



Summer 2006

The OAPMRDD

Newsline

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

Future of Ohio MR/DD services in jeopardy

One of the major topics of discussion at OAPMR/DD Executive Committee meetings, in MR/DD staff lounges, bargaining sessions and social events, is the future of MR/DDs in Ohio. With so many forces stacked against them, how long can they survive?

The removal of the CAFS funding proved to be a big blow to many programs, especially since no replacement has yet been implemented. The reimbursement formulas being discussed at this point do not appear to be adequate to support the kinds of programming that is currently being done. And, the longer it takes for new funding to be put in place, the less

likely that full retroactivity will be part of the plan.

Another major force is the fact that Medicaid is unhappy with Ohio. Our state is one of the last that maintains a separate system for serving people with disabilities. Additionally, Ohio has been cited for not having a statewide plan that allows a person with a disability to access the same services no matter their county of residence.

Private providers are making their mark in many areas and serving consumers who would formerly have been in the public system. New rulings now allow the state, rather than the county, to be the arbiter of costs and services be-

tween the consumer and the provider, which could lead to higher costs for CBMR/DDs.

School districts and families are also playing a role in the decline in people being served. School age and preschool students are increasingly being served in their local district, at the request of families, and districts feel more capable of serving these students. Even among adult consumers, many prefer to work with a private agency rather than rely on the MR/DD, and those in ICF/MRs have no choice but to get their services where the provider chooses.

Jené Wilson
OAPMR/DD Vice-Chairperson

Ohio voters show strong support for their county boards of MR/DD

According to a media release by the Ohio Association of County Boards, voters across Ohio continue support for their local county boards by approving 10 of 13 property tax levies on the May ballot.



"Results demonstrate that Ohioans continue to believe that the responsibility for providing services to our most vulnerable citizens belongs with local county boards, where local accountability is provided at the ballot box," said Dan Ohler, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of County Boards.

Since November of 2001, 154 levies received a "yes" vote from 56.9% of the voters, resulting in the passage of 75.7% of these levies, according to the press release.

Jaime Day
Unit 1 President, KNHCEA

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

**Saturday
November 11th, 2006
10:30 am - 12:30 pm**

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



OEA represents MR/DD members

Members are always asking, "What are OEA and OAPMR/DD doing to represent MR/DD members?" Well, a lot is being done on behalf of members. Representation takes place on three levels. They are the state, department, and local levels.

The state level of representation consists of OEA officers and lobbyists. They monitor proposed legislation and activities of the Ohio Department of MR/DD. OEA lobbyists are very active at the state house. They attend all sessions and hearings that pertain to education, which include MR/DD issues. They also frequently meet with ODMR/DD Directors. When changes were proposed for the Abuser Registry recently, OEA President Gary Allen wrote a letter in opposition, stating the negative impact the changes would have on members.



The department level of representation includes OAPMR/DD officers and executive committee. We meet six times a year to plan activities and hear reports regarding legislation and other issues affecting county boards of MR/DD, our members, and education. The executive committee is comprised of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, and representatives from locals. Each local may send a representative to the executive committee meetings. *The Newslines* editor and an LRC also attend. Activities currently in the planning stages are the 2007 Annual Issues Conference, public relations grants, and *The OAPMRDD Newslines*.

The local level of representation includes local leaders and members. Local leaders take care of the daily business of each association, such as negotiating and maintaining a master agreement. Most important is the member. The mission of OEA and OAPMR/DD is to advocate for members. As you can see, in the ever-changing world of the MR/DD System, we are trying our best to do just that.

As OEA MRDD members you can help with this task. There are currently several local associations that are not represented on the executive committee. I know it seems like a long distance to send a representative to Hudson, but it will be time well spent. You will be helping the executive committee and you will also be helping yourself. For more information visit www.oapmrdd.org.

Russ O'Brien
OAPMR/DD Chairperson

OAPMR/DD 2006-2007 calendar

Executive Committee meetings - open to all members!

