ensure the most efficient and best use of the tax dollars they entrusted to us,” he commented. With a whopping 76.25 percent of the vote, Jefferson County led the state in percentage of ‘yes’ votes on MRDD issues in May.

Michael Stoner, Interim Superintendent in Henry County, weighs in with these thoughts, “ I am wrapping up my tenure as interim superintendent in Henry County, and our levy passage is a

good way to go out. The Henry County Board of DD programs are highly regarded in the community and that, more than anything, passed the levy.”

He continued, “The campaign was basic. I did not organize a levy committee. The staff and parents are experienced in campaigning. As I have done in the past in other counties, we made radio the key communication mechanism. Twelve parents and consumers gave brief statements about what HOPE Services mean to them. A local guitar player put some chords behind the statements and that was our ad. The station did a great job of editing. We ran the ads from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. once per hour two weeks out, then twice per hour eight days before the election.

In addition, we placed about ten 4’ x 8’ plywood signs at strategic locations a month before the election, and put out about 150 yard signs two weeks before voting day. We ran one ad in each of the local papers the Monday before the vote. That was the extent of our campaign. This was a continuing levy, so we emphasized the need for long term support for residential services as part of our partnership with Medicaid.

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The campaign cost less than \$3000. But, as I mentioned earlier, the reputation of the program sold the issue.

The campaign cost less than \$3,000. But, as I mentioned earlier, the reputation of the program sold the issue.”

Nancy Neely, Superintendent in Licking County, noted, “It is a humbling experience to have to lay your case before the voters. I think we won because we work on passing a levy 365 days a year. We had overwhelming support from all kinds of people and organizations. And, of course, I think the door-to-door campaign we did in targeted areas of the county really helped.”

“ I think we won because we work on passing a levy 365 days a year. And, I think the door-to-door campaign we did in targeted areas of the county really helped.”

Brenda Oyer, Superintendent in Fulton County, stated, “I think the biggest factor that helped us pass our levy was that we really emphasized the phrase, ‘no new taxes’, and ‘Issue 8 will not increase your taxes.’ I think that message spoke pretty loud and clear.”

And lastly, from the *Marion Star*, May 9, Lee Wedemeyer, Superintendent in Marion County asked the public for some input as the district saw defeat of a 1.35-mill replacement operating levy. "I would invite people from the community to come and look at my budget and tell me where they would like us to make changes, and to tour our facilities," said Wedemeyer. He added that the board, which operates MARCA School and MARCA Industries, is also trying to prepare for the future as the state phases out the tangible personal property tax.

Regarding the May 8 results, Wedemeyer adds, "We are extremely disappointed. We cut \$1.8 million out of our budget since 1995, and we are feeling the full effects of these cuts."

Thanks to all counties who shared their thoughts with Pipeline.



3. Key Staff Profile ... Kate Haller, Deputy Director, Legal Services



Kate Haller is the most recent Deputy Director to be named at ODMRDD since the new administration began in January. Kate began her law career as an attorney for Ohio Legal Rights Service, where she was chief of the Developmental Disabilities unit for two years. For the past 17 years she has been Associate General Counsel for health sciences at The Ohio State University. Throughout her career, Kate has been interested in fostering collaborative working relationships that solve problems. “I believe that my job as legal counsel is to help other people do their jobs within the parameters of what is legal and what

is appropriate. I enjoy working with people in the process of creating something from the ground up, so I am very interested in the Futures Study Project, and look forward to the work to be done in that area.” (See *Pipeline Extra 4-11-07*, archived at www.mrdd.ohio.gov for more information on the Futures Study Project.)

“ I enjoy working with people in the process of creating something from the ground up, so I am very interested in the Futures Study Project, and look forward to the work to be done in that area . ”

Kate’s broad range of legal experience includes drafting legislation, risk management, organizational mergers, self-insurance programs, and regulatory analysis and development. “It’s very exciting to join ODMRDD at the beginning of this administration and be a part of a diverse team of legal professionals who manage a great deal of different projects. I am very proud to be a part of this team.”

John L. Martin, ODMRDD Director, comments, “Kate’s rich background will provide a solid foundation upon which we will be able to move forward with policy initiatives and effective legislation.”



[May 16 Update](#)

4. Legislative Line

In the May 2, 2007 issue of Pipeline, ODMRDD Legislative Line debuted, prepared by Cathy Allen, Legislative Liaison. This periodic feature will provide you with a summary of information regarding legislation that affects the MRDD arena, and a brief description or insight regarding the legislation.

HB 21 and SB 163 - Foster care. These are companion bills that focus on training requirements and curricula for prospective and current foster parents. Among other things the bills would require ODMRDD to assist the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to develop a curriculum specific to children with developmental disabilities, and provides for the coordination of services for such children in the foster care system.

SB 157 – Guardianship. This bill authorizes parents of adult children who require a guardian to designate that successor guardian for the court’s consideration. Sponsored by Senator Stephen Buehrer (R-Delta). Referred to Senate Judiciary Committee on Civil Justice. First hearing 5/8. Proponent testimony 5/15.

SB 165 – County Boards of MRDD. This bill increases the number of people serving on a County Board of MRDD by two, and requires that the new members be individuals who are eligible to receive services. Sponsored by Senator Eric Kearney (D-Cincinnati), referred to Senate Finance Committee. No hearing scheduled yet.



“It’s Time to Take Action”

5. Solidarity 2007, Abilities in Motion Conference

Solidarity, Ohio’s oldest and largest educational, employment, and leadership conference for and about people with disabilities is May 30 – June 1, 2007 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and Convention Center in Columbus. The conference will feature 30 workshops, and 50 exhibitors, including State agencies, non profit organizations, and companies displaying new technology to help people with disabilities.

Also included is a Health Fair, Art Fair, luncheons with keynote speakers, and a visit to the State House to meet with local State Legislators. Additional activities will include information on Homeland Security preparedness for people with disabilities, and the opportunity to register to vote and learn to use the newest voting machines designed to make voting easy for people with all types of disabilities. Continuing Education Units (CEU’s) will also be offered.



Solidarity 2007 is a project of *Disability Network of Ohio – Solidarity*, and is funded in part by: Buckeye Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America, Cardinal Health, Huntington National Bank, Ohio Coalition to Rehab Technologies, Ohio Department on Aging, Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Ohio Developmental Disability Council, Ohio Hospital Association, Ohio Legal Rights Service, Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission and the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council.

For registration or exhibitor information, contact The Meeting Connection at 614-888-2568 in Columbus, or outside Columbus, call toll free, 866-765-2007. Some scholarships are still

available for registration cost. Find out more about the Solidarity conference on the *Disability Network of Ohio – Solidarity* website at www.dnos.org.



*Special thanks to F. Gregory Schneller for his design of the Pipeline mini-logo.
It will mark Pipeline article completion and serve as a visual break.*

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In this issue –

- 1. Restructuring of Developmental Center Management and Operations
- 2. Division of Community Services Reorganization

1. Restructuring of Developmental Center Management and Operations

ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin announced today a reorganization of the management and operation of its ten Developmental Centers as part of its Community Services Division. The announcement was made today, to constituents and stakeholders at the ODMRDD Administrative Office in Columbus.

Director Martin noted, “The Administration has given a great deal of thought to restructuring the Developmental Centers as part of the Community Services Division, and has done so in order to bring together needed resources to support people served – and do so in the most effective and inclusive manner possible. Therefore the ODMRDD has defined a direction for our ten Developmental Centers (DCs) -- which will report to Michael Rench, Deputy Director, Community Services.”



John Martin

“ The Administration has given a great deal of thought to restructuring the Developmental Centers as part of the Community Services Division, and has done so in order to bring together needed resources to support people served – and do so in the most effective and inclusive manner possible.”

