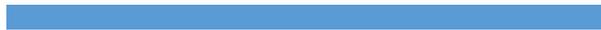




Mission: To support and provide advocacy for providers to ensure the availability of high-quality programs, services, and funding adequate to support the individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities they serve to achieve a life of increasing independence, productivity and integration.

Board Report

April 1, 2025



OPRA's Guiding Principles

Anchor Statement: Ohio's providers are focused on supporting the success of the people we support.

Principle #1: We believe the primary focus of our work is the positive and supportive relationship between front-line professionals and the people they support.

Principle #2: We believe providers should be supported and trusted to support people with developmental disabilities and operate effective and successful organizations.

Principle #3: We believe providers must be sufficiently compensated to deliver essential services to meet the needs of the people they support in an ever-evolving society and system.

Principle #4: We believe all services currently provided across the spectrum of services should be recognized as crucial to each and every person we serve.

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Safe Place Statement

We would like to thank you for attending this meeting. This meeting, like all of the OPRA Committee meetings, are designed to offer a safe place for OPRA Members to share thoughts, opinions and ideas. The OPRA Team and the OPRA Board relies on these discussions to inform our efforts to provide Advocacy, Information and Resources. We are respectfully asking you, as a participant, to assist us to make this a safe place for professionals to openly share without fear. It is important that when personal experiences are shared, there is an assurance that what is shared stays within this group. We are looking forward to an open and honest conversation and we would like to thank you for being a part of this important meeting.



OPRA Board Meeting Agenda

April 1, 2025

10:00am – 12:00pm

1. **Welcome & Safe Place Statement**
 - Review of Safe Place Statement and Meeting Norms
2. **Approval of Agenda**
 - Review and approve today's meeting agenda
3. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
 - Review and approve minutes from January.
4. **Finance Report**
 - Financial Statements Review
 - Finance Committee Recommendations
5. **Board Report**
 - State Budget Update
 1. Where we stand
 2. Waiver and ICF
 3. Process in Senate
 4. Ventilator project
 - Federal Update
 - EVV Update
6. **CEO Report**
 - Great Provider Summit
 - District meetings/County Board Letter/Data Plan
 - Board Retreat
7. **Open Forum**
 - Member Comments



Board of Directors Minutes

Date: January 22, 2025

Time: 10:00am – 12:30pm

Location: Virtual

Board Members:

Present			Absent
District 1	District 4	District 7	Roy Cherry
Felicia Hall	Steve King	Tami Honkala	Bob Heinzerling
Jim Steffey		Laura Lamb	Tim Menke
Jamie Steele			Liz Owens
District 2	District 5	At-Large	
Ashley Brocious	Steve Colecchi	Bob Gaston	
Scott DeLong	Jeff Johnson	Kurt Miller	
Dennis Grant	Michelle Madden		
District 3	District 6		
Mary Thompson Hufford	Adam Guinther		
Lisa Reed			
Tim Neville			

OPRA Staff: Melissa Fannon, Rachel Hayes, Teresa Kobelt, Scott Marks, Pete Moore, Sonya Summers, Christine Touvelle

Guests: None

Minutes*:

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
<i>Call to order</i>	Adam Guinther called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.	Safe Place Statement read.	
<i>Approval of Minutes</i>	<p>Approval of October 2024 and December 2024 Board Meeting minutes.</p> <p>Motion: Lisa Reed Second: Tami Honkala</p>	Unanimously approved	
<i>Finance Committee Report</i>	Discussion will be delayed to February’s meeting due to absence of key members of the Finance Committee.	Finance Committee report moved to February agenda	
<i>Policy Report</i>	<p>Pete Moore welcomed Laura Lamb – will be filling vacancy left by Connie Borros.</p> <p>Budget Coalition: Pete provided an update on budget coalition. Shared latest draft of proposal developed by DD Budget Coalition. Further work on this proposal and/or additional coalition work is to be determined following release of the Executive Budget in early February.</p> <p>Budget Process & Committee Appointments: Christine Touvelle provided updates on key budget process and key players in House and Senate Committees, including policymakers that might be champions and challenges. OPRA’s budget tools and resources have been updated with new committee members and relevant info. Will continue to update as information comes out.</p> <p>There were questions/conversations around Board members including OPRA in legislative meetings or visits. As well as questions about common language or talking points.</p> <p>County Boards: Pete introduced conversation around relationships with County Boards and issues/challenges</p>	<p>If Board members are setting up tours or meetings with legislators or need help setting those up or connecting w/staff, reach out to Christine.</p> <p>OPRA will develop talking points and get all the information members need by March (following intro of budget).</p> <p>Pete will be meeting with Adam Herman to share these concerns</p>	<p>Christine/OPRA team</p> <p>Pete Moore</p>

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>providers are facing – going back to a survey last year that indicated SSAs were providers number one barrier to success. Discussed the importance of providers being able to “push back” a little without fear of retaliation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jamie asked about DODD’s level of awareness of issues between CBs and providers (i.e., around housing referrals). Pete has raised the concerns with DODD who has their own issues w/CBs. Pete is also raising his concerns with OACB/Adam H. next week. - Michelle raised concerns about the punitive nature of interactions with CBs, which seems to have increased/gotten worse since the dollar increase. It’s affecting how MUIs are handled as well (being shut out). - Jeff discussed having a strong relationship with his CB, and in talking with the Superintendent, the Supt was shocked to hear providers perceive SSAs as the “gatekeeper” or any barrier. - Scott D. indicated that some counties have continued to operate as usual, other counties where SSA turnover is a big issue, and some counties who are only referring to their own housing authorities – there is little consistency across counties, but maybe some consistency across Supt regions. - Ashley indicated she is seeing similar things in Miami County. - Kurt has found it most effective to negotiate by reminding CBs that if they can’t flex/help, the provider will need to serve notice. It is a risk, and they don’t always do it, but it is important to let CBs know what you can/can’t do and the importance of providers. Michelle indicated this has been the only way to get some CBs to listen for her as well. - Mary felt it would be important to share this with OACB/Adam – it is not okay for CBs to put providers 	<p>and discuss the relationship with County Boards, SSAs, and providers.</p> <p>Teresa will reach out to DODD to ask that housing corps convo be added to upcoming Waiver Workgroup meeting.</p>	<p>Teresa Kobelt</p>

