



Winter 2008

The OAPMRDD

Newsline

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

OAPMR/DD members meet with Futures Planning Commission representatives, give testimony to Quality Services Subcommittee

The Ohio Department of MRDD Futures Planning Commission continues to draft your future!

On November 9th, union representatives from MR/DD locals (Cuyahoga, Franklin, and Lorain), the Ohio Education Association, and several AFSCME locals met with Commission Subcommittee members in Columbus.

We shared our concerns directly with the two labor representatives on the Commission and their respective subcommittees.

The representatives from the locals and the OEA leadership spoke at length about the need for quality services, informed choice, accountability, consistent standards, and local oversight of local dollars.

Several OAPMR/DD members and I attended the November 30th meeting of the Quality Services Subcommittee in Columbus to continue to voice our needs in the planning of our collective future. The recommendations of this, and

other subcommittees, will shape the future of people with disabilities in Ohio and their access to services.

Jené Schiros Wilson, OAPMR/DD Vice-Chairperson, Jurgen Von Tresckow, OEA Board of Directors Representative, and I gave testimony at this meeting. We reiterated (once again) the need for *quality services, informed choices, accountability, consistent standards,* and the need for *local oversight of local dollars.*

A number of representatives from private provider agencies gave testimony as well. Their topics included their desire to reduce data collection, reduce staff turnover rates, and identify a single accreditation/review process.

Two parents of children with disabilities spoke. Their topics included the need for increased funding for autism and the need to reduce the paperwork and duplicative oversight of plans that comes with receiving services.

The minutes for this meeting and others are available at the ODMRDD Futures Committee website listed below.

There are no plans to hold regional meetings, but you can still voice your concerns by visiting the ODMRDD website. Written statements posted on the website will be made available to committee members during the meetings in Columbus.


Take a few minutes to visit: <http://odmrdd.state.oh.us/futures/odmrdd.htm> and help shape your future.

Joe McCrone
OAPMR/DD Treasurer

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

Saturday
January 5th, 2008
10:30 am - 12:30 pm

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





www.oapmrdd.org

MR/DDs...more than meets the eye

County Boards of MR/DD (MR/DDs) deliver far more services to people with disabilities than most are aware.

People tend to be familiar only with the part of the program in which they work, receive services, or are obvious in the community. To gain the public support we need to pass tax levies to continue to run our programs, OAPMR/DD members need to educate ourselves about all the aspects of MR/DD services. Only then can we help the community understand our work and our significance in the lives of people with disabilities.

MR/DDs provide Early Childhood services to families and their children from birth to age five. Early Childhood Interventionists assist new parents to recognize the needs and strengths of their children. They educate parents and help young children begin the path to their full potential.

MR/DDs provide much needed respite, adaptive equipment, summer camp, equestrian therapy, and much more through the Family Resource program.

MR/DDs provide habilitation and vocational training in both community and sheltered employment settings. Staff members are well-trained and certified. Adult

services include senior programs for people with MR/DD.

MR/DDs provide housing and funding for housing to people who in the past may have been institutionalized. Now, though the support of MR/DDs, people with disabilities can thrive in affordable homes in the community.

Some MR/DDs provide special programs for school-age children who in the past suffered from discrimination and a lack of developmental programs appropriate for their special needs. Unfortunately, funding changes are quickly putting an end to many of these services. Only time will tell if local districts can step up to the plate and afford to offer a comparable service from their tight budgets.

Some MR/DDs offer services from speech pathologists, occupational and physical therapists, adapted computer specialists, and assistive technology specialists, who specialize in the needs of people with disabilities.

MR/DDs also provide Service and Support Administration (SSA). These staff members assist people with a disability to develop a plan for individual growth. They establish and maintain individual budgets and are responsible for ensuring free choice of provider.

The more OAPMR/DD mem-



OAPMR/DD 2007-2008 calendar

Executive Committee meetings - open to all members!

- January 5th, 2008
- May 10th, 2008
- July 12th, 2008

OAPMR/DD Annual Issues Conference @ Mohican State Lodge

- February 29th - March 1st, 2008

Lunch Mixer at OEA Rep Assemblies

- April 25th - 26th, 2008

bers know about the services provided by MR/DDs, the more we will be able to speak to the general public regarding the wealth of services we provide. This will help to generate the needed support to continue the services that we so capably provide.

