



## *Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association*

*Winter 2012*

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK....

Spring is here and that means new Board members: Seth G. Acosta, The Sierra Group; Liza Conyers, Penn State University; Terry Dailey, Chambersburg; and Maureen Fairbanks, Messiah College. We heartily welcome you! We are looking forward to working with you! These new members also mean that 4 Board members who have served so well for the past 3 years have moved on. Stacy Kyle, Pa BLN/AHEDD, has worked so hard in so many areas and with so much energy. If it hadn't been for Stacy a LOT of what happened at the past 3, and more, PDI's would not have happened. Thank you Stacy! Trish Lapotsky whose energy and passion for PRA rivals very few will be missed for everything she has done for the PDI, and the Legislative Committee. Dr. Pacinelli has also moved on and as a valued colleague, mentor and friend we hope he doesn't sail off too far on the retirement cruise ship he's on! Bill Wallick, U of Scranton has also left us. Bill's perspective from his background in Human Resources was always so helpful. We will miss you all!

Spring also means the Professional Development Institute or PDI. We all are aware of the 3 tracks of training for the agenda, but this year is different. This year we will offer 4 tracks of training! They are Ethics, Assistive Technology, Business, and General topics which will include, among other topics, issues affecting returning US Veterans. I guarantee you it will be jam packed and exciting! Plus, not only will there be the CRC credits, but this year we are applying for and hope to offer HRCI credits from the Human Resource Certification Institute. This will broaden PRA's scope by pulling in SHRM folks (Society for Human Resource Managers).

We have discussed offering HRCI credits for several years, but weren't able to have the PDI agenda pulled together soon enough to apply for these credits. This year we moved very quickly after the 2011 PDI to bring this to fruition. This year's PDI committee has done a stellar job! I am so proud of them!

We are collaborating again with the Pennsylvania Association of Rehabilitation Professionals and Penn State University's Rehabilitation faculty to offer a day of training in State College. It will have a similar agenda to our joint presentation held in Pittsburgh last October, but with the University students in the audience there will be a more academic flavor to it. Please save the date for April 20, 2012, Days Inn, State College.

PRA is continuing to act to promote communication and coordination between our colleagues in our community of practice. Please join us and help us to foster further involvement by all persons!

My best to you,

Stephanie

**Stephanie Pranses, PRA President**

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

### **Seth G. Acosta**

Seth serves as the Chief Operating Officer and Senior Rehabilitation Consultant for The Sierra Group, Inc. He has been a member of PRA for approximately 7 years. He believes that his involvement with PRA has allowed him to meet and interact with some of the most innovative and thoughtful minds in the field of rehabilitation. Seth also notes, "In attending the annual conferences, I, without fail, leave feeling rejuvenated and continually inspired by those with whom we share the passion of this business."

### **Liza Conyers**

Liza is an Associate Professor at Penn State University. She has been in the field of rehabilitation counseling for 22 years and living and working in PA for the past 12 years. Liza has served on the PRA board in the past. She is currently working on a number of student initiatives and looks forward to continuing to develop these opportunities. Some of these ideas include continuing to support student participation at the PRA PDI both in attendance and in developing student posters. She would also like to continue to develop the disability policy institute and work with faculty from the other rehabilitation programs to establish a PA rehabilitation faculty consortium and coordinate efforts on key student initiatives.

### **Terry Dailey**

Terry is a VR Counselor Annuitant with the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Terry recently retired from the Commonwealth of PA after 30 years of service, including 19 years with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation where she counseled individuals with disabilities regarding returning to the workforce. She is a Past President of PRA and continued to serve on the Membership Committee after her term on the board was completed. She enjoys sharing knowledge with fellow rehabilitation professionals and leaders that have built the foundation of rehabilitation programs. Terry is a past recipient of the PRA Presidents Award.

### **Maureen Fairbanks**

Maureen is an Admissions Assistant for Transfer Recruitment at Messiah College and also serves as a Guest Teacher and Paraprofessional for the Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit. Prior to that she worked for Highmark Inc. for almost 21 years as the EEO/AA and Diversity Consultant. In that role, she was responsible for the facilitation, coordination and documentation of all ADA Accommodations and Workplace Adjustments for all employees and applicants. She has been an active member in the Business Leadership Network, and because of her involvement in that network has had the opportunity to share best practices for accommodating employees with disabilities and the business case for valuing their contributions with other local businesses. Maureen believes that her mission is to creatively accommodate all people so they are provided equal opportunity to rewarding careers.

