



Spring 2009

The OAPMRDD

Newsline

Ohio Association of Professionals for the Mentally Retarded/Developmentally Disabled
An Affiliated Department of the Ohio Education Association

OAPMRDD members represented during Futures Commission implementation planning

OAPMRDD began taking shape in 1981, partly with the goals of making MRDD members more visible within OEA and within the Ohio Department of MRDD. OEA has been on board with recognizing MRDD members in meaningful ways for years. Getting the Department to do the same has been a longer road, but it seems to have finally come about.

OAPMRDD leaders have taken part in the Department's Futures Commission activities - members gave testimony at the initial hearings, provided written comments, and had direct contact with Department deputies. Subsequent to that phase of the process, several members were appointed to Implementation committees.

The most active Implementation committee is developing a Single Review Process and Tool for assessing services provided by both boards of MRDD and by private providers. This tool would combine elements of many of the assessments now in use, with the goal of having fewer, but more comprehensive, reviews. It would conserve board and provider resources while ensuring quality services and the health and safety of consumers.

Two OAPMRDD leadership people, Jurgen Von Tresckow and Jené Wilson, sit on this committee with Department staff, private providers, superintendents, and Board staff. The OAPMRDD members' focus has been to advocate

that private providers be held to the same certification, licensure, and safety standards as boards. OAPMRDD's participation on this committee has been welcomed, and it is anticipated that the final product will reflect the views of all stakeholders.

With this development comes the realization that OAPMRDD has become a valid and powerful voice for MRDD members and consumers, not only within our own organization, OEA, but also within the state. It may have been a long road, but it's one that was worth traveling.

Jené Wilson
OAPMRDD Chairperson

Conference welcomes John Martin



This past March, for the first time, OAPMRDD was pleased to host the director of the Ohio Department of MRDD as the keynote speaker at our Annual Leadership Conference.

Director John Martin spoke about the ODMRDD 2010-11 budget recommendations, financial challenges facing the agency, and how the federal stimulus dollars will be distributed to county boards. He said he was proud of the new Futures Waiver for Autism, assured us that there are no plans to close more state developmental centers, and said that there will be a push to increase occupancy in supported living settings to five people.

OAPMRDD members, who provide direct service to people with MRDD, didn't miss the opportunity to directly question, make recommendations, and give feedback to the director.

Sue Bour
OAPMRDD Secretary

All are welcome to the next OAPMRDD Executive Committee meeting:

Saturday
July 11th, 2009
10:30 am - 12:30 pm

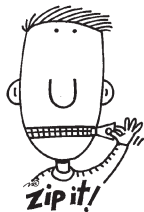
Hudson UniServ Office
591 Boston Mills Road
Hudson, Ohio
800/654-4034
330/929-2882





Advice and warnings to members from OEA attorney

Members who didn't make this year's OAPMRDD Leadership Conference missed these important legal updates from Kathy McKinley, OEA Attorney :



- Public employees are not always entitled to *Freedom of Speech*. Although you will generally be protected if speaking as a citizen on a matter of *public* concern (for example, writing a letter to the editor criticizing the school board handling of a bond issue), there is no protection when speaking as an employee on a matter of *private* concern (for example, gripes about workplace conditions and internal office procedures are not constitutionally protected).
- Information on websites such as MySpace and Facebook can be used by your employer or the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Professional Conduct to take employment action

for "conduct unbecoming the profession". Employees do not have First Amendment protection when blogging about personal matters. Keep blogs "G" rated.

- There are 181 criminal charges that can compromise your employment (as outlined by House Bill 428, effective 9/12/08).
- Your license can automatically be denied or revoked without an administrative hearing if you are found guilty, plead guilty, or convicted of certain criminal offenses.
- Routine background check requirements revealing past offenses and failure to disclose past offenses can compromise your employment.
- At renewal time, contact your OEA LRC if you have any questions regarding conduct or if you have any criminal charges against you.

Joe McCrone
ACCESS. Cuyahoga County

Respect public service! Support the Social Security Fairness Act



Legislation, dubbed the Social Security Fairness Act, has been introduced during this new session of Congress to repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). Public employees in Ohio are urged to organize a letter writing campaign or circulate petitions urging legislators to support the Social Security Fairness Act.

