

Approved Minutes
Vermont State Rehabilitation Council
POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

Thursday, November 4, 2023

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

Meeting called by:

Sherrie Brunelle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Members Present:

- Andrea Bacchi
- Sherrie Brunelle
- Cari Kelly
- Tara Shatney (non-voting)
- Emily Wagner

Members Absent:

- Jacquie Kelley (start next meeting)
- Laura Siegel

SRC Liaison:

- James Smith

SRC Coordinator:

- Janice Leonard

Speakers or Presenters:

- n/a

Guests:

- n/a

Interpreters:

1. Introductions (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Everyone went around and introduced themselves. Welcome to the new members Tara Shatney and Emily Wagner. We are so happy to have you join us.

Conclusions:

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

2. Approval of Agenda (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. It was recommended that we move the Home Modification chapter up on the agenda before Health Services. The agenda was voted on with this change. Andrea moved to approve the agenda as modified and it was seconded by Emily. No discussion. Vote was unanimous 3-0-0.

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Finalize agenda and upload to SRC Website, **Janice Leonard, 11/30/23**

3. Open for Public Comment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

No one from the public was present.

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the Minutes from May 4, 2023. Andrea moved to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Emily. No discussion. Vote unanimous 3-0-0

Sherrie asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the Minutes from September 7, 2023. Andrea moved to approve the minutes and it was seconded by Emily. No discussion. Vote unanimous 3-0-0

Conclusions:

May 4, 2023, and September 7, 2023 minutes were approved.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

Approved minutes uploaded to SRC website and link emailed to members,
Janice Leonard, 11/30/23.

5. Rate Setting Policy (James Smith)

Discussion:

Defer this discussion until we have RSA (Rehab Services Administration) feedback.

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

6. VOTE: Chapter 306, Rehabilitation Technology Services (James Smith)

Discussion:

- James Summary:
 - Also known as Assistive Technology (AT).
 - Any device, physical or technological to assist with employment. Example: a tool to open a jar, to highly complicated technology. AT evolves rapidly.
 - The Vermont Assistive Technology Program (VATP) is embedded in HA and we give them funds to help our participants.
 - If a counselor thinks a participant needs AT, refer to VATP.
 - If AT is over \$2,000 the Regional Manager needs to sign off. No spending guidelines are included in the policy because costs change rapidly.
- Committee thoughts/feedback
 - Rehab technology definition is not consistent with regulation. 361.4.48.b.17 need to add language.
 - Italicized text fits under Rehab Engineering section.
 - Add an introduction explaining that we address rehab technology in this chapter and rehab engineering in another.
 - Paragraph B from current policy was removed, goes in home modification chapter
 - RSA language regarding spending guidelines, no absolute limits on expenditures and an exceptions process need to be included.
 - Need to add: HA cannot require SSI participants to contribute to the cost of services.

- Need consistent use of terms: participant, consumer, etc.
Agreed use participant.

Conclusions:

- Is the group prepared to vote for the proposed policy with the suggested changes? With Cari's arrival, a quorum is present and can vote.

VOTE: Andrea moved that we approve revisions to Chapter 306 with recommended changes. Emily seconded. No discussion. Approved 4-0-0

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

James will make changes and forward the approved policy to RSA for review.

7. Rebranding Name- Inconsistency It was noted that there are inconsistent references to DVR since the rebranding began. Verbiage differs with some references to VR (documents) and others to HA (media). Confusing for people seeking services.

Conclusions:

Need to bring this issue to the full SRC.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

Janice will add this issue to the agenda of the Steering Committee for the next meeting on 1/11/24.

8. VOTE: Chapter 315, Home Modifications Discussion:

James Summary:

- New chapter
- Rare service for HA Vermont.
- We provide if necessary to achieve or maintain employment.
- Limit work to what is necessary to achieve or maintain employment

Committee Comments:

- Members discussed concerns about the use of volunteers for home modifications in terms of HA liability. Should we restrict ourselves to "qualified and insured" instead of volunteers.

