**Maryland Commission on Disabilities**

*MCOD/Alliance Joint Meeting*

Meeting Minutes –April 21, 2022

**Attendees:**

Van Brooks

Sharonda Huffman

Seth Morgan

Dave Drezner

Kelly Dempsey

Janice Jackson

Ronza Othman

Darrin Smith

Rowan Powell

Michael Aronin

Margo Quinlan

Caroline Kobek Pezzarossi  
Tonia Ferguson

Nancy Webb

Dominique Sessa

Megan Collins  
Ande Kolp

Zosia Zaks

**MDOD Staff:**

Carol Beatty

Elizabeth Hall

Yesheva Kelly

Kimberly McKay

Cecilia Warren

Christian Miele

**Guests:**

Bette Ann Mobley - MSDE

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| **Welcome and Approval of Minutes – *Van Brooks*** |

The minutes were approved with the following revision:

* Correct Rose Carey’s email address.

New Members introduced themselves –

* Nicle Webb, Statewide EEO Coordinator for the Department of Budget and Management
* Caroline Kobek Pezzarossi, Gallaudet University

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| **MDOD/COVID UPDATE – *Secretary Carol Beatty/ Cecilia Warren*** |

**Secretary’s Update**

* Worked with Secretary Scrader to revise covid protocols for visitation to immediate care facilities to and psychiatric residential treatment facilities.
* Community living policy Director Jennifer Eastman is working on three federals initiatives:
  + National Center on Advancing Person-Centered Practices Consortium - Its focus is on self-direction across Medicaid populations. MDOD is the lead agency in partnership with DDA, the Department of Aging, advocates and caregivers, and support staff.
  + National Self Direction Conference – Focus on people with intellectual disabilities and aging caregivers who have not accessed any DDA services and better ways to identify and assist them.
  + National Academy for State Health Policy Consortium - This is consortium is focused on connecting caregivers with available resources and ensuring caregiver friendly policies.
* Employment Director Jade Gingrich has been working on neurodiversity and hiring efforts with Howard County Autism Society, Autism at Work Program and other programs that fill the gap in services for those on DORS waiting lists.
* Partnered with Howard County Leadership to highlight the leadership abilities of Tatiana McFadden (Para-Olympic medalist)
* Andrew Drummond (IT Accessibility Specialist) participated in an accessibility webinar in partnership with Comcast Beltway (Maryland, DC, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia), the Maryland Chamber of Commerce, and the Maryland Technology.
* Secretary Beatty was invited to meet with the Affinity Group, which is made up of parents and self-advocates to discuss more inclusive hiring practices and neurodiversity in the workforce.
* On April the sixth, Governor Hogan issued a proclamation celebrating National AT Awareness. The Assistive Technology Program celebrated with several events including an accessible gaming night in partnership with Howard County Recreation and Parks.

**Covid Update**

* Individuals 50 and older can now receive a second booster shot 4 months after their first booster.
* Free COVID tests are available through public libraries and local health departments
* A list of resources providing information on eligibility and pharmacy locations will be distributed to the Commission.
* FEMA is continuing with the assistance programs including reimbursement for funeral expenses for COVID-19 deaths

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| **ABLE Presentation** *–Bette Ann Mobley – Director of the Maryland ABLE Program* |

**Highlights** – *See full presentation attached*

* Maryland ABLE Act (HB431) signed into Maryland law by Governor Hogan on April 12, 2016
* Maryland Able is an investment took for people with disabilities designed to help their beneficiaries save for their everyday needs using a tax-free account
* To be eligible for an ABLE account, a person must have developed a disability prior to the age of 26 and Meet the Social Security definition of disability
* Contribute up to $16,000 per year for qualified disability expenses

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| **2022 Legislative Presentation – *Deputy Secretary Christian Miele/Elizabeth Hall*** |

*Bill Highlight – Tracked by MDOD*

* **HB660**- Student Job Training Reformation Act- Bill introduced by Delegate Guyton that will create a Commission to study the Division of Rehabilitation Services to improve services throughout the State. The commission will consist of the following members: Parent of a student; Self-Advocate; Individual employed by a Local School system; Individual employed a private school; transition specialist; individual employed by the local school system as a special education teacher; individual employed by a private school as a special education teacher; individual employed by MSDE as a transition specialist.
* **HB662** – Advisory Stake Holder Group on Autism-Related Needs – Bill introduced by Delegate Guyton. Legislature voted to add members of the Senate to the Stakeholder Group. The Governor’s office of community initiatives will provide staff for the stakeholder group.
* **HB1020** -Self Direction Act of 2022 - Introduced by Delegate Lewis-Young –
* **SB559** – Estates and Trusts – Supported Decision Making – Bill introduced by Senator Waldstreicher – Authorizing the use of supported decision making to assist an adult through the provision of certain support for the adult
* **SB617 -** Local School Systems - Equivalent Access Standards – Bill introduced by Senator Zucker. Requiring a local school system to provide equivalent access to digital tools for students with disabilities.

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| **Commission Member Updates** |

**Seth Morgan:** *Montgomery County* **–**

* Recently release list of priorities for FY2023 to include not having good sidewalk access for children and wheelchair users. This would require legislative action to prevent homeowners from blocking the development of new sidewalks.
* Proposed an early intervention program to identify children with early onset rather not early onset, but rather identify at an early life people who require intervention.
* Requested funding for shelter for an accessible boat ramp for individuals who have temperature sensitive disabilities.

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| **Adjournment** |

Meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.