**We are fortunate to have Board members representing so many different aspects of the vocational rehab community!**



**REGISTER TODAY!**

**2012 PRA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE**

***“Advancing Employment Strategies:  
The Changing Landscape”***

**April 5, 2012**

Register at <http://parehab.org>

*Keynote:*

*Stephen H. Surovec, Executive Director,  
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation*

Offering 4 Tracks of Training Subjects

*Rehabilitation Ethics  
Assistive Technologies  
Employment Services  
General Topics*

*5.75 CRC Credits to be Offered*

**Location... Central Pennsylvania College  
College Hill & Valley Roads**

**Summerdale, PA 17093**

**<http://www.centralpenn.edu>**

**Registration Fee**

\$105 NRA/PRA Members

\$125.00 Non-NRA/PRA Members

\$40.00 students

Registration after deadline of

3/23/12 and at the door: additional \$5.00

Fee includes breakfast, refreshments & luncheon

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

**The 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, Second Session, Opens for Business.** Congress returned in January and it is unclear if Rehabilitation matters will be given priority in this session. Given the political climate and the talk about the dire need to create jobs in order to grow the economy, perhaps this is the session that will deal with the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Rehabilitation Act which continues as a title in WIA. Periodically there are rumblings that the Rehab Act will be removed from WIA and considered as a standalone piece of legislation. But the proposition never gains much support. NRA and its chapters will need to be extremely vigilant in the months ahead if the integrity of the Vocational Rehabilitation program is to be preserved. PRA will provide updates as Rehabilitation related events unfold in Washington.

**NRA Prepares for March 2012 Governmental Affairs Summit (NRA/GAS).** Work is ramping up for the annual NRA legislative summit scheduled for March 18-20, 2012 in Washington, DC. Actually, conferees meet at the Hilton in Alexandria, VA and prepare for their one-day on The Hill visiting the offices of their elected Congress people. Planning Committee co chairs have been appointed and issue identification has begun. Many of the issues that needed to be addressed last year will surely take center stage again in 2012. Discussions with House and Senate staffers during the last session of Congress suggest that many of the concerns expressed by NRA will need attention in 2012. Our next report will identify the issues approved by the full NRA Board of Directors and used by members who attend the Summit during their visits to Capitol Hill.

**Appropriations Update.** Last October, 2011 in our report to the PRA Board of Directors, we identified an alarming trend where state VR agencies could not match all of the federal funds appropriated for VR services. During the September, 2011 reallotment process some \$160 million was turned back to the federal government (RSA) by the 80 state VR agencies. Pennsylvania was among the states that could not use all of the federal funds. Of the \$160 million returned by the states some \$59 million could not be matched by states with extra cash on hand (the RSA expertly administered reallotment process). Therefore, \$59 million VR dollars was returned to the U.S. Treasury. It is difficult to argue the need for more funds when current funds can't be used effectively by the 80 state VR agencies. Yet, we know that one million disabled individuals are in the caseloads of the state VR agencies in any given year, but that there are at least 12 to 15 million disabled Americans who are eligible for VR services each year.

There is mostly good news regarding Governor Corbett's 2011-2012 budget in that many agencies were asked to reduce spending by three percent, but no cut will be made in the transfer to the Vocational Rehabilitation Fund currently budgeted at \$40,473,000. However, three special programs that benefit individuals with disabilities will be reduced as follows: Supported Employment - \$21,000, CILs - \$101,000 and Assistive Technology - \$34,000.

**Major Leadership Loss at RSA.** RSA Commissioner Lynnae Rutledge announced her resignation effective January 13, 2011. This was a surprise to the Rehabilitation community and could effectively mean that the balance of the Obama Administration could be served without a politically-appointed RSA Commissioner. There is a caretaker, as there always is, when an acting commissioner is appointed from among the ranks of the civil servants. That person is Dr. Ed Anthony. Commissioner Rutledge returned to Seattle, WA to be with her husband who sustained serious injuries from an accident.