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>in this position and what this does to individuals and families – it is a moral issue for the CBs. Michelle noted that unfortunately this makes providers look like the “bad guy” in the situation, when it is about what the CB will/won’t authorize.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jamie also indicated the housing/housing corp conversation is really an issue that needs to be addressed. 		
<p><i>CEO Report</i></p>	<p>Strategic Plan: Pete previously shared OPRA’s 2025-26 Strategic Plan with the Board. He asked for any comments or questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jim asked about measurable goals and reporting. Pete clarified that we would be reporting out on it to the Board and members regularly. - Scott asked that we make sure we stay “fluid” with it and make sure it doesn’t just stay on the shelf. - Tim asked that we change language for consistency – making sure we use I/DD or Intellectual Developmental Dis - Scott emphasized that Board Members must own it as well. Board members need to own it and help move this forward as well. - Jeff Johnson asked for more information about the Partnership Summit. Pete shared that our goal is to bring together leadership from County Boards and Providers orgs around a topic – the first one is likely to be early fall, focused on quality. - Steve C. asked for further clarification about language and terminology. The term we should all be using is “intellectual and developmental disabilities” 	<p>Pete clarified that we would be reporting out on it to the Board and members regularly.</p> <p>We will update the language throughout the document for consistency – using “intellectual and developmental disability(ies”) and/or I/DD.</p> <p>Unanimously approved</p>	<p>Teresa will update document.</p>

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>Scott DeLong made a motion to approve the Strategic Plan. Michelle Madden seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.</p> <p>Training Plan: Scott Marks shared the 2025 training plan. The plan has been developed based on feedback from members, including two discussions earlier in January. The plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CEO/DOO Training - Regional In-Person Training - 3-5 Online Modules - Webinars - CESP Conference 	<p>Move forward with plan</p>	<p>Scott will organize trainings, get dates on OPRA calendar, secure spaces, etc.</p>
	<p>Committee Discussion: The Board went into breakout rooms to respond to a series of questions. Pete then facilitated a report out:</p>	<p>Feedback will be used to inform further discussion w/committee chairs.</p>	<p>Teresa will organize meeting w/committee chairs to discuss further.</p>

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>Tami’s Group: Consider defining committees better – what’s a committee, group, committee of Board vs. OPRA committee. Isn’t Policy a Board Committee—but board members aren’t on it. Friday Five is a good overview, but how do we get access if we’re not on committee. Using chair role for emerging leader with a board and OPRA liaison. Consider how to connect/continue to work ADVANCE grads. How do we get emerging leaders involved in committees work in virtual world, and also don’t want to drive?</p> <p>Kurt’s Group: Think all committees are relevant. Maybe consider doing Day & Employment and Adult like what we did w/Residential (do on same day). Lot of duplication – Friday calls, committees, etc. Look at why we have committees/what they do, what’s the purpose. Look at adding Technology, Finance, Program “folks” (behavioral needs). Emerging leaders – we are committed, but the average OPRA member may not be or can’t. How do we communicate value to members? Friday Five – more delineation, clarification on what’s coming up, etc. Calendar invite – get them on the calendar now for year.</p> <p>Ashley’s Group: HR Committee – needing more relevant topics (i.e., how to handle background checks, marijuana, testing, inconsistent ODOT rules). ADS & Employment – clear differentiation of topics – duplication. Too much repetition on information being shared – Friday Five and Committees.</p> <p>Policy Committee – why isn’t it always open to all members?</p>	<p>Website will be updated to provide information on current committees, including distinction of Policy Committee.</p>	<p>Teresa will work w/team to update website.</p> <p>OPRA committee liaisons will ensure calendar invites go out (note: given membership year, the links change after April – may need to send out separate invites/update invites).</p>

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>Adam’s Group: The committees are a great resource. How do we get emerging leaders engaged. We don’t want to make it mandatory, but maybe it could be something like, “Who from your agency is going to participate in this committee?”</p> <p>Get calendar invites out now/for the year.</p> <p>The combining of committees – there is a lot of overlap, and doing two in a row might be hard, but not sure if that works for everyone.</p> <p>Board members had a hard time naming all the committees.</p> <p>Like the idea of a technology committee, also behavioral services area, maybe children and youth – is there a big enough interest/relevance to all.</p> <p>Getting emerging leaders engaged in committees is vital.</p> <p>Further Discussion: Use of breakout rooms in larger meetings can create more opportunities for connection.</p> <p>Maybe consider twice a year in-person to have a moment to bond/connect. Or maybe consider something at the conference.</p> <p>There was discussion about how the committees are marketed, that it would be helpful to update info on the website around committees, clarifying who can/should attend which committees, etc.</p>		
	<p>District Discussion <i>District 1:</i> District hasn’t met in several years. Friday Five seems to have met their needs/not sure what else they</p>	<p>Feedback will be used to develop district engagement plan.</p>	<p>OPRA team will develop district engagement plan.</p>

