



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK....

My Fellow PRA Members:

Since the September Board meeting, our last for this year, the business of PRA has continued to be strong and vibrant. The strategic planning groups working to reach out to the business community, and to attract the students, graduate students and young professionals have offered terrific suggestions and outside-the-box ideas. I have no doubt that these ideas and activities will foster continued growth of PRA and NRA! The plans for the PDI in April 2013 are almost complete! Kudos to this group who are so on target with this! The search for nominees for the PRA Board...you'll soon see your ballots in the mail...has produced several choices all of whom are terrific!

I must say that as a group and as individuals, PRA folks on the board and elsewhere, are the best! Their dedication, passion, and commitment are on a scale of 1 to 10, about a 12!! As the year 2012 closes for us it has been my pleasure and a distinct honor to be your president! Happy Fall! Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,
Stephanie Pranses
PRA President

Just a reminder...

If you would like to donate to *PRA's Roger Barton Student Award Fund*, please send your tax deductible check to Carl Marshall, 2304 Bellevue Road, Harrisburg, PA 17104. Thank you.

Visit us at: <http://parehab.org>

PRA 2013 Election Candidate Information

This year we have four “members at large” openings on the PRA board to enter office on January 1, 2013. We are honored to have highly qualified candidates who are interested in serving the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association membership for the upcoming three years as board members. Enclosed with this newsletter is your ballot. Please make sure to read the following information on the PRA Board candidates, vote, and return your post-card ballot by the deadline of 12/1/12. Thank you!

2013 BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE **(Vote for no more than four)**

Allen N. Lewis, Jr., PhD, CRC

Pittsburgh, PA

Employer: University of Pittsburgh, Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology – Rehabilitation Counseling Program

Education: University of Virginia, B.A., Rhetoric and Communication Studies AND African-American and African Studies

Virginia Commonwealth University, M.S., Rehabilitation Counseling

Virginia Commonwealth University, Ph.D., Education

Awards: Dean’s List Scholar, 1988

Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, 1988

Appreciation for Service - Friends Association for Children, 2001, 2002, 2004

VCU Grace E. Harris Leadership Scholar, 2001

Faculty Recipient of the VCU Presidential Award for Community Multicultural Enrichment, 2003

VCU School of Allied Health Professions A. D. Williams Scholar, 2005

Statement:

I have had a longstanding commitment to working in the public disability and health arena for 28 years as a case manager, clinician, program evaluator, services researcher, program administrator, and professor. This includes 15 years as a direct services clinician as well as having held four program administration/directorship positions. I have been a member of NRA, VRA and NAMRC for most of my 10 years as an academic.

If elected, I would work to advance the vision and mission of PRA. In addition, I would embrace a four-pronged platform as follows:

Increase the involvement of students in PRA as we embark on active succession planning in an effort to build the next generation of effective PRA leadership

-I will take an active role in facilitating and participating in structured brainstorming to identify strategies that will result in our ability to tap into a steady pipeline of new and upcoming PRA leaders.

Improve the capacity of the PRA Board to regularly engage in data driven decision making in its routine operations

-I am able to facilitate several targeted trainings on such topics as program evaluation 101, determining readiness for outcome evaluation, the strength and utility of the logic model as a management and evaluation tool, and developing outcomes measurement systems.

Enhance the ability of the PRA Board to anticipate change, become more generative in its learning approach rather than adaptive, and systematically plan for change

-I am able to facilitate the PRA Board engaging in a strategic planning process based on Joel Barker's paradigm shift question (J.A. Barker, *Paradigms: The Business of Discovering the Future*, New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1993.), Peter Senge's steps for creating a learning organization (P.M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, New York, NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc, 1990.), and the Social Ecological Model (K.R. McLeroy, D. Bibeau, A. Steckler and K. Glanz, an ecological perspective on health promotion programs, *Health Education and Behavior* **15**(4) (1988), 351-377.).

Build meaningful collaborative relationships with other similar organizations to synergize our efforts

-I can help to identify other like-minded organizations in terms of constituency and mission in such disciplines as psychology, social work, counselor education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, gerontology, etc. to explore and build collaborations with to maximize effort and impact going forward.