The Administration believes that Developmental Centers are an integral part of Ohio's MRDD service delivery system. Therefore, restructuring is based in the following:

- **We are not closing any Developmental Centers.** In fact, the restructuring process will *more clearly spotlight* the role of Developmental Centers as actual Centers for what might be termed an 'intentional community,' designed as a model to serve the needs of the people in each Developmental Center. It is our intent that Developmental Centers play an active and useful role in their communities.
- **The restructuring allows us to maximize limited resources and streamline services.** Managing Developmental Centers under the new structure allows us to use our expertise and our human resources more effectively. We will be welcoming *Ginny Whisman* as Asst. Deputy Director in the Division of Community Services – reporting directly to Michael Rench. Ginny will be assisted by *Dan Housepian*, who will continue to operate a Developmental Center, as well. We also have offered *Michael Snow* and *Sue Curtis* opportunities within the new restructuring, which they are each considering now. More information regarding the management of Developmental Centers will be announced as plans move forward.
- **We are restructuring based on constituent and stakeholder input.** We are shaping these intentional communities using information gained from the recent Developmental Center Study, and from stakeholder input. This information has been extremely helpful in pointing us in the direction we are now going, and we thank each and every participant in that survey and input process. In addition, the ODMRDD *Futures Study Project* (see issues of *Pipeline* at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/pipeline/odmrdd.htm>) will build further on the longterm role and function of Developmental Centers.
- **The new reporting structure maintains the importance of DC's within the Department.** We believe that Developmental Centers are a natural element of the Division of Community Services when viewed as a *model of providing services designed to offer a higher degree of social and community interaction*. The previous reporting structure, with Developmental Centers reporting to the ODMRDD Director, tended to isolate and separate the DC's from opportunities that can naturally occur in an integrated service and staffing environment.
- **The restructuring allows for improved collaboration between county boards of MRDD and Developmental Centers.** The collaborative relationship between county boards of MRDD and Developmental Centers in each region will be stimulated by the restructuring, as DC staff and county board staff will be encouraged to use their expertise to meet needs *without duplicating efforts*. Examples of this could include nursing care, psychiatric evaluations, and other services which may invite shared responsibilities or opportunities.

The previous reporting structure, with Developmental Centers reporting to the ODMRDD Director, tended to isolate and separate the DC's from opportunities that can naturally occur in an integrated service and staffing environment.

The announcement of restructuring underscores the role of the Developmental Centers, which has been evolving -- and will continue to do so -- as regions define specific needs, niches, and opportunities that allow us to serve the needs of the people in that community. As Michael Rench stated, "We need to encourage and establish communities where people can be honored,

cared for, respected and loved. Developmental Centers will be at the center of how we do that.”

In addition to the announcement of changes affecting Developmental Center management, the following general restructuring information was shared regarding overall operation and focus of the Community Services Division.

2. Division of Community Services Reorganization

Focuses on Best Practices in Service Delivery

ODMRDD Deputy Director, Michael Rench, has announced a reorganization plan for the Community Services Division. He notes, “The reorganization of the Division of Community Services is a direct result of listening to what County Board Superintendents and Executive Directors of provider agencies have said about the kind of support and assistance they need to do a better job of serving the citizens in their communities with developmental disabilities. The new focus of the division will be on moving all service providers in our field as close to best practices in the delivery of services as they are able to achieve.”

The reorganization is to be completed by July 1, 2007, and decisions made to-date include:

- The Office of Provider Standards and Review (OPSR) will be headed by Assistant Deputy Director, Kelly Miller. The OPSR will be comprised of 30 Rehabilitation Program Specialists (RPS) assigned to teams that will, as before, provide oversight to the field through licensure, certification, and accreditation processes.
- The Office of Quality Management Planning and Analysis, which includes key staff members, Kathy Luebbert, Assistant Deputy Director, and Leslie Minnich, Project Manager, will focus on quality indicators for oversight functions, and develop ‘best practices’ standards. While this is a more focused approach, it includes essentially the same ‘quality’ functions as before.
- A new Special Unit under the direction of Ernie Fischer, Assistant Deputy Director, will work with entities that are facing licensure revocation, de-certification, or loss of accreditation.
- The certification team currently headed by Suellen White will be a part of the System Innovation and Technical Assistance (SITA) unit. Suellen will report directly to Kevin Aldridge, Assistant Deputy Director. This unit will continue to focus on new provider certifications and county board of MRDD staff certifications.



Michael Rench

“ Reorganization of the Division of Community Services is a direct result of listening to what County Board Superintendents and Executive Directors of provider agencies have said about the kind of support and assistance they need to do a better job of serving the citizens in their communities with developmental disabilities.”



Some of the Community Services team, autumn 2006

As detailed above, while there are some new faces to meet, and some new twists in how a function may be approached, many elements that have defined Community Services will continue unchanged. Those include ... respect for the job to be done ... care in handling each situation in line with appropriate policies and procedures ... and an over-arching desire to bring about continuous improvement of the quality of life for Ohio's citizens with developmental disabilities and their families.



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We hope you will enjoy the new Pipeline, and share your thoughts with us at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us

In this issue

- 1. MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff at Statehouse
- 2. Martin v. Taft Settlement Approved by U. S. District Court
- 3. Foster Grandparents Program Celebrates 40th Year
- 4. Russian Delegation Studies State Services

1. MRDD Awareness Month Kickoff Event Hosts Hundreds! ... Self-Advocates, Parents, Providers, and Professionals Pack the Statehouse Atrium ...

Each year, the ODMRDD, in collaboration with Ohio Public Images (OPI) and the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) hosts the Statewide MRDD Awareness Month kickoff event at the Statehouse in Columbus. This year, the theme, "Focus on what we CAN do," was especially meaningful to participants.

"I cannot think of a better theme for MRDD Awareness Month than this," stated Representative Jon Peterson, holding up a press release and repeating, 'Focus on What we CAN Do.' He continued, "It is so important to keep in mind the many things that people with mental retardation and developmental disabilities can do, and help them get the opportunities to do those things, just like the rest of us."

Peterson's support of bills helping people with disabilities to be successful living and working in their communities is well known throughout the Ohio Legislature, and earned him the *Award of Excellence in Public Service* from OPI and the DD Council in 2006.

***"I cannot think of a better theme for MRDD Awareness month than this –
'Focus on What We CAN Do'."***

Applause followed Peterson's comments during the morning of March 2 in the atrium of the Ohio Statehouse, as sun streamed through the windows and washed over the broad marble pillars. As a kickoff to a month-long celebration, organizers of the event were more than pleased that the weather had cooperated, allowing several large groups from around the state to travel safely Columbus, and share their experiences and talents with the crowd.



Approximately two hundred people filled the Statehouse Atrium during the program portion of the MRDD Awareness month kickoff event. Not shown is the area to the rear of the Atrium, ringed with displays staffed by various service providers and County Boards of MRDD.

Among those groups was ‘Project WAVE’, a group from Washington County, who brought with them a handmade gift for Governor Strickland and the First Lady. This enthusiastic and talented group of people presented a hand-made patriotic blanket to ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, who accepted it on the Governor’s behalf.



ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, proudly displays the patriotic blanket presented to him by Washington County’s Project WAVE, and which he will, in turn, present to Governor Strickland and the First Lady, on Project WAVE’s behalf.

While Governor and Mrs. Strickland were unable to attend the March 2 event, they were well-remembered by many attendees, including Kathy Bachmann and daughter, Angela. Taking the microphone during the program, they shared a moving story about Angela’s work assisting the ‘Elect Strickland’ team prior to election day, and her part in making a very long, very meaningful paper chain symbolizing the Strickland Team’s vision of all Ohioans working together to move Ohio forward. No one can tell that story like Kathy! And, no one can be happier about it than Angela.



Angela Bachmann receives an “Everyone Belongs” hat from Bryan Becker (far forward left). Bryan, a member of the Ohio Public Images board of directors, also was the event’s co-master of ceremonies.

There can be no story about the Kickoff Celebration for MRDD Awareness Month without the mention of Britt Lincoln. Britt, a resident of Hamilton County, sang two songs without accompaniment, and mesmerized the crowd with one of the purest and loveliest voices ever to fill the Statehouse atrium. Britt cannot see, and that has not stopped her from going to college, getting a degree in Elementary Education, logging a number of additional accomplishments, and singing effortlessly at selected events.



