



Winter 2007

# The OAPMRDD

# Newsline

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

## Meet me in Mohican... at the Leadership Conference

The Annual Leadership Conference for the Ohio Association of Professionals for the MR/DD will be held Friday, March 2, and Saturday, March 3, 2007, at Mohican State Park Lodge. This informative conference provides up-to-date information for MR/DD employees.

Gary Allen, president of the Ohio Education Association, will start off the evening Friday with an update of OEA activities. Gary is a very dynamic speaker and should not be missed. There will also be a legislative report and the kick-off for the Fund for Children and Public Education fundraiser. Don't for-

get to bring your checkbooks.

On Saturday morning, Kathy McKinley, OEA Plan Attorney, will provide the latest news about Ohio court decisions affecting education and MR/DD members.

After lunch we'll have a brief business meeting. Several proposals for amendments to the OAPMR/DD constitution, which would allow retirees to continue to be OAPMR/DD members, will be voted on. For the first time this year, we're holding an OAPMR/DD forum, which will give us a chance to discuss the past, present and future of OAPMR/DD. Jim

Timlin, OEA Secretary-Treasurer, will present an overview of the OEA Affiliate Grant Program.

The OEA cyber-lobbying display will be available so members can send e-mails to legislators. A representative from NEA Member Benefits will be there to share information on Saturday.

The Conference will be at no cost to OAPMR/DD members. Cost to non-members is \$9.00, which includes membership for the year. Certificates of attendance will be awarded at the end of the conference. More information will be available at [www.oapmrdd.org](http://www.oapmrdd.org).

The conference is a great opportunity to network with other OAPMR/DD members. Please plan to join us.

Russ O'Brien  
OAPMR/DD Chairperson

## House Bill 79, Student Protection Bill, to become law

House Bill 79 requires background checks upon licensure renewal and strengthens requirements for school districts to report allegations of teacher misconduct to the Ohio Department of Education. The bill passed out of conference committee in late December. The conference report was later approved by both the House and Senate. It awaits action by the Governor and will become law 90 days after the Governor's signature. The OEA worked to ensure that the bill contained as many individual due process protections as possible, while retaining provisions that help keep harmful individuals out of the classroom.

House Bill 79 expands background checks for MR/DD staff licensed by the Ohio Department of Education. Watch for similar legislation to be proposed regarding individuals licensed by the Ohio Department of MR/DD.

If you have questions regarding your licensure renewal application, concerning any activities that may raise questions in a background check, contact your Labor Relations Consultant.

Bob Matkowski, LRC  
OEA Liaison

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

**Saturday**  
**May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007**  
**10:30 am - 12:30 pm**

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



## **Amendments to Constitution & Bylaws to be put to members**

In 1981, several members of various OEA MR/DD locals began meeting to discuss common challenges within their respective organizations that were related specifically to working in the MR/DD system. These challenges were generally unlike those faced by typical OEA locals and therefore needed different strategies to address them.

Initially, the group met informally, without any help from the state association. Eventually, the collective concerns were recognized by OEA as being unique enough to warrant some attention and resources.

Out of these early meetings and with the backing of statewide officers and staff, The Ohio Association of Professionals for the MR/DD was born, with the purpose of advancing the cause for people with MR/DD and to be a collective voice for the staff who work with them.

The Constitution and Bylaws of OAPMR/DD was originally written in 1983, soon after the inception of the organization and with the intention of stating its mission. It closely mirrored the C&Bs of other OEA locals and remained unchanged until 2001, when minor amendments were passed that reflected current practices within the organization.

It is now time to again consider some changes.

As the officers and many long-time members reach retirement status, their interest in and dedication to individuals with MR/DD and the organization has not waned. Therefore, proposals for changing the C&B involve how to allow continued involvement by retired members. Questions to be considered include: whether or not retired staff can continue to be members of

OAPMR/DD; what level of dues should they pay; what benefits would they get; and can they continue to hold office, be present at meetings and attend the annual conference.

Start thinking about these questions, as members in attendance at the annual conference in March will be asked to vote on proposed amendments to the C&B that will address these ideas.