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p>would talk about. Also, in District 1, there is another provider group (Gold Standard) meeting needs in Hamilton.</p> <p>OPRA could help organize/facilitate conversations on topics that haven't been covered elsewhere:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County/Provider relations - SSA topics (we're being asked to do a lot of historical SSA functions – case management) - Unfunded mandates and how to manage (i.e., LOC in ICFs as unfunded mandate) - Independent Providers - Remote Supports <p><i>District 2:</i> We really like the District meetings – they promote bonding in our district/across members. We tend to cover topics not covered by OPRA on Friday Five, etc. For example, we talked about transportation. We also rotate meeting locations among members in district.</p> <p>Questions: We wonder how often we should meet (and probably beneficial to get them on the calendar up front – maybe quarterly). Also, are we trying to get more people at the table, or is it about trying to phase in/get emerging leaders at the table.</p> <p><i>District 3:</i> We meet quarterly. We rotate where those locations – hosted by the Board member who is up for election. Our dates are set. We'll get those out on the calendar at the state of the year. We offer Zoom option. We have speakers different than who we hear from at OPRA or building on OPRA topic, not the same as what we hear from OPRA. We also include operations. We have good attendance. This year, December will be a holiday party/more social event.</p>		

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	<p><i>District 4, 6, At Large:</i> Wonder what the benefit of the District meetings is. Could they be at the conference, but why would we break out by district. Don't feel quarterly is needed – maybe twice a year between conference. Never been invited, never attended (because at large). Where we see the benefit – County Board issues – a lot of people hesitant to address those by themselves – safety in numbers. Not worried about retribution and have more voice. We get so much info on our field, maybe consider topics outside our field – for example, Employee Resource Network topic.</p> <p><i>District 5:</i> What is the purpose of the District meeting? We haven't met in several years. Getting them on the calendar now – maybe not quarterly. Like the County Board issue. Maybe OPRA gives us a list of possible topics/ideas. Then we pick three dates and get them on the calendar for the year. We like the social aspect – maybe a legislative breakfast. We need more purpose, meaning – and that will make it easier to plan those meetings. In-person, virtual, does it matter?</p> <p><i>District 7:</i> Tami and Laura – note we'd like the vacancy left by Diane filled. The reps meet, but we don't meet at as regularly as a full district. This is maybe short-sighted, we realize we need to hear more from the district rather than only sharing "top down" conversations but getting info from our members to bring to OPRA. Hearing from district members who aren't active about why they're not active. We're the "ambassadors" of the district and it's our job to get that info from our members and to OPRA. We like the idea of a Happy Hour or something we could do even virtually, but maybe also host something for our district at a conference, etc.</p>		

Agenda	Discussion	Tasks/Conclusion	Responsibility
	It would be helpful to get an updated list of members annually and updated when there are new members. Make this planned/routine.		
	<p>Membership Update: Pete shared the latest renewal numbers which are coming in faster than in the past. We are pleased with renewals. We'll continue to put out reminders.</p>		
	<p>ANCOR Membership: Pete gave an update on what it means to be a "full" OPRA member as requested by the Board. We have not received the information from ANCOR to date – there is a meeting to discuss at the end of the month. ANCOR is stopping their "small member" program, and this may affect several OPRA members.</p> <p>We will have the numbers ready for the Board in February.</p> <p>Tim asked if ANCOR takes into consideration members that are also members of OHCA and how that factors into the cost. Pete confirmed ANCOR does factor that into their analysis.</p>	Will obtain updated quote/numbers from ANCOR and report back to Board in February.	Pete will reach out to ANCOR.
<i>Other Business</i>	None.		
<i>Adjourn</i>	Motion to adjourn: Tim Neville; second: Tami Honkala.	Unanimously approved	

* More detailed information available upon request

Policy Committee / Budget & Advocacy

The policy committee serves as the clearinghouse for most issues affecting any aspect of DD services and makes recommendations for action to OPRA's board of directors. Every effort is made to allow sufficient time to discuss issues in detail in order to understand the impact on individuals and providers, and to consider what position OPRA should take on a given issue. OPRA Committees examine issues and may pass them on to the Policy Committee for review. Ad hoc workgroups may also be established from time to time to examine issues more fully. The policy committee is chaired by the vice chair of the board of directors with a representative provider group selected to serve as the core committee. This core committee is tasked with convening and commenting on policy issues as they arise, whether during a meeting or between meetings. Other committee workflows through policy committee to the board of directors, and vice versa.

Policy Core Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 12, 2025
10am-12pm via Zoom

Scott DeLong welcomed the group and reviewed the Safe Place Statement.

Review & Update of Charter: Charter has been updated to reflect new membership and better align with OPRA's Code of Regulations.

OPRA Strategic Plan: Teresa provided update on OPRA's strategic plan, specifically discussing district engagement plan, possible changes to committees/chairs, and whether/if a technology committee or "community of practice" might be helpful. The team also shared plans for a Fall Leadership Forum and opportunities for peer learning.

Waiver Work: Teresa and Scott are working with remote support vendors and HPC/paid back up providers to identify and discuss issues around billing, compliance, and contracting. Teresa also shared updates from the Waiver Modernization Workgroup – it appears as if the Department is pausing on the move to the SIS but is still looking to replace the DDP and AAI and have an assessment that gets us closer to/results in acuity-based rates. There is also work around an MRC replacement.

Blueprint Work: Scott shared an update on the Blueprint work – which is not moving forward as planned/originally proposed.

ICF: Rachel shared the ICF rule package is out and invited members to share any feedback with her.

Advocacy: Pete and Christine shared updates on the state budget process, meetings with legislators, and testimony schedule.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 12 10:00 – 12:00 (virtual)



Policy Core Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 12, 2025
10am-12pm via Zoom

Jeff Johnson welcomed the group and reviewed the Safe Place Statement.

State Budget Updates & Amendments: The Committee focused largely on state and federal policy issues, discussing budget amendments proposed by the DD Budget Coalition (Waiver Rates) and OPRA/its members (ICF equipment ceilings and system efficiencies). Members of the OPRA team are also headed to DC to meet with Ohio delegation the week of 3/24.

District Meetings & County Board Relationships: The Committee discussed recent conversations at District meetings regarding local relationships and OPRA's plans to strengthen. OPRA will be sending a letter to County Boards in the coming weeks to share what we've heard and planning a Fall Leadership Forum.