Standing near the front of the great room, Britt Lincoln sang “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” leaving the old Simon & Garfunkle version in the dust. Britt, you rock!

The Statehouse event also incorporated an awards reception for winners of the annual School Poster Contest, co-sponsored by OPI and the DD Council, and celebrating the theme, “*Kids Just Want to Have Fun! Include Everyone.*” The ‘inclusion’ theme was represented creatively by students in elementary and middle schools from throughout the state. They received savings bonds for first, second, and third place awards. Some also received special recognition from legislative representatives who prepared and delivered official printed proclamations in their honor.



School poster contest winners begin to line up for recognition.

For additional information about MRDD Awareness Month events and promotional materials available, visit the OPI website at www.publicimagesnetwork.org

2. Martin v. Taft Settlement Agreement Approved

... U. S. District Court approves Agreement at Fairness Hearing ...

On March 5, 2007, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Eastern Division, approved the Martin v. Taft Settlement Agreement during a previously-scheduled Fairness Hearing. *Please read the two portable digital files (pdf's) attached to this issue of Pipeline for details.* According to ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, “This is very good news for the people who have waited since 1989 to see some light at the end of the tunnel on this case.

Martin v. Taft provides an incredible opportunity to help alleviate Ohio's long waiting lists for residential services."

3. Foster Grandparents Program Celebrates 40th Year *... Needs More Volunteers to Get the Job Done ...*

Who knew that in 1967, a government-sponsored program would begin that was so popular and useful it would be continuing to help people some 40 years later?

Cliff Shuster says he knew. Of course, as Project Director for the Foster Grandparent program operated by the ODMRDD, Cliff is kidding about having 'been around a long time' himself, but he speaks the truth about the power of the program. And we saw it in person in Mansfield, Ohio, this week.

Driving up to visit two sites in Mansfield, Shuster explained the basics. "The Foster Grandparent Program is sponsored by the ODMRDD, and offers seniors, age 60 or older with limited incomes, opportunities in the Central Ohio area to serve as mentors and tutors for people with special needs. Foster Grandparents provide 15 to 40 hours of weekly service to community organizations, and receive a tax-free stipend, transportation, and other benefits." He adds, "These community organizations could be County Boards of MRDD, early childhood and family centers, Head Start programs, day care centers, schools, and so on."

Recruiting volunteers for the program is an ongoing job made a little more difficult by the income guidelines (125% poverty level) coupled with the age requirement. The Federal government sets the income guidelines, which, according to Cliff, currently amount to a little under \$13,000 per year. "That's low, and it affects our ability to recruit," he says, "But the hourly stipend for volunteering, and the opportunity to have transportation reimbursement (public or private) to and from the site, is a big help to them."

"The hourly stipend for volunteering, and the opportunity to have transportation reimbursement (public or private) to and from the site, is a big help to them."



< "Yes it is," exclaims Ruth Spangler, age 88 ... "Soon to be 89!" she adds energetically, while wheeling Mike around the hallway at Raintree Center, part of Richland Newhope residential services in Mansfield. Ruth saw an article in the local newspaper about Foster Grandparents in 1988, and decided that if she was ever living alone and needed something useful to do, she would do this. When her husband passed away in 1989, she made good on her word.

Ruth explains, "It gets me out every day, five days a week, and keeps me going. I even recruited Mildred from church, and now she's been doing it since, I don't know when..."

Cliff knew when. It was 1995. We next visited Mildred Mandley.



“It gets me out every day, five days a week, and keeps me going. I even recruited Mildred from church, and now she’s been doing it since I don’t know when ...

< Mildred Mandley and Robbie – part of Grandma Mildred’s ‘family’.

“I’m 89 -- a year older than Ruth,” she confirms, while smiling and holding the hand of Robbie, wearing a football jersey and obviously thrilled to have ‘Grandma Mildred’s attention every day. “I think Robbie was 9 when I came here,” notes Mildred. “And yes, Ruth recruited me, and I’m so glad she did. These people here at Richland Newhope (Adult Services Center) are my family. My kids and grandkids are grown and living in other states. This is my family,” she repeats, as Scott and a few other admirers rally around her.

Leaving Ruth and Mildred behind, Cliff thought aloud, “It would be difficult to come up with a better program for helping people, all the way around. I’m proud to be a part of it.”

For more information or to volunteer, contact:

**Foster Grandparent Program
35 East Chestnut St., 5th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215-2541**

FAX: (614) 752-5301

Cliff Shuster

Project Director

Gerald.shuster@dmr.state.oh.us

(614) 466-4555

4. Russian Delegation Studies State Services

... Collaboration with U.S. proves mutually interesting ...

The ODMRDD recently was honored to be a part of a group hosting a delegation from Russia, traveling in Ohio as part of a cross-cultural learning experience. Below is a brief report of the day’s activities on February 27, 2007. The group’s primary interest was to learn about how people with disabilities are treated in our communities, and what services they are offered.

... “Through the study of best Practices and shared experiences with American colleagues, we hope our guests will be able to implement changes that increase the effectiveness and efficiency of social service delivery in Volgograd” ...

It was no ordinary group that toured the Ohio Statehouse on February 27. A large delegation from Volgograd, Russia, visited Columbus that week as part of a three-week mission in the U.S. to study how state officials approach using social services and poverty alleviation tactics.

The 10-member delegation represented a variety of roles in their city, formerly named Stalingrad. Regional and local government officials, along with social service providers, and health and social workers, hosted the group, and attended meetings in Toledo and Columbus.

"The objective of the program is for the delegation to examine, research, and adapt American social service delivery practices to their own local situations," host organizer, Dr. Elizabeth Balint, project manager for the Toledo-based Great Lakes Consortium for International Training and Development of Northwest Ohio, said in a news release. "Through the study of best practices and shared experiences with their American colleagues, we hope our guests will be able to implement changes that will increase effectiveness and efficiency of social service delivery in Volgograd," she added.

During the two-day visit to Columbus (February 26-27), delegation members met with representatives from the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission, the Governor's Council on People with Disabilities, and the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council. In addition, the group met with FIRSTLINK, an organization dedicated to mobilizing volunteers and connecting people to resources, and visited a telecommunications firm that actively seeks to employ people with disabilities.

When asked what were some of their most interesting U.S. experiences, the delegation agreed that they were amazed at how integrated people with disabilities are within American society. "The accessible sidewalks and buildings are quite impressive," said Elena Vasilyeva, director of State Allowances, with the Volgograd regional Social Security Department. "People with disabilities are visible and are included in everyday activities, which is not always the case in our country."

" People with disabilities are visible, and are included in everyday activities, which is not always the case in our country."

The group also was asked, "What could Americans learn from *their* country?" Dimitry Kurakov, a senior specialist for the Analytical Department of the Volgograd Administration Public Health Committee, summed it up for the delegation by comparing each country's economic situation.

"I think we have an advantage in implementing programs with limited resources," said Kurakov. "Our country doesn't have the vast resources and networks that are available in the U.S. so we have to rely on passion and determination to get things done," he said. "We also make it a priority to provide free education and healthcare to all of our citizens."

Of special interest, the Russian delegation was very excited to hear about the efforts of Ohio's *Foster Grandparent Program*, which offers opportunities for senior citizens to mentor people with disabilities while earning a small stipend for their efforts (see *Foster Grandparent Program Celebrates 40th Year* in this issue of *Pipeline*). Coincidentally, Ohio's program, which is administered through the Ohio Department of MRDD, has a large contingent of volunteers from Central Ohio's Russian community. The delegation wants to emulate a similar program in Volgograd.

The delegation also will travel to Chicago and Detroit to meet with social service professionals there. Scheduled events include panel discussions, seminars and meetings with government officials.