I would greatly appreciate your support. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Douglas Rand, M.S., CRC, OWDS

Address: 22 Fobes Dr., Waymart, PA 18472

Phone: c: 848-203-6888

Email: w: dorand@pa.gov **h:** douglasrand@ gmail.com

Employer: PA Dept. Labor & Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services

Education: B.S., Counseling & Human Services (2009) and M.S., Rehabilitation Counseling (2011) from *The University of Scranton*
Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (2011)
Offender Workforce Development Specialist (2011)

Awards: Counseling & Human Services Outstanding Student Award
PRA Graduate Student Award for Leadership

Statement: My entrance into the field of rehabilitation counseling began with my training at the University of Scranton. During my master's program, I worked with others to coordinate disability awareness events bringing disability advocates to our campus, such as Jonathan Mooney and John Hockenberry. These experiences were rewarding, as I witnessed my fellow students develop an increased understanding and awareness of people with disabilities. I began working for the Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services in early 2011, where I have assisted individuals with diverse visual conditions enter, reenter, and maintain their employment. While at BBVS, I had the opportunity to partake in the Offender Workforce Development Specialist training, a rigorous 180 hour program, which enhanced my ability to serve individuals with criminal backgrounds. As a result, I joined with OWDS graduates from Berks County and executed PA's first annual Offender-Friendly Career Fair which boasted around 400 attendees, employers, and service providers. Aside from this event I was also able to partake in the execution and future planning of the BBVS Summer Academy, which provides high school students with visual conditions the opportunity to undergo a comprehensive 2 week program to prepare for college.

My current work with individuals with disabilities coupled with my fresh insights on rehabilitation education make my wish to become a PRA board member even stronger. I am intent on finding ways to engage new professionals such as myself, in building a stronger PRA base. As the field of rehabilitation continues to grow, bright ideas and enthusiasm will need to be the goal to sustain and strengthen the bonds between both seasoned and rookie professionals. I look forward to having an opportunity to work with the members of PRA in the future. I sincerely appreciate your attention to my application.

Jeffrey E. Seabury, Sr.

Address: 155 Union Street, Uniontown, PA 15401

Phone: H:724-437-6372 / C:407-592-6230

Email: w: jseabury@pa.gov / h: seaburypssu668@ gmail.com

Employer: PA Dept. Labor & Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Education: BA Psychology, West Virginia University

Statement: I have worked in, or, with the field of Rehabilitation for almost 23 years; for the last 20 with OVR, serving first as the MH/DD in Fayette and then as Placement Counselor for the Washington District. Placement and Business Services are my passion and I strive every workday to enhance opportunities for the employment of persons with disabilities. PRA is the premier representative association of the Rehabilitation profession in Pennsylvania and necessary for the continued advancement of the promotion of best practices, community education regarding the field of Rehabilitation, advocacy and professional growth. I believe that I can contribute time, ideas and effort to meeting the goals of PRA. It is my hope to assist in strengthening and enhancing the relationship between PRA and public VR in Pennsylvania. I hope to promote involvement with PRA within the public VR workforce and collaboration in areas of mutual interest regarding legislative issues. Thank you very much for your time and kind consideration of my application.

Nowell Smith

Address: 2750 Tara Lane York, Pa 17408

Phone: 717-792-0660

Email: nowell5@hotmail.com

Employer: Retired Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor 1975 - 2009

Education: BS Sociology, York College of Pa

Statement: Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor York Do 1975 – 2009

1 Term PRA Board

If elected I will continue to advocate for persons with disabilities and the programs that assist them as I have for many decades.

NRA – PRA are the primary voices and forces for public VR in PA and in DC. It is critical that both continue their mission and grow. Persons with disabilities and programs that assist them need organized voices to advance programs that enable them to get and keep gainful employment and maintain their independence.

In the present political climate “social service” programs are easy targets for the budget cutters. We need to continue to let our voices heard. We need to continue to “educate” state and federal officials about the many benefits and cost savings that public VR and the many private programs that our members represent provide. PRA/NRA is a powerful force with it’s membership of public and private program members working together to continue to “educate” legislators.

PRA needs to grow it's membership by continuing to reach out to the many new people in our field. We need to continue to educate them on the importance of PRA/NRA's role in maintaining a strong public VR program as well as the many private VR programs, thus enabling them to serve their customers.

The PRA board is an impressive group of VR professionals that I am proud to be part of. Thank you for the opportunity to be a member.

Brandon M. Stirpe, BS

18 Lauren Lane, Halifax, PA 17032

717.514.5882

bms42@pitt.edu

Employer: University of Pittsburgh | Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology | Rehabilitation Counseling Program | Pittsburgh, PA

Education: *Bachelors of Science, Psychology; Minor, Chemistry* | University of Pittsburgh | May 2011 | Pittsburgh, PA

Graduate Student, University of Pittsburgh | Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology | Rehabilitation Counseling Program | Anticipated Graduation: August, 2013

Awards: *Pre-Doctoral Fellowship* | University of Pittsburgh | Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology | Rehabilitation Counseling Program

Statement:

Engaging, educating, and assisting individuals with (and without) disabilities has always been important to me. Since I was younger, I've always tried to reach my hand out to those who need it. I've actively volunteered, mentored, and joined student groups to further benefit others and myself. These are the reasons I applied to a rehabilitation counseling program in the first place. I was originally a pre-pharmacy student but after a few years as a pharmacy technician I realized, no matter how good of a day I had, I did not feel as though I completed anything; I did not feel like I truly accomplished anything or helped anyone. My goal in life has always been to positively affect as many people as I can. With the chance to serve on this board as a student, this would start my career off on the right foot and in the right direct.