**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?

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## **BREAKING NEWS!**

President Obama's budget for 2013 was delivered to Congress on February 13, 2012. There were no surprises for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The formula grant program (3.2 billion) retained its mandatory funding status and avoided any cuts. However, the consolidation of three programs into the Title I formula grant to States was recommended. They are the Supported Employment formula program, the Migrants and Seasonal Farm Workers program, and the State Agency In-service Training program. These programs will increase Title I VR funds by \$35.7 million dollars. On the negative side, the cost of living allowance (COLA) for the Title I VR program was conspicuously absent. That's about a \$50 million dollar annual shortfall. Several set-aside project grant programs funded by diverting existing discretionary funds were described, i.e., for SSI kids and family members and for interagency Workforce innovation demonstrations. The cost of these projects could be as much as \$10 million dollars. The tradition in Washington each year is that the President's Budget is DOA (dead on arrival) the minute it reaches Capitol Hill.

**Stay tuned...**

*Pennsylvania Association of Rehabilitation Professionals*  
&  
*Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Association*

**PRESENT: "Rehabilitation Moving Forward"**

**Friday, April 20, 1012**

**Days Inn State College**

**Price: \$45** (IARP & PRA members)      **\$65** (Non-member)      **\$20** (Students)  
\$5 additional fee after early bird registration deadline of March 30, 2012

Payment by CHECK only made payable to: PARP  
Send registration and payment to: PARP, P.O. Box 104, Creamery, PA 19430

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

For program accommodations please list and submit by March 30, 2012) \_\_\_\_\_

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**For additional information contact: Bill Miller, [Parp11@verizon.net](mailto:Parp11@verizon.net) or (610-831-5488)**

## ***FROM THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE...***

Compliance is just one area of need for businesses that are Federal Contractors. The information provided here will help vocational rehabilitation professionals to better understand the Compliance requirements for companies and assist them with offering needed supports.

The US BUSINESS LEADERSHIP NETWORK (USBLN® ) is the national non-profit, non-partisan business to business network promoting workplaces, marketplaces, and supply chains where people with disabilities are included. It represents over 60 local affiliates and over 5,000 companies.

On February 6, 2012 the USBLN® submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Labor's, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), Notice of Proposed Rulemaking of December 9, 2011.

The USBLN recognized that the current Section 503 affirmative action regulatory framework needs to be modernized, strengthened, and clarified. Since the member companies of the USBLN are committed to including disability in all their diversity efforts, they wanted to give input to ensure that the final regulations will actually advance recruitment, hiring, retention and advancement efforts.

To read more details about the USBLN's response to the OFFCCP , go to one of the following links:

DOC: [http://www.usbln.org/urls/2012\\_USBLN\\_503\\_Comments\\_2-6-12.doc](http://www.usbln.org/urls/2012_USBLN_503_Comments_2-6-12.doc) ;

PDF: [http://www.usbln.org/urls/2012\\_USBLN\\_503\\_Comments\\_2-6-12.pdf](http://www.usbln.org/urls/2012_USBLN_503_Comments_2-6-12.pdf) .

The USBLN® also conducted an in-depth webinar entitled, "**What Federal Contractors Need to Know about OFCCP's Proposed Section 503 Regulation**" in partnership with SSB BART Group and the ADA National Network. To access the PowerPoint presentation, handouts, audio recording and related materials, go to [http://www.usbln.org/webinar\\_archive\\_01.html](http://www.usbln.org/webinar_archive_01.html) .

## **Thanks...**

Your generous contributions to *PRA's Roger Barton Student Leadership and Service Award* fund has raised more than \$5500. These funds are used to recognize outstanding students enrolled in Pennsylvania university and college rehabilitation programs and will become our future rehabilitation professionals.

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!

Help us Go Green!

If you are interested in receiving future newsletters in electronic format only– please contact Sue Soderberg at [ssoderberg@yourgoodwill.org](mailto:ssoderberg@yourgoodwill.org).

Every little bit helps the environment!

## **2012 PRA BOARD**

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|------------------------|------------------------|
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Liza Conyers

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**[www.nationalrehab.org/pennsylvania](http://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.

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