National Perspective Session: OPRA is organizing a session to take place 5/28 (the day before Great Provider Summit) that will bring in ANCOR, NASDDDS, and Consulting for Human Services. The session will include both public policy and business practices.

GES/BEST: Scott gave an update on the status of GES/BEST. There was discussion about a response to DODD from OPRA. We are expecting a letter from DODD/Director Hauck.

Waiver Nursing: To be discussed at next Healthcare Committee. Need to get a better sense of the issues around billing waiver nursing.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 9 from 10:00 – 12:00 (virtual, open meeting)

Budget & Federal Advocacy Documents

(Please see the attachment and PowerPoint sent with Board Report)

OPRA CEO Report

Membership Committee Charter

Purpose

OPRA's Membership Committees play a vital role in advancing our mission by bringing together providers from across Ohio to discuss challenges, share best practices, and shape the future of services for people with disabilities. These committees provide a collaborative space for members to stay informed, advocate for policy and system improvements, and engage with OPRA leadership in meaningful ways.

Committee Structure

- Each committee will have a **staff liaison** appointed by the CEO to provide administrative support and ensure alignment with OPRA's strategic goals.
- A **board liaison** will serve as a connection between the committee and OPRA's Board of Directors, ensuring that key discussions and recommendations are communicated effectively.
- Each committee will be led by a **chair** and **co-chair**, both of whom will be non-board members to create additional leadership opportunities within OPRA.
- Chair and co-chair terms will be **three years**, with staggered appointments to ensure continuity.

Selection of Chairs and Co-Chairs

Chairs and co-chairs will be selected through a nomination process (self-nominations or nominations by others), followed by a vote of the committee members. Additional selection criteria or processes may be determined by each committee as needed.

Responsibilities

Committee Chairs & Co-Chairs:

- Provide leadership in facilitating committee discussions and ensuring productive meetings.
- Work collaboratively with the staff and board liaisons to set meeting agendas and priorities.
- Encourage engagement among committee members and create opportunities for participation.
- Mentor and support the incoming chair/co-chair during the final year of their term.
- Represent the committee's interests and recommendations in discussions with OPRA leadership.

Committee Role & Responsibilities:

- Serve as a forum for members to stay informed about key issues impacting providers.
- Foster collaboration among OPRA members, staff, and board liaisons to address challenges and share best practices.
- Advocate for policy and system improvements by identifying key priorities and contributing to OPRA's initiatives.
- Shape discussions by suggesting agenda topics, sharing insights, and participating in committee projects.

Meetings & Participation

- Meetings will be held regularly, with schedules determined by each committee.
- Meeting agendas, minutes, and relevant materials will be accessible via the committee forum.
- All OPRA members are encouraged to participate, whether by attending meetings, proposing discussion topics, or contributing to committee-led initiatives.



Amendments:

This charter may be reviewed and amended as needed to ensure the effectiveness of the committees and their alignment with OPRA’s strategic goals.

2025 OPRA Membership Update (As of 3/28/25)

Provider Members – 188 members

- 11 new members
- 153 members renewed
- 24 members yet to renew (7 were new members in 2024)

\$1,691,200 was invoiced for 2025 provider membership dues
\$1,322,538 has been paid so far
\$368,662 still owed (mostly from semi-annual and quarterly dues yet to be paid)

Public Entity Members – 35 members

- 4 comp’d memberships (OADSP, Ohio Self Determination Assoc., The Arc of Ohio & The Downs Syndrome Assoc. of Central Ohio)
- 1 new member (at level 1 membership)
- 26 members renewed (11 renewed at Level 2 membership)
- 4 members yet to renew (2 were new members in 2024)
- 2 members quit (Montgomery Co. Board of DD & Geauga Co. Board of DD)

\$56,000 was invoiced for 2025 public entity membership dues
\$56,000 paid so far

Associate Members – 69 members

- 9 new members
- 43 members renewed
- 17 members yet to renew (6 were new members in 2024)

\$24,500 was invoiced for 2025 associate membership dues
\$23,000 paid so far
\$1,500 still owed

Total membership dues invoiced for 2025 - \$1,771,700

Total membership dues paid so far - \$1,401,538

Total membership dues still owed - \$370,162

OPRA Committee Reports



Day Array

Summary

This committee provides a platform for information sharing, networking, deliberating, and problem-solving topics and issues unique to leaders in the day array. Topics covered in meetings may include, but are not limited to, updates from the field, national and state trends, policy and rule review, best practices in organizational leadership, operating fiscally sound organizations, and identifying and mitigating organizational risk as relates to the broad array of services and supports, including day programs, active treatment, vocational training, career development, and employment. Policy recommendations from this committee are taken to the policy committee for review and action.

Committee Chairs: Anne Haning (Belco Works), Chelsea Ashcraft (Ohio Valley Goodwill Cincinnati)

OPRA Staff Lead: Scott Marks

OPRA Day Array Committee Report

Thursday, February 2, 2025

9:30am-11:30am

Quick recap

The meeting focused on the first Day Array committee meeting of the year, with discussions on the Collaborative for Adult Resources and Information, the future of 14 C in Ohio, and the implementation of the Comprehensive Individual Service (CIS) tool. The committee also discussed the decision to not move forward with changes to group employment support and career exploration, the definition of community in the context of disability services, and the state biennial budget. Concerns were raised about the impact of potential federal grant cuts and the need for further discussions and advocacy for disability services.

Summary

Day Array Committee Meeting Overview

In the meeting, Scott Marks, the Vice President at Opra and staff liaison for the Day Array and Day Employment Service committees, welcomed everyone to the first Day Array committee meeting of the year. The meeting featured several guest speakers, including Ann Tapia from the Community Life Engagement team, who discussed the Collaborative for Adult Resources and Information, a statewide initiative aimed at bridging gaps in services for aging adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Chelsea Ashcraft, the Director of Developmental Services at Ohio Valley Goodwill, also participated in the discussion. The conversation ended with Monica Younger and Adam Herman from the Ohio Association of County Boards, who were set to discuss a few topics with the committee.

