**Maryland Commission on Disabilities**

Meeting Minutes – June 23, 2023

**Attendees:**

Van Brooks

Janice Jackson

Caroline Kobek Pezzarossi

Ande Kolp

Jose Sanchez

Ronza Othman

Marlana R. Hutchinson

Dominique Sessa

Margo Quinlan

Christy Russell

Mary Keane

Nicole Webb

Irene Souada

Nicholas Burton

Doris Lyons Jones

Corey Johns (For Delegate Michele Guyton)

Rachael Lipke

**MDOD Staff:**

Carol Beatty

Elizabeth Hall

Yesheva Kelly

Lisa Belcastro

**Guests:**

Kristine Nellenbach

Christopher Mason-Hale

Dahlia Shaewitz

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

The minutes from April 22nd were approved with no changes.

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| **Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities–** *Christopher Mason-Hale/Kristine Nellenbach* |

***Highlights:*** *(full presentation attached)*

* Every state is required to have a UCEDD (University Center for Excellence in Development Disabilities). Kennedy Krieger’s MCDD Office serves as Maryland’s UCEDD.
* Each state is also required to have a DD Council (MCDD) and a P&A (Protection and Advocacy) agency. Disability Rights Maryland currently serves as Maryland’s P&A.
* MCDD works in partnership/collaboration with Disability Rights Maryland, Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, Maryland DDA, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), several law firms, and local universities and colleges.
* Funding for MCDD is provided through federal and state grants as well as donations and other grants.
* MCDD primarily performs the following functions:
  + Continuing education and specialized training such as parent support groups and special education law.
  + Community Services and Technical Assistance
  + Legislative Advocacy (providing oral and written testimony)
  + Research and Evaluation

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| **MDOD Updates and MDOD Deputy Secretary Lisa Belcastro Introduction** *–Carol Beatty/Lisa Belcastro* |

***Staff Updates***

* Secretary Beatty introduced Lisa Belcastro as the new Deputy Secretary for the Maryland Department of Disabilities. Focus will be leading the policy team, legislative efforts, transitioning the Autism Stakeholder Group, and working on the revision of the State Disabilities Plan.
* John Brennan will now lead the operations team (TAM/TAP)
* Kim McKay is now Assistant Secretary of Programs

***Events Updates***

* Celebrated Autism Acceptance month with Governor Moore
* TERPS SUCEED program had their first graduation in May within the College of Education. One graduate has secured employment at the Performance Arts Center on campus.
* Secretary Beatty attended a ribbon cutting with CORT Commons (and affiliate of the Arc of Central Region) Building is a multi-use facility which will include affordable/accessible housing.
* Secretary Beatty presented a proclamation to CRAB for accessible boating month with Secretary Tony Woods from the Veteran Affairs administration.
* Secretary Beatty participated in the Howard County Project Search Graduation
* MDOD staff participated in the 5k Charity Run/Walk for Athletes Serving Athletes (ASA)
* MDOD held a staff appreciation event to include Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller
* Secretary Beatty encouraged commissioners to participate in the US Access Board’s town hall meeting on July 24tth.
* Nominations are now be accepted for the Governor’s Disability Cultural and Achievement Awards

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| **Commission Updates** *– MCOD Commissioners/Guests* |

* **Ronza Othman** *(National Federation of the Blind)*
  + The Bell Academy which has 3 locations across the state (Baltimore City, Salisbury, and St. Mary’s County) for kids 4-12 and 10-17. The program assists visually impaired kids with learning braille, independent living, and home management skills.
  + Working with BISM on transitioning youth program teaching life skills within a residental location.
* **Dahlia Shaewitz** *(PG Commission on Individuals with Disabilities)*
  + Met with PG Co Council members to discuss important disability issues.
  + There will be a national call with the US Department of Housing to talk about non-discrimination based on disabilities.
* **Dominque Sessa**
  + Attended a meeting with Ocean City mayor to discuss and support ways for the town to address accessibility issues including transportation. Creating a pamphlet to assist individuals with disabilities to locate local resources.

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| **Adjournment** |

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.