- November 18th, 2006
- January 13th, 2007
- May 12th, 2007
- July 14th, 2007

Deadline to apply for P.R. Grant

- October 31st, 2006

OAPMR/DD Annual Issues Conference

- March 2nd-3rd, 2007,
Mohican State Lodge

Lunch Mixer at OEA Rep Assemblies

- December 2nd, 2006
- May 4th, 2007



The OAPMRDD Newslines

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

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Ted Strickland: OEA's endorsed candidate for Governor

- Ted Strickland is correct on all the important issues.
- Ted Strickland has a vision for public education. This vision

THREE CHEERS!



places public education at the center of building a better future for all Ohio citizens. This vision includes enhancing the skills and learning opportunities of the people served by county boards of MR/DD throughout the state by providing the necessary resources to allow county MR/DD employees to meet the needs.

- Ted Strickland will not provide tax breaks to the wealthiest Ohioans that result in sacrificing the services needed to improve the lives of all Ohioans.
- Ted Strickland recognizes the importance of ensuring all Ohioans a reasonable wage. He supports an increased minimum wage. With gas prices at \$3.00 per gallon, no one can survive on \$5.15 per hour.
- Ted Strickland will fund public education (K-16) at a level necessary to provide all Ohioans the new specialized skills being required by both current and prospective employers.
- Ted Strickland will push for dramatically increasing the number of students in Ohio's colleges and universities by broadening access and ensuring that those who attend suc-

ceed and graduate with a degree that counts. Good jobs for fair pay will create a cycle of success that builds its own momentum, creating opportunities for new investment. Economic growth will lead to a growing tax base that will ensure public education and MR/DD funding.

Russ O'Brien
OAPMR/DD Chairperson

OAPMR/DD grant opportunities

The OAPMR/DD Public Relations Grant program has become one of our most successful activities. The program began in 2004 and has helped ten MR/DD associations participate in activities that they would not have been able to afford without OAPMR/DD support.

The OAPMR/DD Public Relations 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 people with developmental disabilities. The amount of the local's grant depends on the proposal but is limited to \$500.

Grant applications are due by October 31st of each year and a summary of activities and receipts are due at the end of August of the following year. The OAPMR/DD Executive Committee will review grant applications in late fall.

Grant applications will be mailed to presidents soon. If you would like additional information, visit our website at www.oapmrdd.org.

Russ O'Brien
OAPMR/DD Chairperson

OAPMR/DD membership drive

When you renew your OEA membership, please remember to renew your membership in OAPMR/DD also. This year, encourage at least one other OEA member to join OAPMR/DD. Membership dues are \$9 (that's only **9 dollars**) per year.

OAPMR/DD is the department of OEA that represents MR/DD employees. If we are to continue to provide quality services to MR/DD members, we need the support of all MR/DD employees through their membership.

Benefits of membership

- The quarterly newsletter, *The OAPMRDD Newsline*
- Leadership training at our Annual Issues Conference
- Monitoring of legislation specific to MR/DDs
- Public Relations grants
- The OAPMR/DD Website, www.oapmrdd.org

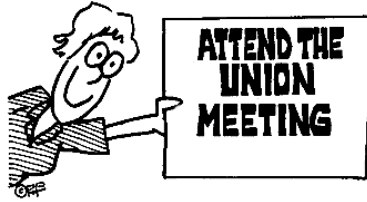




News from Knox County

On June 14th the Knox County Board of MRDD passed a resolution to allow the development of a plan to discontinue directly providing adult services. The KCBMRDD is working with the nonprofit New Hope Industries Board to become a private provider of day habilitation.

The employment of current staff is up in the air. Will they become employees of the nonprofit board? For what period of time will the county board continue to provide a program? We are being told this is all coming from the state and federal Medicaid. We know that a few other counties



have privatized, but don't believe they just lay off all their staff. The private companies had some kind of contract with the county board. We are being told this is happening state-wide.

The Knox New Hope Center Education Association, with help from parents, former employees and community members, has been informing the public about the proposed changes. We have

been in parades, passing out balloons that say "Keep New Hope Public." Our neon green shirts, signs, stickers and buttons say the same. We are getting good crowds for board meetings, including commissioners. We had petitions signed by 1800 people asking the County Board to continue to provide adult service. Even so, the Board passed the resolution.

Go to your board meetings! Keep up with what they are doing before it is too late!

Check out our website at www.keepnhipublic.blogspot.com.

Jaime Day
Unit 1 President, KNHCEA

