



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association

Winter 2013

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK....

Hello PRA Members!

I am so pleased to introduce myself to you as the new president of PRA. It is my honor to step into this role and I look forward to working with the many fine rehabilitation professionals involved in this dynamic organization.

It is hard to believe it is March! But time flies when we are working hard and that is just what the PRA Board members have been doing! We met in January and got the year off to a very productive start. Our first order of business was to thank Stephanie Pranses for her wonderful leadership! She has served as our president for the past 2 years and made many wonderful contributions. An example of this is her initiation of long overdue strategic planning initiatives. This work has resulted in the development of 2 new outreach committees, one focused on students and new professionals and one focused on employers. Both groups are making great strides organizing programs and working to increase membership.

Next, we welcomed a new 2nd Vice President, Marisa Pelto from AHEDD. Marisa has been a very involved board member for the past few years and has been instrumental in assisting with many aspects of the PDI planning process. We greatly appreciate her willingness to serve on the executive board. We also welcomed 4 new board members: Allen Lewis, University of Pittsburgh; Douglas Rand, OVR - Blindness & Visual Services-Wilkes Barre; Jeffrey E. Seabury, Sr., OVR- Washington; and Brandon M. Stirpe, University of Pittsburgh. Of course that means that 4 board members rotated off the board: Allison Croft- Bernheimer, John Rouzer, Nowell Smith and Susan Storm. We thank them all for their service!

Of course the onset of spring also brings our annual Professional Development Institute. We have been busily preparing and are so pleased with this year's program. We will again be offering 4 training tracks including Ethics, Assistive Technologies, Business/Employers and General Topics. There are 5.75 CRC credits available plus for the first time we will be offering an additional credit for those who visit our Student Poster Session during breaks! We are also excited to again be offering HRCI credits for Human Resource professionals, so please pass the registration information on to your employer contacts. It promises to be a fantastic day with lots of learning opportunities and terrific networking. We hope you will consider joining us!

We always welcome your questions, comments and suggestions so please feel free to contact me anytime, at rebecca.dalgin@scranton.edu.

Happy Spring,
Rebecca

Rebecca Spirito Dalgin, PRA President 2013

PRA Board of Directors welcomes its newly elected members...

Allen N. Lewis, Jr., Ph.D., CRC

Allen received his Ph.D. in Education from Virginia Commonwealth University. Currently, Allen is an Associate Professor for the University of Pittsburgh in their Rehabilitation Counseling Program. He has 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. He has been a member of NRA, VRA and NAMRC for most of his 10 years as an academic.

Allen will serve as our Keynote Speaker for this year's PDI!

Douglas Rand, M.S., CRC, OWDS

Doug graduated from the University of Scranton with his M.S. in Rehabilitation Counseling. While in graduate school he also earned the PRA Graduate Student Award. Doug began working for the OVR's Bureau of Blindness & Visual Services in early 2011, where he has assisted individuals with diverse visual conditions enter, reenter, and maintain their employment. While at BBVS, he had the opportunity to partake in the Offender Workforce Development Specialist training, a rigorous 180 hour program, which enhanced his ability to serve individuals with criminal backgrounds. As a result, he 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 he was also able to participate 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.

Jeffrey E. Seabury, Sr., B.A.

Jeff received his B.A. in Psychology from West Virginia University. He has worked in, or, with the field of Rehabilitation for almost 23 years; for the last 20 with OVR, serving first as the MH/DD Counselor in Fayette and then as Placement Counselor for the Washington District. Placement and Business Services is his passion and he strives every workday to enhance opportunities for the employment of persons with disabilities. Jeff believes that 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.

Brandon M. Stirpe, BS

Brandon is currently a graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh where he is in the Rehab Counseling program and is anticipating graduation in August 2013. He notes that being a student, he has not had much professional experience, but says "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."

We are very fortunate to have Board members representing so many different segments of the vocational rehabilitation community!



REGISTER TODAY!

2013 PRA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

“Maximizing Opportunities: A Bridge to the Future”

April 4, 2013

Register at <http://parehab.org>

Keynote:

Skills VR Professionals Need for Success in the 21st Century
Allen Lewis, Ph.D., CRC, Associate Professor, University of Pittsburgh

Offering 4 Programmatic Tracks for Attendees

Rehabilitation Ethics
Assistive Technologies
Business/ Employer
General Topics

5.75 CRC credits to be offered (Includes up to 4.0 Ethics Credits!)

Additional 1.0 CRC Credit Available to Visit Student Posters!



5.75 CEU's have been approved by the Human Resource Certification Institute (HRCI)

"The use of this seal is not an endorsement by the HR Certification Institute of the quality of the program. It means that this program has met the HR Certification Institute's criteria to be pre-approved for recertification credit."