For more information about these efforts, contact Elizabeth Balint, Project Manager, Great Lakes Consortium for International Training and Development, (419)-530-8572, www.gl-consortium.org



Russian delegates and their U.S. hosts pause briefly for a photo between meetings.

In Future Issues of Pipeline ...

In addition to feature articles, and state and national news, look for profiles of ODMRDD key staff, and information to help you understand key issues.

Pipeline feedback ... direct from you to the state ...

Questions? Comments? Pipeline (formerly 'Visions') Newsletter is a publication of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD) and is distributed approximately twice monthly to update and inform readers of time-sensitive, relevant, and important information affecting MRDD stakeholders. Please share your questions or comments with us about Pipeline newsletter at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us, or contact Robert Jennings at robert.jennings@dmr.state.oh.us, phone (614) 644-0263.

Editor's Notes: MRDD values subscriber confidentiality and does not share subscriber addresses with others. If you would like to subscribe to Pipeline newsletter, send an email to: join-pipeline@odmrdd.state.oh.us and write SUBSCRIBE in the subject line. If you would like your subscription to Pipeline (formerly 'Visions') discontinued, write UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line. You may also read issues of this newsletter on the web at: <http://www.mrdd.ohio.gov> For previous issues of Visions, visit our Publications section at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/mrddlibrary>

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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



Pipeline will be published at least twice monthly.

Visit us at www.mrdd.ohio.gov

Wednesday, May 2, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 8

Important Notice to Pipeline Subscribers

Please read the Editor's Note at the end of this Pipeline. It contains important information regarding the Pipeline subscriber list. It is important to know that you may 'opt on' or 'opt off' of any subscriber list at any time if you feel you are receiving information you do not wish to receive ('spam' and the like). We have received a public records request for the Pipeline subscriber list from the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD, and will comply with the request this week. If you wish to opt off this list of email subscribers, please follow the simple instruction at the end of this Pipeline newsletter. Thank you.

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- 6. Memorandum of Understanding Spotlighted, Montgomery County
- 7. *New!* ODMRDD Legislative Line, To Keep You In-the-Know
- 8. Save the Date -- Ohio Adult Sibing Conference, October 12 & 13, 2007

Good Luck to All Counties with Levy Issues on the Ballot, May 8

County / Issue Type / Millage
Fulton County / Renewal / 2.0 mills
Henry County / Renewal / 1.9 mills
Jefferson County / Renewal / 1.7 mills
Mahoning / Renewal / 2.0 mills
Licking / Replacement / 1.0 mill
Marion County / Replacement / 1.35 mills
Columbiana County / Replacement/ 1.5 mills

1. Director Martin's Open Forum for County Board Superintendents

At the invitation of ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, Ohio's County Board of MRDD Superintendents recently attended a Superintendents' Open Forum in Columbus. The opportunity afforded direct communication with the Director in an informal setting. An open

forum, by nature, allows the participants to direct the collective conversation in a free-flowing manner to address several key issues.

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The Director opened the conversation by providing an update as to what progress the Department has made supporting priorities that the Superintendents established for the Department in January. These included short-term priorities such as: delaying waiver reimbursement implementation; developing a comprehensive vision and plan with the input of MRDD stakeholders; renegotiating the home and community-based waiver agreement with County Boards of MRDD; and, changes in criteria for admissions to Developmental Centers, among others.

Attendees at the recent forum also reviewed long-term priorities discussed at the outset of the administration, and included the following: progress on the reduction of waiting lists; review of key interagency agreements; reduction in bureaucracy and redundancy within the state's administrative rules; and, more focus on specific MRDD issues, including autism.

At the April open forum, the Superintendents asked that the Department:

- Capture and provide relevant data that can be accessed by County Boards on a day-to-day basis;
- Expand self-determination and early intervention initiatives;
- Support private providers with improved training and education;
- Recognize excellence in service provision.

Opening the floor to further discussion, Superintendents discussed the need for: replacement capacity for the Level One Waiver; evaluating the MRDD system for individual choice and opportunities to further develop self-determination; exploring the need to develop a system that can support non-waiver services; and, understanding the relationship and difference between funders and service providers.

Director Martin also was asked to take a more holistic look at the MRDD system, and to continue to offer the opportunity that open forums provide. In addition, the group discussed the decision to enact a law establishing the MRDD Futures Study Committee, to be comprised of individuals representing various governmental, stakeholder, and constituency groups. The Futures Study Committee will review various issues for Ohio's MRDD services system.

Each county representative also shared unique and creative ideas that worked well in their areas. Most involved increased emphasis on self-determination, individual budgets, community employment, and integration into the general fabric of the community.

Each county representative also shared unique and creative ideas that worked well in their areas. Most involved increased emphasis on self-determination, individual budgets, community employment, and integration into the general fabric of the community.

Three shared ideas were:

Coshocton County: 'Day Hab without Walls' -- Heather Kendall, Superintendent, noted that in this unique day program, a group of individuals who are interested in a specific area, such as

sports, will work with staff to design day activities around those interests. “We take the program beyond our four walls, and replace it with ‘discovery learning.’ It also lets others in the community see the interests of our participants, and allows them to interact in a natural way with others. People in the community seem surprised by the varied interests of our participants.”

Washington County MRDD: ‘The Marietta Harbor’ – This program provides ten jobs for Washington County MRDD participants during boating season. This unique opportunity includes activities such as harbor management and maintenance, gasoline sales, concession stand operation, and interpersonal skills development. “The location at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum rivers offers an excellent learning opportunity for the people we serve to participate in the uniqueness of our community,” says Mary Ann Chamberlain, Superintendent.

Holmes County: ‘Dental Clinic’ -- Holmes County MRDD provides space at their offices for County Board program participants, their families, and staff, to avail themselves of dental services. Superintendent, Scott Brace, explains that a local dentist works with the Board to provide this service on a regular basis, improving the overall health and wellness of the people served, and underscoring the importance of good dental care.

Based on these and several other ideas, the County Board Superintendents and Director Martin agreed to meet regularly to share updates on issues, to track progress in specific areas, and to learn more from each other. The group then agreed to review and share the information captured at this forum – and thus this *Pipeline* summary!



2. House Passes Budget Unanimously

Support for Governor Ted Strickland’s biennium budget was extremely strong as the House unanimously passed the budget, moving it on for consideration by the Senate. According to Gongwer News Service, “The show of bipartisan support was considered historic as the chamber sent the Senate the \$52 billion measure.”

The ODMRDD is particularly encouraged by the support shown, as the budget: endorsed funding the Martin Settlement (Martin v. Strickland) providing waiver reimbursement dollars and additional waiver capacity; included language supporting an agreement between the ODMRDD and the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD clarifying who is responsible for paying the non-federal portion of Medicaid-funded waiver services, outlining how state and local levy dollars are to be used, and allowing county boards to determine the priority uses of these dollars in their communities; and, would establish the MRDD Futures Study Committee, to be comprised of individuals representing various governmental, stakeholder, and constituency groups.

Pipeline will keep you posted on Senate results in the continuing legislative process.



3. Adult Services Survey, Part II

In 2005, results of an adult services survey were published in the ODMRDD newsletter, 'Visions,' with the intent that results of a second survey would be published in similar fashion. Part II of this survey follows, preceded by a brief note by Jane Novick, a member of the Family Advisory Council and the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council:



A Note from Jane:

Due to the implementation of 'Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)' for students in special education, more and more students with disabilities are gaining work experience in community settings, and the public is becoming more accustomed to seeing individuals with special needs working in the community.

We wanted to gain insight as to how Ohio's 88 counties are balancing the financial constraints with the evolving philosophies of community employment settings versus sheltered settings. In addition, we wanted to share the information we gathered with all the County Boards.

This survey was originally conceived by the ODMRDD Family Advisory Council and supported by the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council. A questionnaire was sent to all County Board Superintendents, and to families of individuals with special needs.

