



The OAPMR/DD

Newsline

Spring/Summer 2007

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

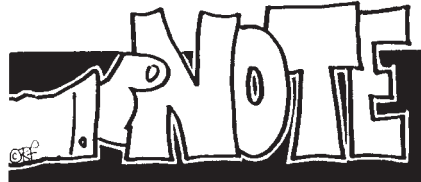
McKinley advises members on Mandatory Reporting bill, state licensure renewals, and investigations

Report professional misconduct, be truthful, cooperate with investigators, get representation

Ohio House Bill 79, the Mandatory Reporting bill, went into effect on March 28th.

The Mandatory Reporting bill applies specifically to employees of MR/DD Boards who are issued certificates or licenses from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). It requires that certain allegations be forwarded to ODE's Office of Professional Conduct and that renewals only be issued after a criminal records check.

Allegations of professional misconduct, as defined in the Ohio Revised Code, must be reported to ODE, as well as "conduct unbecoming" a professional. Kathy McKinley, OEA Plan Attorney, advises that, although there are guidelines for this in the Ohio Ad-



ministrative Code, locals would do well not to specifically define conduct unbecoming in their contracts and instead deal with instances on a case-by-case basis.

When renewing your license, it is essential that all questions be answered truthfully, even if you think that something in your past could be problematic. Lying on the application could automatically cause the Department to refuse your renewal. If you are concerned, contact your OEA Labor Relations Consultant immediately.

Kathy McKinley also advises members to cooperate with any ODE investigations, as refusal to do so can result in your being subpoenaed. It's important to keep copies of any work papers that you sign for as long as you work and into retirement. Licensed staff can be charged with a felony for up to six years after retirement and with a misdemeanor for up to three.

Finally, do not decline an offer to have a representative in a meeting with an administrator or department investigator. Doing so will negate your Weingarten Rights and could cause you undue harm.

Jené Wilson
OAPMR/DD Vice-Chairperson

Retirees welcomed to OAPMR/DD

After retirement, members can now continue their membership and involvement in OAPMR/DD.

The annual OAPMR/DD business meeting held last March considered a revision to the OAPMR/DD constitution and bylaws. The proposed change would allow members who have retired to continue their membership in OAPMR/DD. Retirees would still be expected to hold membership in the United Education Profession or OEA-Retired to qualify.

The amendment passed unanimously, with Lifetime Membership for retirees set at \$35.

Sue Bour
OAPMR/DD Secretary



All are welcome to the next OAPMR/DD Executive Committee meeting:

Saturday
September 8th, 2007
10:30 am - 12:30 pm

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





A future for county boards?

Ohio is the only state that has maintained a county-administered system, in addition to a state board of mental retardation/developmental disabilities, for the education and habilitation of people with disabilities. The value of this dual system has been under discussion for years, with some advocating the elimination of the county boards of MR/DD.



During testimony before the state legislature, John Martin, director of the Ohio Department of MR/DD (ODMRDD), outlined a project to "study and develop recommendations to improve service delivery, enhance the funding partnership between the ODMRDD and the county boards, streamline system processes, and plan changes needed in Ohio's MR/DD system." Of specific concern to OAPMR/DD members, Martin said the study would, "examine the efficiency and effectiveness of the current system of separate and concurrent accreditation, licensure, certification, quality assurance, and quality improvement activities." Simply put, this is a question of whether the county MR/DD system should continue, be redesigned, or perhaps even eliminated.

County boards of MR/DD provide early intervention, preschool, school-age, adult, and Service & Support Administration services to people with disabilities. A few counties also provide residential services. Programs are certified by and subject to the standards of either the Department of Education or the ODMRDD. All staff, whether professional or paraprofessional, are certified/licensed and must meet continuing education requirements. Records are open for public review, helping to ensure accountability. All of these factors contribute to the high quality of services provided by the county boards of MR/DD.

If county boards of MR/DD were not providers of service, much of the work would go to private providers. Are private providers held to the same high standards as county boards of MR/DD? It is unclear. Most private providers are similar to charter schools; there are standards to meet, but the standards are not as closely monitored and there is less accountability to the public. Typically, staff salaries are lower and employee turnover is higher. So which system is better?

Should county boards of MR/DD stay or go? Someone needs to commit one way or the other. Either allow county MR/DD programs to continue or decide to eliminate them and begin a phase out. The uncertainty we are facing now is not good for anyone.