Ohio 14 C Transition and Budget

Adam discussed the resolution passed by the Delegate Assembly regarding the future of 14 C in Ohio, emphasizing the need for a reasonable transition period, allowing individuals to choose their place of employment, and providing state technical assistance during the transition. He also mentioned the need for temporary financial support for providers transitioning from subminimum wage service models. Monica then updated the committee on the state budget review, waiver modernization, and the introduction of the State Budget. She also discussed the challenges and considerations around the implementation of the Comprehensive Individual Service (CIS) tool. Keith and Stacey were set to discuss the best proposal for the employment proposals.

Group Employment Support Changes Discussed

Keith and Stacy discussed the decision to not move forward with changes to group employment support and career exploration. They explained that the decision was based on feedback from stakeholders and the need to avoid confusion between services. They also discussed the implementation of basic employment skills training as the new Ohio waiver prevocational service, including the addition of a new enhanced acuity C rate. Stacy clarified that the previous draft rule for group employment supports had the wrong rate chart, which was an error on their part. Scott clarified that the priority was not one service over the other, but both were equally important. Jeff expressed concern about the transition of one-to-four current group employment sites to CI best, and the potential loss of the group employment service. Stacy acknowledged the feedback and promised to take it back to the department.

Community Inclusion and Disability Services

The meeting involved a discussion about the definition of community in the context of disability services. Teresa expressed concern about the raised bar for community inclusion, stating that it was an unfair standard for people with disabilities who may not want to be in the community all the time. Stacy acknowledged Teresa's feedback and emphasized the importance of communication and compromise in finding a solution. Dana also shared her perspective, highlighting that not everyone wants to be inclusive in community or employment settings. Scott acknowledged the need for further discussion on these points, given the recent introduction of the rule language. The team agreed to take the feedback back to their respective groups for further discussion and revision.

Group Employment Supports Rate Concerns

Stacy and Scott discussed the group employment supports rate and the materials provided since last April. Scott expressed concern about the inconsistency between the proposed rates and the materials distributed, which led to a reworking of their 2025 budget and approach to group employment supports. Stacy acknowledged the miscommunication and the need for further discussions to clarify the integrated community setting definition. She also mentioned that the group's feedback would be taken into consideration for future steps. Scott emphasized the need for a collaborative discussion to move forward on this issue.

Addressing New Definition and Support

Scott expressed gratitude for the support and guidance received from the committee members during the challenging week. He acknowledged the need for further discussions and a reconvening of the work group to address the changes in the proposal. Scott also encouraged members to reach out to allies and advocates to support the cause. Teresa added that the department is already applying the new definition in the compliance process, which is causing operational issues. Michelle shared her experience of defending a site against the new definition, emphasizing that the changes are already being implemented. The committee agreed to continue advocating for their original stance.

Budget Advocacy and Federal Grants

Scott discussed the state biennial budget, noting that the governor's proposal includes flat funding for rates following the rate increases last biennium. He emphasized that this is just the beginning of the budget advocacy journey and that they will work with their coalition to advocate for increases through the budget. Scott also mentioned the potential for members to testify in support of funding for disability services. Jamie raised concerns about the impact of potential federal grant cuts on members and the need to monitor the status of documented immigrants. Scott acknowledged these concerns and mentioned that they are working through the implications of the executive orders on federal contracts. He concluded by stating that they will continue to advocate for a progressive path towards the most integrated employment possible.

The next Day Array Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 3rd @ 9:30am

The Day Array Committee has two standing subcommittees:

- **Day Services Committee:** This committee is designed for program directors, frontline supervisors, and direct support professionals who are providers of adult day support. Meetings include information sharing, networking, problem-solving and discussion of best practices and trends in day support for adults with DD. Training and updates from the state concerning adult day supports, vocational habilitation, career planning, and non-medical transportation is provided. Policy recommendations from this committee are taken to the Day Array Committee for review and then forwarded to the policy committee.

Committee Chair: Nicole Smith (RHDD)

OPRA Staff Lead: Scott Marks

- **Employment Services Committee:** The employment services committee is designed for program directors, frontline supervisors, certified employment support professionals, job developers, and job coaches. This committee is a platform for information sharing, networking, deliberating, and problem-solving topics and issues unique to providing integrated, competitive employment services. Topics covered may include, but are not limited to, policy and rule review, state trends, understanding and implementing DODD, OOD, and ODM rules, braiding funding, best practices service delivery, establishing relationships with employers, supervising remote employees, operating fiscally sound programs, and dual customer model, and identifying and mitigating individual and programmatic risk. Policy recommendations from this committee are taken to the Day Array committee for review.

Committee Chairs: Paul Soprano (UCP of Greater Cleveland), Justin Blumhorst (Capabilities)

OPRA Staff Lead: Scott Marks

OPRA Day & Employment Committee Report

Thursday, March 6, 2025

10:00am-11:30am

Quick recap

The meeting covered various aspects of employment services for individuals with disabilities, including updates on budgets, programs, and challenges faced by different departments. Discussions centered around federal and state funding, changes in referral patterns, and issues with service consistency and coordination across regions. The team also addressed concerns about compliance with regulations, explored strategies for advocating for budget increases, and considered potential impacts of proposed budget cuts on Medicaid and vocational rehabilitation services.

Summary

Scott's Employment Service Update Meeting

In the meeting, Scott welcomed everyone and initiated the agenda. There was a discussion about the previous few weeks and months, along with updates on the employment service. Scott announced that the meeting might extend beyond 11:30. Jay Burns and Sarah Trout from OOD joined the meeting and shared positive updates about their budget and VR system. Jay also mentioned the successful implementation of the BRP schedule and the Summer Youth program, which is set to start now.