- Jane Novick-

Jane can be reached in any of the following ways:

Phone: (937)554-5507—cell; e-mail: JanePN@gmail.com; Fax: (937)299-6469



Survey Results

A survey requesting information about adult services through County Boards of MRDD was conducted in 2006. Topics included: providers, employment, recreation, and funding sources, and 45 of the 88 counties responded.

Survey results indicate that most services currently are provided by the County Boards, and they project that this will continue over the next five years. However, some counties do not see other service providers coming forward. Clermont, Clinton, and Erie counties stated that, in their areas, there are few - if any - choices in providers. For example, the representative from Erie County stated, "I believe if other providers made services available people would choose someone other than the County Board."

While many County Boards are the main service provider, some counties are seeing an increase in choice of providers. Jefferson County expects to see more contracted services over the next 5-10 years. And, a representative from Miami County stated, "I feel strongly that County Boards cannot be, nor should they be, all things to all people. I think smaller entities may be better equipped to provide 'niche' services, one-on-one for prolonged periods. The picture in five years will depend upon individual choice, as people vote with their feet..." In addition, it was reported that outside contractors are being used by Butler and Ross Counties.

“ ... The picture in five years will depend upon individual choice, as people vote with their feet...”

Presently, 26% of the small counties responding provide all services, with 32% providing most services. In five years, according to survey input, it is expected to shift to 4% of small counties providing all services and 49% to provide most services. There also will be a shift from no small counties providing services mainly through community agencies, to 7% of them providing most services through community agencies. Interestingly, the same pattern can be seen with the medium and large counties.

When looking at what will have the greatest impact on how Adult Services are provided, availability and usage of Medicaid dollars appears to carry the most weight. Thus, individuals with Medicaid-funded waivers will have more options. For example, there is an increase in Medicaid-funded day habilitation programs throughout the state. Jefferson County acknowledged, “Medicaid is driving the system.” In Miami County, it was stated, “...Currently, waiver recipients have more choices, since they have funding that can follow them...”

Clearly, free choice of providers is of great importance. Harrison County summed it up well, noting, “The ability to privatize service delivery appears to be an excellent route to pursue in order to maximize effectiveness and support, and to stretch service delivery.”

“The ability to privatize service delivery appears to be an excellent route to pursue in order to maximize effectiveness and support, and to stretch service delivery.”

Some counties are shifting to a more community-centered emphasis. Butler County has seen a 47% decrease in people attending day habilitation programs between January 2005 and August 2006; whereas there was an increase in individuals working in community and enclave settings. Geauga County stated that over the next five years they anticipate individuals working in the community, strategically located in specific geographic locations.

Counties of all sizes expect an increase in community employment over the next five years. For example, Portage County runs Portage Industries, Inc. This is the County Board’s non-profit workshop. The non-profit stated that they, “...fully recognize they are in a competitive environment, and are taking action to operate effectively in a competitive situation.” The trend toward developing community involvement will continue and, likely, accelerate.

Medicaid continues to have a strong impact on how Adult Services are implemented. As long as this is the case, it will be harder to shift to a more community-based service system. If Medicaid Buy-In should become a law, more people will be able to work in the community and not risk losing their Medicaid benefits. It is also fair to assume that unless self-determination is more widely implemented, individuals without waivers will be left with little or no choice.



4. Key Staff Profile ... Tracy Williams, Deputy Director, Medicaid Development and Administration

Periodically, Pipeline will provide brief profiles of each ODMRDD Deputy Director, and other key staff. Previously we profiled Michael Rench, Deputy Director, Community Services; Patrick Lanahan, Deputy Director, Special Projects; and Renuka Mayadev, Deputy Director, Constituent Services.



Tracy Williams

Early this year, Tracy Williams joined the ODMRDD as Deputy Director, Medicaid Development and Administration. Tracy is no stranger to the subject matter, as her previous position with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODFS) was State Medicaid Director, overseeing a \$12.5 billion budget. Suffice it to say that Tracy was qualified for the ODMRDD position!

And, she was excited about joining the new Administration's team due to her interest in working to effect change in streamlining the system, and to have an opportunity to problem-solve in the MRDD arena.

Tracy explains, "I like being a part of a team that focuses on making a difference on state issues. For me, coming to ODMRDD now, after 12 years with the state, is very exciting. We are in the final steps of the Martin Settlement (*Martin v. Strickland*), and at the beginning of some new initiatives that can really move to simplify the system and help the people we serve."

" For me, coming to ODMRDD now is very exciting. We are in the final steps of the Martin Settlement (Martin v. Strickland), and at the beginning of some new initiatives that can really move to simplify the system and help the people we serve ."

Medicaid Development and Administration involves approximately 40 ODMRDD Central Office staff, and is one of the busiest divisions in the Department. Tracy's experience with the state prior to joining the ODMRDD team will be an excellent foundation for putting into perspective the issues focusing on the MRDD arena. Tracy earned a bachelor's degree from Kent State University, and Masters in Public Administration from The Ohio State University. She may be reached at: *Email: Tracy.Williams@dmr.state.oh.us, or, telephone: (614) 728-2736.*



5. Key Staff Announcement ... Kate Haller, Deputy Director, Legal Services

A Key Staff Profile featuring Kate will appear in a future issue of Pipeline. Following is a brief announcement by ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin:

I am pleased to announce that Kate Haller started May 1, 2007, as Deputy Director, Legal Services. Kate began her law career as an attorney for Ohio Legal Rights Service, where she was chief of the Developmental Disabilities unit for two years. For the past 17 years she has been Associate General Counsel for health sciences at The Ohio State University. I am confident in the experience and leadership skills that Kate brings to the Department, and look forward to her joining our team.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity thank Kim Anderson for her leadership and dedication during her years as ODMRDD Deputy Director, Legal Services. We wish Kim the best as she pursues new endeavors.



6. Memorandum of Understanding Spotlighted **Montgomery County/ City Officials and Law Enforcement Agencies Endorse** **Special Procedures Protecting Individuals with Disabilities**

We are sharing this publicity for the Montgomery County MOU-signing as a good example of how to shine a light on an otherwise routine process, and make a statement about the importance of this understanding.

The Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities hosted the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on April 24, 2007 at 12 p.m., at the Montgomery County Administration Building.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) details the relationship a county board has with its providers concerning the investigation of alleged abuse, suspected and/or actual occurrences of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The process is required by ODMRDD Major Unusual Incident rules.

The signing represented a commitment to protect and acknowledge that people with disabilities may need special procedures in various situations. The memorandum establishes procedures for protection, aid, treatment, and proper reporting and follow up in cases of abuse, neglect or victimization. Disclosure of information to protect confidentiality for these individuals was covered, and accommodations with regard to criminal investigations were outlined.

Additionally, guidelines were provided in cases of patient endangerment, and procedures were provided to be followed in the handling of any and all deaths of people with disabilities.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding was one of many positive steps toward formally recognizing that certain procedures need to be followed to assist persons with disabilities regarding various health and safety issues, based on individual needs. One specific procedure included in the memorandum provided that the Montgomery County Board of MRDD will intervene regarding reports of injustice against people with disabilities.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding was one of many positive steps toward formally recognizing that certain procedures need to be followed to assist persons with disabilities regarding various health and safety issues, based on individual needs.

The MOU also detailed procedures such as the elimination of all unnecessary interviews and trauma associated with treatment of a person with mental retardation or developmental disabilities in criminal investigations, and actions resulting from them.

Several county and city officials signed the MOU to indicate their support and commitment. And, a total of 28 area police departments in Montgomery County, as well as the City of Dayton Attorney's Office, and the Ohio Department of MRDD will sign the document.

The Montgomery County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities is funded in part by the Montgomery County human services levy.



Montgomery County Commissioners Dan Foley, Debbie Lieberman, and Judy Dodge, endorse special procedures protecting the health and safety of individuals with disabilities, during the signing of the MOU.