Russ O'Brien
OAPMR/DD Chairperson

OAPMR/DD 2007-2008 calendar

Executive Committee meetings - open to all members!

- September 8th, 2007
- November 17th, 2007
- January 5th, 2008
- May 10th, 2008
- July 12th, 2008

OAPMR/DD Annual Issues Conference

- February 29th - March 1st, 2008, Mohican State Lodge

Lunch Mixer at OEA Rep Assemblies

- December 1st, 2007
- April 25th - 26th, 2008



The OAPMRDD Newsline

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

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Members step forward to serve on OEA committees

We have entered a new era of OAPMR/DD representation in the Ohio Education Association. Although OEA Officers and staff continue to represent MR/DD members well, OAPMR/DD leadership has encouraged members to do more to represent themselves.

A number of OAPMR/DD members have stepped forward to volunteer and we now have representation on four of eight OEA committees. OAPMR/DD is committed to recruiting members to fill the MR/DD seat on each committee.

The three-year committee appointments are subject to term limits. Most of the committees meet three to four times a year in Columbus. Meetings are on Saturdays, with an occasional Friday evening meeting. All expenses, including mileage, meals and any

THREE CHEERS!



overnight accommodations, are reimbursed by the OEA.

There are still vacancies on the Collective Bargaining, Member Rights and Protection, and Convention Planning committees for an MR/DD representative. One OAPMR/DD member has come forward to volunteer for the Local Development and Training committee and is yet to be appointed by the OEA Executive Committee.

Specific committee responsibilities are on the OEA website,

www.ohea.org. Please consider volunteering for the open committee positions to help us reach full representation.

If you are interested in filling any of the current vacancies or a future vacancy, contact one of the OAPMR/DD officers.

Thank you and congratulations to everyone who volunteered to serve on an OEA committee:

Jody Butler (Erie Co.)
Organizing Strategy

Ralph Terry Tullis (Franklin Co.)
Professional Efficacy

Mary Jo Nagy (Mahoning Co.)
Legislative

Melody Craik (Columbiana Co.)
Resolutions

Russ O'Brien
OAPMR/DD Chairperson

OAPMR/DD to offer PR grants again this year

The Ohio Association of Professionals for MR/DD will be offering public relations grants again this year.

The PR Grant program is designed to support local associations in developing programs to reinforce the professional image of the MR/DD employee, and to enhance the image of education, work and life skills development for the developmentally disabled. The amount of the local's grant depends on the proposal, but is limited to \$500.

The OAPMR/DD Executive Committee will review grant applications in November. Please review the grant requirements:

- Application deadline is October 31st, 2007.
- Elect delegates to the Fall and Spring OEA Representative Assemblies. Delegates must attend and vote at all assemblies.
- Send members to the annual OAPMR/DD conference.
- Send a representative to at least three OAPMR/DD Executive Committee meetings.

- Submit an article about your project to the OAPMR/DD *Newsline*.
- Grant money must be used for the benefit of your local membership.
- Submit financial statement with receipts by August 1st, 2008.
- Completion deadline is September 2008.

Grant applications were mailed to all MR/DD presidents in early September. If you would like to apply, see your president or contact OAPMR/DD Chairperson Russ O'Brien at MisterO4@aol.com.

Russ O'Brien
OAPMR/DD Chairperson

Deadline for grant reports

- 2006 OAPMR/DD PR Grant Financial Reports are due August 1st, 2007





OAPMR/DD PR Grant supports community involvement in Erie County

Last fall the brainchild of two Erie County MR/DD Employees Association members bloomed into the first annual Halloween Happenings event. People supported by the County Board, Association members, Board administrators, and the community all participated in the event.

Celeste Stein and Doug Armstrong fostered an idea two employees of Double S Industries had to create a haunted house. This "house" quickly grew into a haunted woods, filled with businesses and consumer organizations offering some Halloween treats and a few light-hearted scares.

The Association applied for the OAPMR/DD Public Relations Grant to help support the event. The funds provided through this grant helped to pay for glow-in-the-dark goodie bags, bakery donuts, and to sponsor a live broadcast from local radio station K96.

Approximately 375 children and family members wandered through the field of booths receiving treats and making their way to a shelter house filled with games, face and pumpkin painting, and raffles.

The event was a fabulous opportunity for Association members to give back to the Erie County community. Thank you, OAPMRDD, for your support!

Donna Palazzo
Erie County MRDD Employees Association



www.oapmrdd.org