- Spending guidelines require bidding but with a limit of \$5,000. If over this, a Regional Manager needs to approve.
- Should we have categories for modifications? Interior vs exterior?
- Do we need to add the term Rehab Engineering in this chapter to comply with RSA definitions.
- Need to use gender neutral references
- Where reference “manager” policy doesn’t specify the type of manager.
- Section B, States regional managers should maintain copies of building codes. Not clear why. What are they expected to do with these. Recommend remove that section.
- Paragraph C, “counselor will inspect work and sign off on it.” How would they necessarily be qualified? Is this just to verify that the work is complete? The RSA monitoring audit focused on how to verify expenditures/rates. Can this verification be part of the contract? Can it be signed off by professional and participant? This is done through case services contract – add language: vendor must have proof of insurance, complete description of work, breakdown of cost, proof work is done to code.
- Section 3, Para B of (spending guidelines) Need to delete reference to funding of post-secondary education and training.

Conclusions:

- There were many edits and feedback. James will return with a revised version for a vote.
- There should also be language regarding the need to search for comparable services or benefits. Cannot restrict cost. Cost will be the result of the bidding process and other available resources.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- James will make the suggested revisions and return to the group for a vote.

9. VOTE: Chapter 302, Health Services

Discussion:

James Review of changes:

- HA is required to pay for physical and mental health services to support participants to return to work. But availability of comparable benefits must be explored and determined not available.
- This service is used infrequently due to Vermont’s robust insurance.

- Typical expenditures are for e.g., dental, orthopedic, optical services. Funds are also used to cover costs exceeding insurance payments.
- Got rid of payments language. HA to use BC/BS standard rates for payment. If over \$3,000 must get Regional Manager approval

Committee Comments:

- Definition #5 Need to add "and clinic services" for consistency with 34 CFR Sec. 361.5 (c) (39)(v).
- Definition #12 Discussion whether need add hearing aids. Covered in a different policy and need the term to be broad to cover full range of speech and hearing- services. Also, definition #7 references hearing aids. Keep as written consistent with regulations.
- Section 2, General Policy. Add reference to chapter 103 (Comparable Services and Benefits).
- Top of page 3, paragraph b is guidance not policy. It's not in statute. Remove or move to guidance.
- Section 4, Spending Guidelines, last sentence states: If cost exceeds \$3,000 supervisor approval is required but what level of supervisor is intended. Need to add approval by the Regional Manager.

Conclusions:

Health Services Policy is approved as modified:

Andrea made a Motion to approve chapter 302, Health Services with modifications discussed in this meeting, it was seconded by Cari.
Approved 4-0-0

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

James will make changes and send the revised policy to RSA for review.

10. VOTE: Chapter 308, Self-Employment

Discussion:

Table vote until to the next meeting due lack of time.

Conclusions:

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

James will have revised policy ready for vote next meeting.

11. Policy Review: Chapter 101, Confidentiality Discussion:

Table until the next meeting due to a lack of time.

Conclusions:

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

12. Other Business & Agenda Setting (Group)

- **Other Business Discussion:**

Conclusions:

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- **Agenda Setting: January 4, 2024**

Discussion:

- Vote: Chapter 308, Self-Employment
- Vote: Chapter 315, Home Modifications
- Review: Chapter 101, Confidentiality
- Informational: If reviewed by RSA, Review the Rate Setting

Conclusions:

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

13. Adjournment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Sherrie called the meeting adjourned at 11:57 a.m.

Meeting Action Items, Person Responsible and Deadlines:

- Finalize agenda and upload to SRC Website, **Janice Leonard, 11/30/23.**

- Draft minutes for this meeting, send to Committee Chair for comment then upload to SRC website, **Janice Leonard, 11/30/23.**
- Finalize approved minutes for last meeting and upload to SRC website **Janice Leonard, 11/30/23.**
- Add Rebranding inconsistencies to the Steering Committee.
Rebranding Name- inconsistent HA vs VR verbiage within HA media and contracts – **bring to full SRC.** It says a division of VR on some documents.