Obviously being a student, I have not had much professional experience. I have had practicums or internships at an adaptive modification company and in a VA rehabilitation facility. Both taught me valuable, professional lessons in which I will take with me throughout the duration of my career. As a young professional, I am always looking for ways to make myself into a better leader. Being elected to your board would not only help me achieve this, but it would also allow me to help recruit other young professionals to this organization. It would allow me to advocate for individuals with disabilities. It would allow me to engage the community, educate those not familiar with standards and policy, and assist individuals with disability. With strong interpersonal and public speaking skills, I am not afraid to advocate in the community and recruit individuals to join our cause. Ultimately, it would allow me to inspire while being inspired; I would be out of school but continuing my education. If elected, I would be a dedicated student who is ready to transition into a young professional, ready to educate those around me, ready to advocate for those who need me and ready to engage with my peers to bring in the new wave of rehabilitation professionals...which is all according to plan.



SAVE THE DATE!

2013 PRA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

April 4th, 2013

Location...

Central Pennsylvania College
College Hill & Valley Roads
Summerdale, PA 17093
<http://www.centralpenn.edu>

*If you'd like to volunteer to participate
on a great planning team for the 2013 PDI,
please contact Rebecca Spirito Dalgin, dalginr2@Scranton.edu*

*If you are interested in being a vendor, please contact Terry
Dailey, tsdailey@yahoo.com*

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE by Dr. Ralph N. Pacinelli and Trish Lapotsky

Reauthorization. Since our last report there has been no action in the U.S. House and Senate on the reauthorization of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (includes the state-federal program of vocational rehabilitation). It is likely that the short session of Congress after the November elections will be devoted to fiscal and debt matters and that human services programs will be put on hold until the new Congress convenes and organizes in January 2013.

Appropriations. The President signed into law a stopgap spending measure (H.J. Res. 117) that will ensure the federal government will be funded by the Continuing Resolution through March 27, 2013. The President's signature guarantees that there will be no risk of a government shutdown before the November Presidential Election. Federal funds will continue to flow during that period for the VR programs operated by the states. Most disability-related programs will receive a small 0.6% increase over the amount they received in 2012.

Major Changes at NRA. At the August 2012 NRA Board meeting in Chicago, it was voted to transform the NRA headquarters office into a virtual office. The office condo in Alexandria, Virginia, was sold allowing outstanding bills to be paid including rebates owed to NRA divisions and state chapters. NRA executive director, Beverlee J. Stafford, left the organization in mid-September and Patricia Leahy, NRA Governmental Affairs director, assumed the post of interim executive director. A search is underway for a permanent executive director.

U.S. DOE Commemorates Rehabilitation Act. On October 2, 2012 the U.S. Department of Education and leaders of the disability community commemorated the 39th anniversary of Section 504 (non-discrimination provisions) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. In conjunction with the celebration, the DOE Office of Civil Rights released a report titled "Disability Rights: Enforcement Highlights" that discusses the department's work to implement this civil rights statute.

White House Disability Teleconferences. The White House hosts monthly phone calls to update the disability community on disability issues and to introduce people who work on disability issues in the federal government. To receive emails and to sign up for the calls go to www.whitehouse.gov/disability-issues-contact and fill out the contact form.

Web Sites. The official web sites for the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate are www.house.gov and www.senate.gov. These websites provide useful information about each chamber and serve as a portal to many other sites.

PRA Legislative Mantra. Never forget that informed, targeted and timely advocacy is imperative to maintain the integrity of the public VR program. If we don't do it, who will?

**Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association
1150 Goodwill Drive
Harrisburg PA 17101**

<http://parehab.org>

PRA Newsletter Disclaimer

The Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association, an organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities, publishes the newsletter as a free membership service. Through the newsletter, PRA makes reasonable effort to provide quality information to its readers, but does not assume legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the material disclosed. The information is provided “as is” and not intended as legal or professional advice. Therefore, the original source or a competent professional should be consulted regarding specific circumstances. Unless otherwise noted, the expressed views and opinions of the writers do not necessarily represent those of PRA and reference to a product or service does not necessarily imply endorsement by PRA. You may visit our website at <http://www.nationalrehab.org/pennsylvania>.



Upon request, this newsletter is available in alternate format.

**CONTACT -
Sue Soderberg
ssoderberg@yourgoodwill.org**