Patricia E. Homan
Columbiana County EA



The OAPMRDD Newslines

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

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For membership information contact Joe McCrone, 4431 West 210th St., Fairview Park, OH 44126, 216/344-1703.



OAPMR/DD members represent MR/DD staff, issues on six OEA committees

During the past few years the Ohio Education Association has expanded their committee system. In addition to the Standing Committees that have existed for many years, Core Function Committees were created.

The Standing Committees are Convention Planning, Legislative, and Resolutions.

The newly formed Core Function Committees are Collective Bargaining, Local Development and Training, Member Rights and Protection, Organizing Strategy, and Professional Efficacy. Membership on all the committees was expanded to include MR/DD repre-



sentation. Since March 2006 a dedicated group of volunteers has been attending committee meetings to represent MR/DD members.

Kathy Abrahamson is serving on the Convention Planning Committee; Mary Jo Nagy is on the Legislative committee; Melody Craik is on Resolutions; Pat Cohen is on Local Development and Training; Jody Butler is on Organiz-

ing Strategy; and Terry Tullis is on Member Rights and Protection.

We need to thank all these people for taking the time from their own schedules to represent MR/DD members.

There are still two tasks that need to be completed. One is to fill the current MR/DD vacancies on the Collective Bargaining and Professional Efficacy committees, and the second is to recruit members to be future committee representatives. Each committee appointment is for three years with a maximum of two terms. When these terms are complete, we will need others to serve.

Please consider volunteering. The committees meet three to four times per year in Columbus at the OEA Headquarters. Expenses are reimbursed. If you are interested, contact an OAPMR/DD officer.

Russ O'Brien
OAPMR/DD Chairperson

Let the national, state, and regional districts know your MR/DD local

MR/DDs have been part of NEA/OEA/NEOEA for over 35 years, but often these locals feel that they are not part of the mainstream of these national, state and district organizations. Additionally, there is the feeling that most of their colleagues working in regular education settings do not understand the MR/DD system and its consumers and employees.


To alleviate this, some districts have been making an effort to include MR/DD news in their publications. OEA's *Ohio Schools* seeks news from MR/DD locals to include in the magazine.

MR/DD locals can also do their part to make themselves more known within the larger organizations. Many districts offer grants and awards to help with PR efforts, leadership support and membership promotion. Criteria for some of these include sending delegates to the Representative Assemblies, which is an opportunity for MR/DD and regular ed. staff to develop a greater understanding of each other.

There are also internal awards programs that would increase the visibility of MR/DD locals. For example, the Five Star Award recognizes those locals who send members to RAs, Uniserv Councils and leadership training. Newsletter awards are another way to get your local recognized and your issues more widely supported.


Take advantage of these opportunities to become more closely integrated into the larger organizations.

Jené Wilson
OAPMR/DD Vice-Chairperson



**Election of
2008-2009
OAPMR/DD
officers**

**March 1st, 2008
at the OAPMR/DD
Annual Leadership
Conference**





Hear the latest MR/DD news at 2008 conference

The OAPMR/DD Annual Leadership Conference will be held on Friday, February 29th, and Saturday, March 1st, 2008 at Mohican State Park Lodge. The conference will provide current information of interest to MR/DD employees. This year's conference will be the best ever.

Patricia Frost-Brooks, president of the Ohio Education Association, will open Friday evening's events. There will also be a legislative report and the kick-off for the Fund for Children and Public Education (FCPE) fundraiser. Don't forget to bring your checkbooks.

On Saturday morning, Kathy McKinley, OEA Plan Attorney, will present a Legal Update of MR/DD Issues. We are also planning with the ODMRDD for a Deputy Director to present again this year.



After lunch will be an OAPMR/DD business meeting. There will be an election of officers. We'll hold an OAPMR/DD forum, which will give us a chance to discuss the past, present and future of the association.

The OEA Cyberlobbying display will be available for members to email legislators. An NEA Member Benefits rep will be there to share information on Saturday.

For the first time, a conference registration fee will be charged. The fee will be \$20 for OAPMR/DD members and \$29 for non-members, which also covers the cost of joining. Certificates of attendance will be

awarded at the end of the conference. Additional information will be available at OAPMRDD.org.

The conference is a great opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones.

Russ O'Brien
OAPMR/DD Chairperson