Jené Wilson  
OAPMR/DD Vice-Chairperson



### **HERE'S THE LATEST!**

#### **OAPMR/DD 2006-2007 calendar**

*Executive Committee meetings - open to all members!*

- May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007
- July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007

#### **OAPMR/DD Annual Issues Conference**

- March 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007,  
Mohican State Lodge

*Lunch Mixer at OEA  
Rep Assemblies - all  
MR/DD delegates welcome;  
lunch provided at a local restaurant.*

- May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007



## **The OAPMRDD Newsline**

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

Editor: Gloria Stansberry  
Associate Editor: Jené Wilson  
OEA MR/DD Liaison: Bob Matkowski

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## Governor appoints new ODMRDD director

Governor Ted Strickland recently appointed John Martin to head the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (ODMRDD).

Since 1984, Martin served as the executive director of Sunshine Inc. of Northwest Ohio, a non-profit organization serving people with mental retardation and other development disabilities and their families. In 1995 Martin started and became the executive director of MR/DD Solutions, a for-profit subsidiary of Sunshine Inc. that provides software to more than 100 agencies in 18 states. Addition-



ally, Martin sits on the board of the Ohio Provider Resource Association and served as a representative on the Family Advisory Committee for the ODMRDD from 2003-2005.

“As a parent of a child with severe disabilities and a professional with thirty years of experience, I will work hard to understand and balance the perspectives

of consumers, providers, and local, state and federal governmental agencies,” Martin said. “I am eager to start the important work ahead.”

Martin received a Bachelor’s degree in Special Education from Illinois State University and a Master’s degree in Community Psychology from Temple University.

The ODMRDD oversees Ohio’s system of support and services for people with mental retardation or other developmental disabilities and their families.

Joe McCrone  
OAPMR/DD Treasurer

## Respect public service! Repeal GPO and WEP

Ohio is one of the states where public employees are not covered by Social Security. Two laws – the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) – affect these employees by reducing or eliminating their earned Social Security Benefits.

The GPO affects people who work as federal, state or local government employees, including educators, firefighters and police officers, if the job is not covered by Social Security. The GPO reduces public employees’ 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 and in jobs in which they earned Social Security benefits. For instance, consider a public school educator who doesn’t earn Social Security and works part-time or during the summer in a job covered by Social Security. The WEP will reduce her earned Social Security benefits because she’ll receive a public pension upon retirement. The offsets penalize people who have dedicated their lives to public service by taking away retirement benefits they have EARNED. Other public employees affected by GPO lose their entire survivor benefit, even though their spouse paid Social Security taxes for many years – all this because they have a pension from a job not covered by Social Security!

Legislation has been introduced during this new session of Congress to repeal these offsets. Please contact your legislators and urge them to support the repeal.

Sue Bour  
OAPMR/DD Secretary

### Your Association, OAPMR/DD

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. Membership dues are \$9 (that’s only **9 dollars**) per year.

#### 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](http://www.oapmrdd.org)





## **OAPMR/DD Public Relations Grant to improve member communications in Stark County**

SCEPTA, the Stark County Educators & Professional Trainers Association (SCEPTA), was recently awarded an OAPMR/DD Public Relations Grant. The \$500 award, combined with a \$500 match from SCEPTA, paid for a laptop computer and program to help our local publish a newsletter.

It's been many years since SCEPTA issued a newsletter. The laptop and program should make it easy for the editor to put it together. Our members will now be able to keep abreast of important MR/DD issues that affect their jobs on a daily basis.

Contract issues, building concerns, and special projects will highlight the issues. We will bring our members "up to speed" regarding NEA and OEA concerns, local, state and national legislative issues, and retirement system information.

SCEPTA represents the Stark County board of MR/DD workshop staff, teachers, classroom assistants, professional support staff, nurses, occupational and physical therapists, and language specialists.

We appreciate OAPMR/DD making these grants available each year.

Sue Bour  
OAPMR/DD Secretary



[www.oapmrdd.org](http://www.oapmrdd.org)