7. ODMRDD Legislative Line ... To Keep You In-the-Know **... New for you from ODMRDD Legislative Liaison, Cathy Allen**

New in this issue of *Pipeline*, we debut the *ODMRDD Legislative Line*, prepared by Cathy Allen, Legislative Liaison, and a part of the seven-member Constituent Services team. This periodic feature will provide you with a summary of information regarding legislation that affects the MRDD arena, and a brief description or insight regarding the legislation. We hope you will find *Legislative Line* interesting and informative. *Special thanks to Cathy for organizing this material.*

Legislative Line

May 2, 2007

HB 19 – Designates the Month of November as “Epilepsy Awareness Month”

- Sponsored by Rep. Ken Carano (D-Youngstown)
- Referred to State Government Committee
- Had one hearing in March.

HB 53 – Removes the words “idiot” and “imbecile,” along with several other antiquated terms, from the Ohio Revised Code. No substantive law changes.

- Sponsored by Rep. Jon Peterson (R-Delaware.) Companion bill (SB 41) sponsored by Senator Robert Spada (R-North Royalton)
- Passed both House of Representatives and Senate
- Governor Strickland will sign the bill; the date has not yet been sent.

HB 119 – Biennial Budget Bill. Funds ODMRDD programs and services, along with all other state agencies, boards, and commissions.

- Sponsored by Rep. Matt Dolan (R-Novelty)
- Passed House of Representatives May 1.
- To be introduced in Senate immediately.
- Must be finalized by start of next fiscal year – July 1, 2007.

HB 170 – Autism Parity. Prohibits insurers from excluding coverage for autism.

- Co-Sponsored by Rep. Ted Celeste (D-Columbus) and Rep. Jon Peterson (R-Delaware)
- Recently introduced; not yet referred to committee.

SB 87 – Creates an Amber Alert system for missing adults who have a mental impairment.

- Sponsored by Sen. John Carey (R-Wellston)
- Referred to Senate State and Local Government Committee
- Two hearings held so far.

SB 138 – Requiring coverage of occupational therapy services under Medicaid.

- Sponsored by Senator Tim Schaffer (R-Lancaster)
- Referred to Senate Finance Committee.
- No hearings to date.

Pipeline readers with questions or comments about this material are invited to reach Cathy Allen at Cathy.Allen@dmr.state.oh.us, or by calling (614)752-4676.



Save the date



8. Ohio Adult Sibling Conference, Oct. 12 & 13, 2007

The Seventh Annual Annual Ohio Adult Sibling Conference will be October 12 and 13th, 2007, at the Columbus Airport Marriott Hotel, 1375 N Cassady Avenue Columbus, OH 43219. Hotel reservations can be made by calling the Marriott, directly, at 614.475.7551 or, toll free at 800.491.5717. *Mention Ohio SIBS for a special room rate.*

See preview information below.

- Registration forms will be mailed at a later date. You also may register online at www.ohiosibs.com , after June 15th.
- Guest speakers include [Rosemarie Rossetti](#) and [Jennifer Owensby](#). Topics covered will include family relationships, advocating for services, future planning for your siblings, and much more!
- Continuing education credits will be available! (MRDD, SW, LPC, MFT).

Contact information:

Ohio Special Initiatives by Brothers and Sisters (Ohio SIBS)
c/o Nisonger Center
The Ohio State University
1581 Dodd Drive
McC Campbell Hall, Room 257
Columbus, OH 43210-1257

“Adult siblings and disability professionals gather to exchange information and ideas, and share similar life experiences at the Ohio Adult Sibling Conference.”

Questions about the conference or other sibling concerns? Contact Tom Fish at fish.1@osu.edu or 614.292.7550. The conference is funded in part by a grant from the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council, Project SOS (Support of Siblings)



Above: Special thanks to F. Gregory Schneller for his design of the Pipeline mini-logo. It will mark Pipeline article completion and serve as a visual break.

In Future Issues of Pipeline ...

In addition to feature articles, and state and national news, you may expect to read profiles of ODMRDD key staff, and legislative information to help you understand various issues.

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Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities
Ted Strickland, Governor

John L. Martin, Director



Pipeline will be published at least twice monthly.

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Wednesday, March 21, 2007
Volume 1, Issue 5

We hope you enjoy the new Pipeline, and share your thoughts with us at feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us

In this issue

- 1. Luncheon Honors 64 for Outstanding Efforts
- 2. ODMRDD Key Staff Profile, Mike Rench
- 3. Survey to Develop New Model for Consultant Services

1. Luncheon Honors 64 for Outstanding Efforts ... OACBMRDD Annual Conference Hosts Awardees...

Each year, the Ohio Association of County Boards of MRDD (OACBMRDD) hosts the Statewide MRDD Awareness Awards at a luncheon in Columbus, in collaboration with Ohio Public Images (OPI) and the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council). The luncheon honors individuals and organizations for excellence in providing greater awareness and understanding of people with disabilities, and presents honors in 19 categories, including public service and self-advocacy.

“And the Self-Advocate of the year is *Maria Bowen*, of Union County!” announced Pamela McCort, president of Ohio Public Images. At the March 14 Awards Luncheon, Maria received a standing ovation as she made her way triumphantly to the podium to say a few words about herself and her commitment to self-determination.



Maria Bowen, Self-Advocate of the Year

Maria's nomination stated that she is "...A tireless volunteer who regularly devotes countless hours of service on a regular basis throughout Union County. Among her activities is coordinating the Job Club for individuals served by the employment services division of Union County MRDD. She also started a daytime group, 'Lunch Bunch,' that addresses social needs of individuals who work in the community."

Just before Maria stepped up to the podium to receive her colorful ‘Passion Flower’* award and certificate, *Vickie Crabtree* had made her way up the aisle for her award as Runner-Up Self-Advocate of the Year. Vickie represented Stark MRDD, and is a regular volunteer in a soup kitchen in Canton that supplies meals to nearly 2,000 people each year. She started volunteering there in 1990, after receiving some meals from the center, herself. She indicated that she wanted to ‘give back’ to others for the services she had received. *Way to go Maria and Vickie!* There was no doubt about their feelings as awardees – their enthusiastic smiles said it all, as they shook hands and exchanged hugs.

The more than 60 other awardees (detailed in the pdf of the Luncheon Program attached to this Pipeline) included Awards of Merit and Awards of Excellence for efforts ranging from a very large art show (ODMRDD and OACBMRDD, honored jointly for coordination of the *Images Seen Art Show*, October/ November, 2006, displaying more than 350 works of art by people with disabilities), to the Rotary Club of Lancaster’s award for their long-term support of people with MRDD in their community and throughout Fairfield County.

It was clear following the luncheon program, that the more than 300 people in attendance were now even more motivated to help others, “Focus on What We Can Do.” Lon Mitchell, executive director, OPI, (and the golden voice of the awards video shown during the luncheon) summed it up, “I can’t wait to see the award nominations for next year. Somehow, the entries just keep getting better and better.”



Vickie Crabtree, runner-up Self-Advocate of the Year

“ Focus on what we can do.”

For additional information about the luncheon honorees, open the attached OPI/DD Council Award Luncheon Program pdf, attached to this issue of Pipeline.

* *Passion Flowers* are products of the Athens County Board of MRDD art program, *PassionWorks*, and may be viewed at www.passionworks.org

2. Key Staff Profile, Mike Rench

... ODMRDD Deputy Director, Community Services ...



Mike Rench, Deputy Director, Community Services

Pipeline will provide brief profiles of each ODMRDD Deputy Director in upcoming issues. The first of these is Mike Rench, who joined the ODMRDD early this year as Deputy Director, Community Services. Mike came to the Department from the Hamilton County Board of MRDD.

“What I’ve always appreciated about Mike,” said ODMRDD Director, John L. Martin, “is his straightforward communications style, and his total honesty in how he conducts business.”

It appears this reputation preceded Mike's coming to the ODMRDD, as Cheryl Phipps, Hamilton County Board of MRDD Superintendent, had this to say about him, "Although Mike will be sorely missed locally, we are thrilled that one of our own will be joining in the important statewide work of providing person-centered, quality, cost-effective services to the thousands of individuals with disabilities in Ohio."