Positive Feedback on New Fee Schedule

Jay reports mostly positive feedback on the new fee schedule and service options, though some clarification has been needed for new job search assistance options. The transition to new terminology, such as changing "community-based assessment" to "community work experience," has been a learning curve but is progressing well. Jay also mentions that OOD is in a healthy position with pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS)

spending, partly due to the new PARTS model. Paul adds that the Pre-ETS curriculum development process is going well, with a robust and user-friendly curriculum expected to roll out in the coming months. Jay confirms that OOD is open to new Pre-ETS providers, especially in areas with less availability, and notes that the new curriculum resources will make it easier for providers to implement Pre-ETS services.

Federal Funding and Ohio's State Budget

Jay and Scott discussed Federal funding for VR and Ohio's state budget. Jay stated they continue to stay positive and encouraged by their state budget, requesting an increase, and feel supported. Scott noted the complexities of federal funding and asked about potential abolition of the Department of Education. Jay clarified they are monitoring the situation but remain hopeful. Scott also asked about the state budget, which Jay explained involves state partnerships and an increase of 1.5 million. Jay expressed gratitude for the governor's commitment to being an inclusive state and supporting Ohioans with disabilities.

Participant and Referral Numbers Discussion

Scott discussed the impact of the increase in participants and referrals on services. Ann noted that their numbers have remained similar over the years, but they face challenges due to unusual restrictions and clients who don't fully understand the services they've signed up for. Paul shared that their job development referrals have declined significantly year over year. He speculated that this might be due to a change in the mix of participants or the nature of the referrals. However, Paul expressed optimism about the upcoming summer youth program, noting that they have already received a good number of referrals. The team also discussed the potential connection between internal job development and the decline in job development referrals. Nicole added that there's been an increase in customized employment cases, which can take a year to start, and a rise in transition age youth.

Addressing Community Service Disruptions

The meeting focused on issues related to the functioning of a community service. There were concerns about the inconsistency among offices and regions, with different supervisors and counselors leading to service disruptions. There were also challenges with the project search service, which faced issues with student recruitment and retention. The team discussed the need for better coordination and consistency in these services. They also talked about the impact of frequent reassignments of cases and the need for better communication within the team. The conversation ended with a discussion about the possibility of reconvening the project search group to address these issues.

Employment Skills Training and Waiver

Scott discussed the recent developments regarding the employment skills training for the July 1st waiver. He mentioned that the Department had decided not to move forward with the proposed group employment service, which was a significant setback for the team. Scott expressed frustration over the Department's refusal to provide a written explanation for their decision and their refusal to reconvene the stakeholder group. He also highlighted the challenges faced by the team in understanding the Department's rationale for not allowing the coexistence of the two services. Scott concluded by stating that nothing is changing at the moment and that the team is still trying to understand the Department's position.

Addressing State Compliance and Budget Issues

Scott discussed the uncertain next steps regarding a situation involving state and stakeholder partners. He mentioned that they were exploring some budget language to address certain issues. Scott also addressed concerns about the compliance of their prevocational services with CMS regulations, explaining that the key aspect of compliance is the service's intention to advance individuals on their path to employment. He suggested that maintaining compliance could involve discussing expected time limits for the service with the SSAs. Mallory asked about specific ways Ohio was not in compliance, to which Scott responded that the main issue was the 50% minimum wage rule, which the department had already discarded. Scott also mentioned that the current CMS administration was not pursuing any states for lack of compliance with pre-vocational rules.

Handling Patient Liability Challenges

Scott discussed the need for patience in dealing with the department, suggesting that direct discussions might not be productive at the moment. Chelsea added that the department intends to have internal conversations before returning to the table. Scott also raised a question about patient liability, seeking feedback on how to handle it. Kay and Michelle shared their experiences, noting that they collect patient liability and often see it reduced after a reevaluation. Michelle advised requesting a reevaluation to potentially reduce patient liability. Mary mentioned a county where patient liability is more frequent, but noted that the County Board has provided additional training to help their Social Security Administration (SSA) staff. The team agreed to continue monitoring the situation and providing feedback.

State Budget Process and Increases

Scott discussed the state budget process, highlighting the need for incremental increases in funding for waiver services over the next two years. He explained that the proposed flat funding for the current year was based on the use of American Rescue Plan Act funding in the previous budget, which was limited time funding. Scott also mentioned the development of a method for sustainable planned increases in budgets going forward. He shared a one-pager detailing the proposed increases and encouraged the group to advocate for these increases. Paul asked about the higher cost in the second year, which Scott explained was due to the cumulative effect of the increases and the half-year implementation delay. Scott also directed the group to the Ohio Producers Association (OPRA) website for more information on the state budget process.

Medicaid Funding in the Budget Resolution

Scott provided an update on the current state of the US House of Representatives' Budget resolution, which includes a directive to the Department of Energy and Commerce to cut \$880 billion over the next decade. He suggested that this could potentially impact Medicaid funding, despite the President and many legislators publicly stating that they do not want to see cuts to Medicaid. Scott also mentioned that there has been a lot of discussion about potential waste, fraud, and abuse in both Medicare and Medicaid, as well as in Social Security. He encouraged the attendees to stay informed through their partners at Anchor and to advocate directly with their representatives, as this is crucial for the future of Medicaid and vocational rehabilitation services.

Addressing NMT Rate Budget Constraints

Scott and the team discussed ongoing challenges with the NMT rate, particularly in regards to budget constraints. Michelle shared her county's struggle with the new rate, and Scott acknowledged the unhelpful guidance from DODD. They agreed that the enhanced rate is beneficial only if it works within the budget limits. Scott promised to send out a short survey to gather initial feedback on the NMT authorization process. The team also expressed gratitude for the active participation and advocacy shown this week.