The GPO affects people who work as federal, state or local government employees. It reduces Social Security spousal or survival benefits by two-thirds of their public pension. The WEP affects people who worked in jobs not covered by Social Security (SS) and in jobs where they earned SS benefits. The WEP reduces earned benefits because workers receive a pension. These offsets penalize people who have dedicated their lives to public service. Your action is needed.

Sue Bour
SCEPTA, Stark County

OAPMRDD 2008-2009 calendar

Lunch Mixer at OEA Spring Rep Assembly

- May 8th, 2009

Executive Committee meetings - open to all members!

- July 11th, 2009



The OAPMRDD Newsline

Newsletter of the Ohio Association of Professionals for the Mentally Retarded/Developmentally Disabled

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Members adopt mission and strategic goals for Association

At the OAPMRDD Annual Conference, held March 6th and 7th at Mohican State Park, members adopted a Mission Statement and four Strategic Goals for the organization, with the idea that these would become guiding principles for our association. The Executive Committee decided to offer ideas for implementation of one goal in each of the next four issues of *The Newslines*.

The first goal is: *Promote and preserve county MRDD boards as a viable MRDD service option for consumers –*

- Ensure that the entire spectrum of county board MRDD services is publicized and available as a choice for consumers and their families.
- Ensure continued ODMRDD support in the delivery of county board MRDD services.

Put the words in action

How can locals and members make this meaningful? Here are some ideas to get you started; feel free to think of your own. Please report your ideas and progress to: Jené Wilson, jene@mac.com.



- Work with your administration, SSAs, and other community staff to ensure services of the MRDD board are offered as a choice to consumers. Get a copy of the list that is shared with consumers and monitor it regularly. Keep a copy of the list to share with families and consumers you work with.
- Maintain copies of any brochures or other public information the board publishes to give out to families, consumers, agencies that do business with the board, and other interested community members.
- Start a Public Relations campaign, either as an Association or in conjunction with your Board. Often, funds to conduct PR campaigns are available from your Regional Coordinating Council, Uniserv Council, your District Association, or through an OAPMRDD Public Relations grant.
- Partner with parent or family groups, such as the PTCU, to get the positive message about board services out to the community.
- Talk to your family and neighbors about the valuable service you provide.
- Be a visible and active participant on your Uniserv council to share information about your services with regular education counterparts.

Jené Wilson
OAPMRDD Chairperson

Conference recap

The 2009 OAPMRDD Annual Leadership Conference has faded into history, but what a weekend it was!

Keynote speaker: John Martin, ODMRDD Director

Total in attendance: 68 (62 pre-registered, 6 registering at the conference)

New members: 23

Counties represented: 15 (Allen, Ashland, Auglaize, Clermont, Columbiana, Cuyahoga, Erie, Franklin, Geauga, Lake, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, and Summit)

County with most attendees: Lake, with 13 members (Allen County was second with 11 members)

OAPMRDD Scholarships: Auglaize, Ashland, and Columbiana counties

LRCs in attendance: Todd Jaeck (Gauga), Chlo Leidy (Lake), Shelli Jackson (Auglaize), Bob Matkowski (Stark), Ernest Blanden (Medina)

NEOEA: President Dale Kain attended for the first time.

Total conference cost: \$7644

Cost for food and drink: \$4978

OEA support of conference: \$4200

Plan to attend next year's OAPMRDD conference - mark your calendar for March 5th and 6th, 2010.

Steve Spall
OAPMRDD Vice-Chairperson



Website giveaways at www.oapmrdd.org



Visit our website and look for your OEA membership number on the home page (the individual ID number listed on your OEA membership card). If you see your ID number in the left hand column, you have won a \$40 gift card!

Contact OAPMRDD Chairperson Jené Wilson at jene@mac.com.

Gloria Stansberry
The OAPMRDD Newsline editor

Geauga local to host OPERS

The Metzenbaum Employees Association (MEA) will host a representative from the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System on June 17, 2009, from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Geauga County Board of MR/DD located at 8200 Cedar Road, Chesterland, Ohio, 442076.



All Ohio Education Association members are invited to attend this informative session that will cover the following topics:

- What do you need to do for retirement?
- When do you need to start the paperwork and what paperwork is needed?
- How is the economy affecting the retirement system?
- What about my Health Insurance?
- Question and Answers

If you are interested in attending, please RSVP to Kathy Abrahamson, MEA President, at abr05@aol.com or 440/212-1192.

Kathy Abrahamson
MEA, Geauga County