... "A straightforward communications style, and total honesty in how he conducts business ..."

And, it appears that Mike is doing just that. Within just a couple of months, Mike carefully has taken stock of what is currently on the plate (a very large plate) in the division of Community Services, and started to sort it all out, thoughtfully.

Director Martin notes, "Mike's values include enjoying the hard work it takes to manage the kinds of challenges and issues inherent in the process of moving forward. I'm confident he will get the job done and treat folks well along the way."

Mike was with the Hamilton County Board of MRDD for 11 years, and has more than 30 years of experience in related areas.

3. Survey to Develop New Model for Consultant Services

... Access it at www.mrdd.ohio.gov ...

The ODMRDD is developing a new model for consultant services. Your input will be most valuable in reinventing a consultant model that meets the needs and concerns of the people we serve. The survey is easily accessible through the ODMRDD website at any of the three links listed below. Your participation in the survey will help improve consultant services to the field, and Systems Innovation and Technical Assistance (SITA), the Division responsible for consultant management, appreciates all survey feedback from stakeholders.

Survey results will be reviewed by Kelly Miller, Consultant Manager. For questions regarding the survey, contact Kelly Miller at Kelly.Miller@dmr.state.oh.us or 614-728-2520.

Survey links:

<http://mrdd.ohio.gov/ss/wsb.dll/webdev/consultant.htm>

<http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/counties/odmrdd.htm>

<http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/families/odmrdd.htm>

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Thursday, December 6, 2007

Feds Approve New 'Daily Billing Unit' for Homemaker Personal Care Services

The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has approved an ODMRDD proposal to create a Daily Billing Unit (DBU) to calculate Homemaker Personal Care (HPC) services provided to Individual Options (IO) waiver enrollees in shared residential settings. The new DBU will be used by service providers and county boards to simplify the daily billing calculations associated with delivering HPC services to people in shared settings.

The ODMRDD understands there are provider concerns regarding the use of the DBU calculation at night when people are sleeping. During these times, some people may only need staff onsite in case of emergency, while others in the home may require active HPC services such as feeding. ODMRDD has developed a way to address these situations that will allow providers and county boards to document staff time consistently. For details, visit our homepage at <http://mrdd.ohio.gov> under Waiver Transition Updates to review the document, "*ODMRDD interpretation for the Daily Billing Unit: settings where both OSOC and HPC routine are required in congregate settings.*"

A key component to the new DBU is to ensure consistency across Ohio in determining the amount of services an individual needs in a day, which is different from the cost of his or her services. Many counties and providers are now using a tool called the '20/20' to calculate these amounts. The 20/20 tool is being updated by the Franklin County Board of MRDD, and will be shared with other counties that choose to use it. Also, for those counties that prefer to use their own different calculation tools, ODMRDD will work directly with them to ensure compatibility with the new DBU.

Next Steps

Now that the Daily Billing Unit proposal has been approved, all parties involved need to work together to assure that everything CMS has asked regarding waiver transition is completed. Here are five scenarios in line with this transition:

- 1) People *not* sharing HPC services with others but are using negotiated rates, will need to begin using the 15 minute billing units in order to get HPC services (this would include individuals living at home with their family and on an IO or Level One waiver). This

must begin no later than **December 31, 2007**. If a person has an appeal filed, it is possible that they may continue to use the negotiated rate. However, there is no guarantee that an appeal will automatically mean a person will stay with the former negotiated rates. At best, one may be able to use those rates until a hearing decision is final.

- 2) People receiving Adult Foster Care services who are using negotiated rates, must begin to use the new Adult Foster Care daily rate no later than **December 31, 2007**.
- 3) People sharing HPC services with others and using a negotiated rate, *may* have until **March 1, 2008**, to make the transition to the DBU, however, *Ohio has not received official approval of this request. When we hear from CMS the information will be shared.*
- 4) People using Adult Foster Care and 15 minute units will need to use the new Adult Foster Care daily rate. We have asked CMS to allow them to have until **March 1, 2008**, to make the transition to the Adult Foster Care daily rate, however, *Ohio has not received official approval of this request. When we hear from CMS the information will be shared.*
- 5) People sharing HPC services with others and using the 15 minute billing unit, have already made one transition. Those people will eventually need to change from using the 15 minute unit to the DBU within one year of the date the Daily Billing Unit rule is filed. *Ohio has not received official approval of this request. When we hear from CMS the information will be shared.*

Department's Goals for Transition Progress

The ODMRDD wants to assure all who need to transition by December 31, 2007 know they need to make changes in how their services are being paid. The total number of people who will need to transition by December 31, 2007, is 607, statewide. To help counties expedite the transition process, ODMRDD staff will be contacting county boards that have a small number of people in their county who share HPC services and who are still using the negotiated rates. It is important that affected county boards work to complete the cost projection planning related to the DBU for individuals who share HPC services.

ODMRDD staff also will be contacting the Ohio Provider Resource Association (OPRA) to determine which providers have the highest number of individuals to transition. Those providers, along with their county board partners, will work together to create transition plans for the people they serve. It is important these partners work together so a transition plan can be created for those who need to transition in December, and also for those who will need to transition later in 2008.

In a future issue of Pipeline we will report our system's current status on this matter, and next steps as we work together to complete the transition to a statewide waiver reimbursement system.



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Friday, November 9, 2007

Ralph Keller to Head Warrensville Developmental Center

Effective November 26, 2007, Ralph Keller will become Superintendent of Warrensville Developmental Center. Keller has been involved in the MRDD arena for more than 20 years including a broad range of experience within the County Boards system, most recently as Manager of Service and Support Administrators at Miami County Board of MRDD in Troy, Ohio.

Keller was selected for the Superintendent position recently vacated by William Green, who left the position July 2007. Over the years Keller has facilitated and coordinated services with numerous community organizations, governmental entities, and area businesses, to create unique vocational, educational, and life-skills services for a diverse population of individuals with disabilities.

In accepting the position, Keller noted, "I am especially excited about the prospect of developing relationships within the community served by Warrensville Developmental Center, and expanding the Center's role as a resource for local County Board staff and others. There is so much talent and experience to share, and I look forward to providing a vision that allows staff to develop to their full potential."

" ... There is so much talent and experience to share, and I look forward to providing a vision that allows staff to develop to their full potential. "

Ginnie Whisman, ODMRDD Assistant Deputy Director for Developmental Centers, notes, "Ralph has dedicated his entire career to providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities. We feel fortunate to have Ralph leading Warrensville D.C., and becoming part of the Community Services team."

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Wednesday, September 12, 2007

- 1. ODMRDD Futures Committee Membership Composition Completed**
- 2. Tax Relief deadline Looms for Homestead Exemption Applications**

1. Futures Committee Membership Composition Completed



The ODMRDD Futures Committee has been fortunate to have many people express interest in working on this project. The Committee is now preparing to begin its work through four subcommittees, and we are very appreciative of the willingness expressed by so many people volunteering to participate in the process.

There are 46 people, including 21 members of the Futures Committee defined in statute, serving on the four supporting subcommittees. These subcommittees are: Accessing Services and Supports; Delivering Quality Services; Financing; and, Serving Populations with Specialized Needs.

The subcommittees working on MRDD Futures issues are designed to be well-balanced to include representatives of many stakeholders in Ohio's MRDD system. Fourteen of the subcommittee membership are people served by the system – individuals, parents, or advocates -- providing solid representation from those who know and use MRDD services. Providers of services are also participating on subcommittees with a total of nine representatives. In addition, ten subcommittee members are representatives of County Boards of MRDD and Superintendents, and representatives from labor organizations, and state and local governments comprise the remaining participants. Each committee has members from each of these groups.

With more than 75 people volunteering to serve on MRDD Futures subcommittees, it allowed us to create balance for all of the subcommittees. It is also important to note, however, that it was difficult to cull from the 75 volunteers, individuals to fill only 25 seats for non committee members -- therefore many who expressed interest were not able to be accommodated. The Futures Committee leadership acknowledges that the need to maintain manageable subcommittee size made for tough decisions on final committee membership, and that the interest in the Futures Committee work clearly demonstrates the importance of the work to be done.