The next Day & Employment Services Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 1st @ 10:00am

Health Care

Summary

The Healthcare committee is comprised primarily of nursing staff but does include other members who are interested in health and healthcare related issues. The committee focuses on nursing and medical services in the waiver and ICF settings. Areas of focus include but are not limited to: rules and regulations that affect the DD nursing community, training, education and best practices.

Committee Chair: Shelly Wharton (The Society)

OPRA Staff Lead: Christine Touvelle

OPRA Health Care Committee Report

Thursday, February 20, 2025

10am-12pm

OPRA's Healthcare Committee met on this date. OPRA staff Rachel Hayes and Teresa Kobelt led the meeting due to the absence of OPRA Liaison Christine Touvelle. The committee was chaired by Shelly Wharton.

The Role of COGs (Council of Government)

As part of OPRA's strategic plan, representatives of Ohio's COGs were invited to participate in the meeting. The discussion centered around conversation and initiatives to possibly collaborate on relating to quality within the nursing realm. Additionally, data from the COGs regarding Nursing Review QA's was presented to the group as well as a discussion regarding how the review process is conducted and the importance of distinguishing a review process looking at Quality vs looking at Compliance.

To that end, the group agreed to continue discussions around potential ideas and collaboration. The group believes this could be a very productive conversation with provider members, county boards, and the department.

Waiver Nursing Rule

Rachel led a discussion around the upcoming revisions to the Waiver Nursing Rule, specifically:

- Renames the service from "Waiver Nursing Services" to "Waiver Nursing."
- Replaces, updates, and adds definitions.
- Revises definition of "plan of care" to align with CMS.
- Revise definition of "service documentation".
- Reorders provisions of service.
- Updates provider qualifications. Clarifies that Independent Provider may not provide the service to his or her spouse or minor child to align ODM.
- Updates the service authorization process.
- Requires a provider of the service to utilize EVV.
- Specifies that same-day visits must be separated by a lapse of at least two hours.
- Addresses billing modification codes in the rule and adds the codes to the appendix.
- The proposed rule defines waiver nursing services, outlines provider qualifications, service delivery and documentation requirements, and sets payment standards.

- The rule expands and clarifies several definitions including:
 - Waiver Nursing Services*
 - Plan of Care*
 - Nursing Task Inventory*
- The proposed rule better defines the qualifications required. Reinforces that waiver nursing service must be provided by either an independent or agency provider holding a current Medicaid provider agreement and hold the required license (RN or LPN working under RN).
- Outlines the service authorization process:
 - Timelines*
 - Length of visit (cannot exceed 12 hrs within 24 hr period)*
 - Group visits (no more than 3 individuals)*
 - Mandates the use of EVV*
- Provides more guidance on overtime billing, how to bill multiple or extended visits.

The next Health Care Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 17th @ 10am

Human Resources

Summary

The HR committee is comprised of HR professionals, or anyone responsible for the life cycle of employment for his/her agency. This group of professionals meets to discuss best practices in HR, from recruiting and hiring process, to keeping abreast of upcoming new regulations that affect employment law and/or training requirements.

Committee Chair: Michelle Madden (IOPC)

OPRA Staff Lead: Christine Touvelle

The March 20th HR Committee meeting was cancelled due to scheduling conflicts.

The next HR Committee meeting is scheduled for May 15th @ 10am

Residential Resources

Summary

The ICF & Residential Waiver Committees was combined as a forum for providers offering residential services, including ICF and waiver-based models. The committee explores funding, staffing, regulatory requirements, and issues that have a direct impact on the programs and services our members offer.

Committee Chair(s): Susan Berneike (Help Foundation), Bob Heinzerling (Heinzerling Community), Kurt Miller (Empowering People) and Jamie Steele (OVR)

OPRA Staff Lead: Rachel Hayes

The new meeting structure beginning in 2025:

9:30 AM – 11:00 AM | Residential Waiver

Focused on updates, discussions, and presentations specific to the Residential Waiver service.

11:00 AM – 11:30 AM | Department Updates/Presentations

Content applicable to both Residential Waiver (RW) and ICF services.

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM | ICF

Centered on updates, discussions, and presentations specific to the ICF service.

OPRA Residential Resources Committee Report

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

9:30am – 1:00pm

Quick recap

The Residential Resources Committee met on this day. This committee is now a hybrid committee made up of both Residential Waiver and ICF representatives. The group discussed the proposed flat budget, the need for a mechanism to trigger ongoing increases, and potential cost savings through regulatory reforms. They also discussed the challenges with the SIS and the MRC, and the need for better training for county boards and providers. The conversation ended with discussions on new rules, the possibility of the ICF reimbursement group reuniting, and the increasing number of citations related to the use of PRN medications in care facilities.

Summary

Residential Resources Committee Budget Discussion

Rachel Hayes, the meeting's organizer, introduced the Residential Resources Committee and its new format aimed at maximizing efficiency. Susan Berneike, a committee chair, expressed her support for the new format. The meeting then focused on the budget, with Pete discussing the proposed flat budget and the need for a mechanism to trigger ongoing increases. He mentioned the coalition's proposal to use the consumer price index for inflationary increases and the need to protect the DD waivers. Susan Brownknight asked about regulatory reforms and potential cost savings, to which Pete responded that they are considering regulatory reforms to improve the system and reduce administrative burdens. Tim suggested appreciating the legislature's efforts in the current budget and sharing stories of how increased wages have positively impacted quality and retention. The conversation ended with Teresa discussing the waiver modernization effort and the work group's involvement.

Modernization Process, Updates, and Rules

Teresa led a discussion about the underwhelming modernization process, focusing on the SIS and then MRC. Concerns were raised about the SIS, including its proprietary nature, limited assessors, and potential for over-measuring support needs. The group also discussed the MRC, with some members expressing a need for improvements rather than a complete replacement. The team agreed on the need for consistency and flexibility in the billing system, with some members suggesting a daily rate could be beneficial. The conversation ended with a discussion on the need for better training for county boards and providers to ensure accurate implementation of the MRC and SIS.

