

Approved Minutes
Vermont State Rehabilitation Council
POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

Thursday, September 5, 2024
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Virtual Meeting

Meeting called by:

Laura Siegel, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Members Present:

- Andrea Bacchi
- Sherrie Brunelle
- Jacquie Kelley
- Laura Siegel
- Tara Shatney (non-voting)
- Emily Wagner

Members Absent:

- Sarah Sterling
- Amanda Wheeler
- Cari Kelly, excused

SRC Liaison:

- James Smith
- Suzanne Hopkins

SRC Coordinator:

- Janice Leonard

Speakers or Presenters:

- n/a

Guests:

- n/a

Interpreters:

- Mareike Larsen
- Bobbi Nicole Comtois

1) Introductions (Laura Siegel)

Discussion:

The group members introduced themselves, welcome back to Sherrie.

Conclusions:

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

2) Approval of Agenda (Laura Siegel)

Discussion:

Laura asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. Jacqueline moved to approve the agenda, and it was seconded by Emily. No discussion. Vote was unanimous 7-0-0

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Finalize agenda and upload to SRC Website, **Janice Leonard, 9/30/24**

3) Open for Public Comment (Laura Siegel)

Discussion:

No one from the public was present.

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4) Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (Laura Siegel)

Discussion:

Laura asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the Minutes from March 2, 2024. Emily moved to approve the minutes, and it was seconded by Jacqueline. No discussion. Vote unanimous 7-0-0.

Conclusions:

Minutes approved.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Approved minutes uploaded to SRC website and link emailed to members, **Janice Leonard, 9/30/24**

5) Draft Review: Chapter 313, Audiology Services and Hearing Aids

(James Smith)

Discussion:

Discussion:

- Section 1. Definitions:
 - Add Hyperacusis, to section b. It's very different from tinnitus. (Pain from noise). Tinnitus has similar symptoms as Hyperacusis. Then why tinnitus and not hyperacusis.
 - Where could we include hyperacusis.
 - Audiology Services/Assessment: too broad, is it an evaluation or screening (these must be completed by a different level of professional; audiologist vs lower-level practitioner)? Less than a moderate hearing loss goes to screening, evaluation is more precise, more accurate.
 - Audiogram/hearing assessment
 - Should we broaden "hearing aid", to include other hearing devices?
- Need to clarify intent of Policy – hearing loss only or hearing-related conditions requiring hearing aids
 - Guidance around disability criteria for hearing loss only?
 - Hearing loss and issues around hearing loss.
 - We do not have policies for all conditions, which are not realistic. We have educated, qualified staff who should be able to adapt.
 - Add an appendix to policy to clarify the related disabilities? There are many related conditions.
- To qualify, HA needs a statement from audiologist or ENT.
- Do we call this Hearing Services (not include "hearing aids").
- Workplace Communications Assessment tool is referred to in this policy. Tara hasn't seen it. It does exist and says that a participant can qualify based on hearing loss or related condition. How does this tool affect eligibility

James Response

- Policy is about a service not a condition. We have staff to work with the issues. All conditions are not listed in policies.
- Andrea has a strong feeling about awareness of hyperacusis. Where do we include this. Can she work with the HA Outreach and education? She is welcome to work with them to help improve awareness of hyperacusis and other people with disabilities who don't know that HA offers services.

- There are two levels of need in this policy. One is the need for staff to have updated insurance guidance. This needs to be done short term, the changes being suggested will require more time. James suggests that the SRC approves the changes that are related to insurance guidance now and makes the changes included in this draft just related to insurance, so counselors have updated guidance. Then bring this back to the group for further changes.

Sherrie moved that we approve the policy now with the insurance changes today. This was seconded by Andrea. Voted unanimously 7-0-0.

Conclusions:

Policy revision approved as moved.

We need to discuss additional revisions further. The policy needs to be clear to identify the person whose need is met here with this policy. Awareness of Hyperacusis and where does this belong in policy also needs to be further discussed.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

Further review of policy is needed

6) Draft Review: Chapter 312, Transportation (James Smith)

Discussion:

James presented an overview of proposed changes to the policy. James formed a small work group of counselors to look at this (Tara was a member of this group). One counselor from each region. They came up with several recommendations:

- 1c. Changed term "cost effective" with Cost Sustainability". Intent is to ensure participant is able to maintain the vehicle over time.
- Exact wording changes can be found in the policy attached to these minutes.
- Add mention of purchasing bicycles as an option
- Increase spending guidelines for car repair from to \$2,500 and purchase up to \$5,000.
- Added language around exceptions: We cannot require SSI/SSDI participants to contribute to cost of services.
- Participants have sought funding for car repair and/or purchase then do not participate in services.

- Wording should be changed to include working towards a plan goal as a condition of HA support for car repair, car purchase, or other transportation services.
- C. added, must have a valid driver's license
- D. Vehicle purchase – added "and Lease"
- D1c add or engaged in a credentialed training or educational program.
- Spending guidance change to \$2500 for repairs and \$5,000 for purchase
- F Drivers Education/Lessons has been added noting that this will not be funded where education would cover costs. Also indicated that that lessons for adults may be financially supported with a funding guideline of \$500. Add wording about exceptions process.

Group Comments:

- Add wording: 3f. Attend scheduled meetings and follow through with developed plan is expected.
- Last section of a, last two are duplicative, need to combine.
- Change for consistent use of terms – HA vs VR. Also, applicants or participants instead of consumers.
- Add that interpretive services for driving test to be covered? Is this under HA umbrella? (James wants to get input from HA counselors for D/deaf have to say about this and get back to the group. This must have come up). DMV won't provide interpretative services while in the car, during test.
- G. Full Vehicle Modifications and Purchases is new title. Added Specialist Counselor.
- G1 change "van" to "modified vehicle." This should already be changed throughout the policy.
- Include HA will support the Driver's Evaluation.

Sherrie moved that SRC would like to review the next draft before approving. Take this up at the next meeting. Laura seconded. Voted unanimously 7-0-0.

Conclusions:

Policy requires further revision beyond changes related to insurance.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

James will make edits and clean up. Sherrie will review the revised draft and provide James with any comments on revised draft changes. James will present the revised version at the next meeting.

7) Status of Policies (James Smith)

Discussion:

- Public meeting was held this week on the chapters:
 - Rehab Tech
 - Home modifications
 - Health Services
- No comments received, so these will be put live online.
- Supported Employment is still on to-do list

Conclusions:

- Three policies are now final and posted online

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

8) Other Business & Agenda Setting (Group)

a. Agenda Setting: November 7, 2024

Discussion:

Next Meeting:

- Transportation
- Confidentiality

Future:

- Supported Employment
- Hearing Services
- Customized Employment vs Supported Employment

Conclusions:

- We have made progress and a plan for the next meeting

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

9) Adjournment (Laura Siegel)

Laura 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, 9/30/24.**
- Draft minutes for this meeting, send to Committee Chair for comment then upload to SRC website, **Janice Leonard, 9/30/24.**

- Finalize approved minutes for last meeting and upload to SRC website
Janice Leonard, 9/30/24.