The Futures Committee sincerely thanks every person who offered his or her name for consideration as a subcommittee member, and hopes that the interest in our work remains strong. We have informed subcommittee members about their involvement, so if you were not among those notified, we ask that

you continue to follow the work of MRDD futures at <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/odmrdd.htm>, or attend any meetings that are of interest. Anyone interested in providing direct input into the Futures process may do so by using futures-feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us. Please see the roster of subcommittee members below.

***MRDD Futures Committee Member**

DELIVERING QUALITY SERVICES

Laura Glenn*

Parent

Chair

Name	Organization
John Hannah	Self Advocate
Dan Ohler*	OACBMRDD
Cheryl Phipps	Hamilton CBMRDD Supt.
Ernie Strickland*	Recipient of MRDD services
Kate Haller	ODMRDD
Davida Russell*	OAPSE
Senator Robert Spada*	Ohio Senate
Pat Cloppert	Parent Advocate
David Robinson	OPRA
Mark Davis	OPRA
Nisi Pozderac*	Ohio Health Care Association

SERVING POPULATIONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Barb Yavorcik*

Ohio Autism Society, Parent

Chair

Name	Organization
Bill Adams*	People First of Ohio
Cindy Ison	APSI
Mark Gerhardtstein	Montgomery CBMRDD Supt.
Terry Ryan	Cuyahoga CMBRDD Supt.
Ginny Roseculp	Southern Ohio COG
Renuka Mayadev	ODMRDD
Monty Blanton*	OCSEA
Senator Ray Miller*	Ohio Senate
Paula Prentiss*	County Commissioners
Bill Watkins	Parent Advocate
Gary Toth	OPRA
Sr. Marianne VanVurst	OPRA

ACCESSING SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

Michael DeFrancesco*

OPRA

Chair

Name	Organization
Gary Tonks*	Arc of Ohio
Nancy Richards*	Ohio Self-Determination Assn.
Karla Rinto	APSI
Tom Armstrong*	OASCBMRDD
Alvin Willis	Auglaize CBMRDD Supt.
Michael Rench	ODMRDD
Representative Jon Peterson*	Ohio House of Representatives
Wynema Melane	Parent Advocate
Anita Allen	OPRA
Patrick Beatty*	ODJFS

FINANCING

Bob Milliken*

OACBMRDD, Family Member

Chair

Name	Organization
Sonya Mawhorter*	Ohio League for the Mentally Retarded
Jed Morison	Franklin CBMRDD Supt.
Heather Kendall	Coshocton CBMRDD Supt.
Tracy Williams	ODMRDD
Representative Brian Williams*	Ohio House of Representatives
Denise Kuhnheim	Parent Advocate
Steve McPeake	OPRA
Maureen Corcoran*	OPRA
David Ellis	Office of Budget and Management

2. Tax Relief Deadline Looms for Homestead Exemption Applications

Ohio is offering tax relief to senior citizens and individuals with disabilities through the new and expanded Homestead Exemption. Proposed by Governor Strickland in early 2007 and enacted by the Ohio General Assembly, the exemption will lower residential property tax bills for all seniors and qualifying individuals who are disabled by an average of \$400.00 each year, regardless of income.

The new Homestead Exemption is open to any Ohio homeowner who currently lives in their own home as their primary residence, and who:

- Is at least 65 years old or will reach age 65 during the current tax year; or
- Is certified totally and permanently disabled as of Jan. 1 of the current tax year, regardless of age; or,

- Is the surviving spouse of a qualified homeowner, and who was at least 59 years old on the date of their spouse's death.

Eligible homeowners may apply for the exemption with their county auditor and applications must be received by Oct. 1, 2007, in order to receive savings on tax bills payable in 2008.

For more information call the Ohio Department of Taxation at (800) 282-1780, or visit the department's Website at tax.ohio.gov. and click on "Homestead Exemption."

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Wednesday, November 7, 2007

In this issue:

1. Letter from Director Martin
2. Statewide Election Results, MRDD Issues



Crowd gathers for Futures Committee meeting at Columbus Developmental Center.

ODMRDD Futures Committee Chair, Director John Martin, Invites Further Participation

The ODMRDD is committed to sharing information and discussing policy options during the Futures Committee process. Since our first meeting on August 30, 2007, we have continued to build on this public process to create venues for all voices to be heard, and for discussions about issues and options for Ohio's MRDD system.

A group of 46 people have been appointed to the Futures Committee representing a broad range of stakeholder groups and areas of interest. In addition, nearly 200 individuals and families have attended meetings hosted by the Committee -- meetings that have focused on shaping a system of quality services that are affordable and accessible to a broad population -- offering some hope and some help to everyone.

As Director of the ODMRDD and head of the Futures Committee, I would like to re-state the group's purpose, as introduced at the first Committee meeting: "The purpose of the Committee is to identify opportunities in the MRDD system to improve individual choice, support quality outcomes, and assure financially sound practices and sustainable funding resources." To this I would add that,

"The system-wide vision will be developed after we receive the input of as many stakeholders as wish to be involved, and not before. There are many difficult issues to address, and our intent is to stay focused, and make decisions based on input and data analysis. "

Toward a System-wide Vision

The Futures Committee invites further participation in these efforts to maintain a strong and positive focus on issues, while assuring the most transparent and accessible public forum possible.

The first round of public testimony begins on Monday, November 26 with hearings from the Financing and Serving Populations with Specialized Needs subcommittees. The Accessing Services and Supports and Delivering Quality Services subcommittees will conduct their hearings on Friday, November 30. The meetings will be held from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm at the Columbus Developmental Center Training Room, 1601 W. Broad St., Columbus.

While there is a March 30, 2008 deadline on the recommendations from this Committee, the Futures Committee is part of an ongoing process to obtain a continuous flow of meaningful input from individuals receiving services; family members; advocacy organizations; providers; County Boards of MRDD; Superintendents and their employees; and, representatives of state and county governments.

I look forward to the active participation of all interested parties in the Futures Committee process and thank all who have done so to this point.

Director John L. Martin

More on the Testimony Process

Public testimony will be limited to 3-5 minutes, but written comments of any length can be submitted in person or through the MRDD Futures Website via an email to: Futures-Feedback@odmrdd.state.oh.us. We encourage everyone who wishes to testify to notify the Department via e-mail so that we can accommodate as many as possible during the scheduled times. More information regarding the testimony scheduled times, process and protocol, will be available on the Futures Committee website at www.mrdd.ohio.gov/futures

The ODMRDD is committed to supporting this effort through MRDD Futures Committee members, the Department's electronic newsletter Pipeline, and the Futures Committee website at www.mrdd.ohio.gov/futures Each of these communications tools are provided to make all information available, to deliver news and additional information, and to receive comments and input.



Looking to the Future



**Results of the November 6, 2007 Election,
MRDD Levies, Statewide**



Clermont County, a .75 mill renewal for 5 years. **Passed, 64.5% For**

Clinton County, a 1.5 mill replacement. **Passed, 63% For**

Columbiana County, a 2.5 mill additional for 10 years. **Failed, 57% Against**

Defiance County, a .85 mill replacement for 5 years. **Passed, 65% For**

Montgomery County, a 5.21 combined human services replacement. **Passed, 58.5% For**

Morrow County, a 1.31 mills renewal for 5 years. **Failed, 57% Against**

Muskingum County, a 3 mill replacement. **Passed, 55% For**

Paulding County, a 1.4 mill renewal. **Passed, 60% For**

Preble County, a 1 mill additional. **Failed, 52% Against**

Seneca County, a .5 mill renewal. **Passed, 72%**

*Information obtained from the individual County Board offices. Thank you!
Congratulations to all who passed their levies, and best of luck next time to those whose issues
did not pass. More info at: Ohio Secretary of State website at: <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/>*

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