In the meeting, Teresa and Rachel discussed the need for a group to delve deeper into the issues surrounding MRC and Sherry Weber. Susan Berneike asked about the appetite for change and the timeline for implementation, to which Teresa responded that the contract with Deloitte ends at the end of the fiscal year. Rachel then presented three new rules: the Assistive Technology Rule, the Specialized Medical Equipment Rule, and the Extended Travel Rule. She also discussed the upcoming Waiver Nursing Rule, which will replace the current rule and define what waiver nursing services are. Susan Berneike raised concerns about the administrative burden of billing for waiver nursing services, and Rachel agreed that this was a significant issue.

Remote Support Peer Learning Challenges

Rachel led a meeting discussing various topics including remote support, peer learning, and compliance. Teresa provided an overview of the challenges faced by the OPRA community in the relationship between remote support providers and paid backup. Rachel also mentioned the idea of a peer learning system involving case studies and plans of correction. Ann then gave updates on the department's budget, new community talks, the 2025 Workforce Symposium, the 2025 Innovation Series, and the Ohio ISP team's feedback collection. She also encouraged agencies to reach out for potential collaborations. Rachel ended the conversation by discussing the MUI rule implementation timeline and the upcoming Great Provider Summit.

New ICF Structure and Budget Update

In the meeting, Rachel discussed the new structure for their ICF portion, which they believe will be beneficial for attendees by reducing duplicative content. They also reviewed the recent ICF rules package, with Pete providing an update on the budget process, including a proposal for a 6% increase in inflationary costs and the continuation of the professional workforce development add-on. They also discussed the challenges with prn medications and the need for more training opportunities. Lastly, they touched on initiatives moving forward, peer learning, compliance, and surveys.

Ohio Budget and Medicaid Funding

Pete provided an update on the budget situation for developmental disabilities services in Ohio. The group discusses the need for wage increases to compete with other sectors and state-run facilities. They highlight the importance of Medicaid funding for these services and the need to protect it from potential cuts. Pete mentions upcoming testimony opportunities, including Director Houck's testimony and a panel from their budget coalition. The governor's proposal for ICFs is generally supported, though there are some questions about whether it matches growth needs. The group plans to advocate for increased equipment and vehicle cost allowances. They emphasize the importance of thanking legislators for past support and educating them on the reliance on Medicaid funding. The discussion concludes with a reminder to support all types of services and not pick winners and losers.

ICF Rules Package and Depreciation

Rachel provides an overview of the ICF rules package that was recently released. She explains that nine rules were up for their five-year review, covering topics such as provider agreements, payment during Medicaid appeals, personal needs allowance increases, debt estimation for operator changes, and capital assets and depreciation. The most significant discussion centers on the depreciation of vehicles, with Tim noting that their request to depreciate vehicles over 8 years instead of 4 was denied due to CMS guidelines. Than suggests exploring whether Medicare rules necessarily apply to Medicaid and offers to discuss this at the federal level. Rachel mentions that there will be opportunities to comment on additional rules later in the year.

ICF Group Reunion and OISP Updates

Rachel discussed the possibility of the ICF reimbursement group reuniting and expressed optimism about it. The group is hopeful that this reunion will happen soon, although it's not clear yet. Timothy raised a query about the Department's intentions of bringing in a consulting group again, to which Rachel responded that they haven't indicated anything yet. Rachel also confirmed that they are at about 68-70% progress with OISP. Timothy shared his recent experience of receiving a citation for not communicating ISP updates to adult day programs. She also shared updates on the OISP Milestones training project and mentioned that the department and ODH have supported it.

Addressing PRN Medication Citation Issues

Rachel led a discussion about the increasing number of citations related to the use of Prn medications in care facilities. She emphasized the importance of contacting the prescribing physician every time a Prn medication is administered, even if it's part of a pre-approved plan. Rachel also highlighted the issue of providers being cited for not contacting the physician when administering Prn medications, despite having all necessary approvals. The team agreed that this issue needs to be addressed at the national level to ensure quality care and avoid losing physicians due to the administrative burden. They also discussed the potential use of Station MD to streamline the process. The team agreed to continue documenting their processes and to include the use of Station MD in their cost reports.

Peer Learning Initiative and Medicaid Updates

Rachel discusses developing a new peer learning initiative for providers aimed at sharing knowledge and expertise. The initiative, part of OPRA's strategic plan, aims to utilize providers' "grit" and innovative approaches through case studies, regional sessions, or rule interpretations. Than notes that Ohio ICF providers are among the best nationally, with excellent dialogue between state government and private providers. The group also briefly discusses long wait times with Medicaid and ODH surveys, as well as plans to develop ICF-specific FAQs for MUI rules. The meeting concludes with a discussion about potential changes to provider taxes and their impact on Medicaid funding.

The next Residential Resources Committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 16th @ 9:30am

Marketing and Communications

Summary

The Marketing and Communications Committee is designed for organization leaders and their marketing and communication staff. The goal is to provide a focus on sharing strategies and tools, develop and hone innovative ideas, and provide feedback to other members of the group. The committee will periodically invite guest speakers to address identified needs of the group.

Committee Chairs: Liz Owens (The Alpha Group) and Carla McDonald (Weaver Industries)

OPRA Staff Lead: Melissa Fannon

OPRA Marketing & Communications Committee Report

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

10am – 11am

The Marketing & Communications Committee met to discuss how organizations are leveraging AI today which was presented by Carla McDonald, Director of Operations at Weaver Industries. The discussion included do's and don'ts on how to leverage ChatGPT Plus and ChatGPT Deep Research as resources to help with future communications and marketing endeavors.

The next Marketing & Communications Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, May 13th @ 10am