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE-By Dr. Ralph N. Pacinelli and Trish Lapotsky

Reauthorization. As predicted in our last report the 112th U.S. Congress completed business and did not deal with the reauthorization of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (includes the Basic State Grant Program for Vocational Rehabilitation). This is the same reauthorization that was originally due in 2003. Now that the 113th Congress has organized, on February 14, 2013 the House Democrats (Committee on Education and the Workforce) in a surprise move dropped a bill on WIA/VR reauthorization. The bill has no support from the other side and is likely to go nowhere. Following a hearing on February 26th, chaired by Virginia Foxx, R.NC., the full committee on Education and the Workforce introduced H.R. 803, "Supporting Knowledge and Investing in Lifelong Skills Act (SKILLS Act) by a vote of 23 – 0. This is the reauthorization of WIA and VR. Not one Democrat voted for this bill. On the Senate side, Tom Harkin, D.IA., chaired a hearing on February 26 of the Senate HELP Committee on "State Leadership and Innovation in Disability Employment." Two State VR directors (Oklahoma and Utah) were among the three panelists with Governor Markell of Delaware. No date is set for the Senate to drop a bill. Stay tuned and be alert to the issue papers that flow from the March 17-19, 2013 Government Affairs Summit of the National Rehabilitation Association.

Federal 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 (CR) through March 27, 2013. Then on March 6 the House passed a \$984 billion CR, funding government operations for the remainder of fiscal year 2013. The bill provides funds at the sequester levels and the Senate is unlikely to make any major changes fearing a government shutdown. The President is expected to sign the extended CR. The impact of sequestration that took effect on March 1 is expected to be a 5.1% reduction (estimated at \$162,779,148) in federal funding for the Public program of vocational rehabilitation.

Governor Corbett's 2013-2014 Budget. The much anticipated Corbett Administration's budget for 2013-2014 was announced on February 5, 2013. Level funding was proposed for Vocational Rehabilitation (40,473,000), Supported Employment (397,000), Centers for Independent Living (1,912,000), Assistive Technology Devices (244,000), and Assistive Technology Demonstration and Training (399,000). As more details are learned about the budget and hearings in the House and Senate they will be shared with the PRA membership.

News Flash, RSA Commissioner Nominated. President Obama has nominated Ms. Janet LaBreck to be the next Commissioner of the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration. Currently, she is Commissioner of the Commission for the Blind in Massachusetts. Ms. LaBreck's appointment requires full Senate confirmation. To learn more about Ms. LaBreck, please access: www.mass.gov/mcb/.

NRA Government Affairs Summit. The 32nd Annual Summit will be held at the Washington Marriott Hotel, 1221 22nd Street, N.W., Washington, DC beginning Sunday, March 17, 2013, and ending on March 19 with NRA's Day on the Hill. For details check the NRA website: www.nationalrehab.org.

Major Changes at NCD. President Obama announced appointments to the National Council on Disability (NCD). New NCD members are: Jeff Rosen (Chairperson), Lynnae Ruttledge (former Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration), Jonathan Kuniholm, Alice Wong, Gary Blumenthal, Sara Gelser, Matan Koch, Ari Ne'eman, Kamilah Oni Martin-Proctor, Stephanie Orlando, Clyde Terry, Dr. Fernando Torres-Gil and Pamela Young-Holmes.

Senator Tom Harkin Retires. The influential chair of the Senate HELP committee and longtime friend of the state-federal program of vocational rehabilitation, Senator Tom Harkin, D.MO, will not seek re-election to the Senate. His lifetime of leadership on disability issues was influenced by his brother Frank who was deaf, received services from the public VR program and was competitively employed his entire work life. Senator Barbara Mikulski, D.MD, is next in line for the HELP chairmanship if she wants it.

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?

Help us Go Green!

If you are interested in receiving future newsletters in electronic format only– please contact Sue Soderberg at ssoderberg@yourgoodwill.org.

Every little bit helps the environment!

2013 PRA BOARD

PRESIDENT:	Rebecca Spirito Dalgin
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT:	Sue Soderberg
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT:	Marisa Pelto
TREASURER:	Will Stennett
SECRETARY:	Janell Shaffer-Yoder
PAST PRESIDENT:	Stephanie Pranses

Term ending 2013

Dave Baum
Carl Marshall
Ralph Roach

Term ending 2014

Seth Acosta
Terry Dailey
Maureen Fairbanks
Liza Conyers

Term ending 2015

Allen Lewis
Douglas Rand
Jeffrey Seabury
Brandon Stirpe

**Pennsylvania Rehab. Association
1150 Goodwill Drive
Harrisburg PA 17101**

www.nationalrehab.org/pennsylvania

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