

The OADDP *Newsline*

The Ohio Association of Developmental Disabilities Professionals

A Department of The Ohio Education Association

Important Dates

Annual Conference

March 3-4, 2017

**Mohican State Park
Lodge and Resort**

Board Meetings

July 16, 2016

**Ferrante's Winery
5585 North River Rd.**

Geneva

12:00

September

November

December RA

January

April

July

**Check the website,
oaddp.org, for exact
dates and locations.**

Feds Approve Ohio Plan

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services notified state officials last week that the agency signed off on a preliminary plan submitted in March by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. Even though all states must comply with the new federal regulations established in 2014, Ohio is only the third state, after Tennessee and Kentucky, to meet the requirements, designed to move people with disabilities away from services provided by institutions and toward community services.

The feds are pushing to get people who are on waivers out of institutional settings, including sheltered workshops, and into day treatment, day care, and jobs in the community. John Martin, Director of DODD, states that the department will be looking to see if everybody being served by boards of DD is given the opportunity



and choice to be fully involved in their community. People who do not want to leave their existing program will be allowed to stay, as long as they are informed about community options.

According to Greg Moody, head of the Governor's Office of Health Transformation, "Ohio is committed to creating meaningful choices for seniors and people with disabilities to live with dignity in the settings they prefer." The Director of Medicaid in Ohio, John McCarthy, said the approval makes Ohio the leader in the nation in transition to home and community based services.

OEA's Analysis

Melissa Clark, OEA

Government Relations staff person who monitors DD issues, noted that the Federal approval and overview of Home and Community-Based Settings (HCBS) Regulations does not address the issue of Conflict of Interest that has been the focus of so many discussions among DD locals and boards over the last two years.

The initial proposals from the feds indicated that boards could not do both the Service and Support Administration (SSA) activities *and* engage in hands-on support and care of consumers. This latest overview of the regulations does not mention these competing interests. However, it is thought by OEA that this may be an attempt by DODD to “sugarcoat” the issue by not talking plainly about it.

The regulations state that, while workshops will not *have* to close and consumers will not be *forced* to leave, the choices they will be offered are from among non-disability settings. And, because the SSA function brings in federal dollars, many boards around the state have already opted to close down their hands-on services and focus strictly on the SSA part.

Disability Advocacy Alliance Responds to Feds & Ohio

Caroline Luhrmann, a spokesperson for Disability Advocacy Alliance (DAA), said changes should be based on what is best for the consumer and not simply on where services are delivered. “Families are very concerned the state is over-reacting to the new regulations,” she said.

DAA is a volunteer organization, formed in January, 2015, by parents and family members to protect the rights of Ohioans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

DAA's mission is faithful to the U.S. Supreme Court's Olmstead decision and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Olmstead clearly states that an individual's desires are paramount in determining residential placement. It is with this legal foundation that DAA asserts that the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities must offer a range of residential, habilitation, and employment options to meet the diverse needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Disability Advocacy Alliance (DAA) recognizes the need for the full array of services to support the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities. We believe, however, the choice of where to live and work resides with the individual, acting independently or with the aid of responsible family members or other guardians. These choices should not be made through an unwelcome and unrepresentative lawsuit.

More information, as well as links to letters and other resources, is available on their website www.disabilityadvocacyalliance.org.



We Did it - Again! Annual Conference is a Huge Success.

by Nikki Nadasky

Members came out once again to Mohican State Park, March 5th and 6th, to attend this year's Annual Membership Conference. Due to the many changes with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) rule, members were keenly interested in hearing from both Kathy McKinely, the OEA Plan Attorney, and Melissa Clark, OEA Government Relations. Melissa touched on the latest updates on the CMS rule and how they are affecting workshop facilities run by County Boards. It was a chance for members to be heard and discuss their stories and feelings over these changes. Most were concerned about how these changes affect the people they serve and work with on a daily basis. Members were asked to share their stories and send those concerns to Becky Higgins, President of OEA, who also spoke at the conference. Becky made a heart felt speech and thanked everyone for their continued work and dedication. Scott DiMauro, Vice President of OEA, updated those in attendance on issues effecting education and labor and the OEA.

The group had a successful Fund for Children and Public Education (FCPE) drive led by Bob Matkowski, OEA liaison, and Chairperson Christina West. They explained how contributions to the fund allow members to have a voice in electing candidates who care about the issues that occur locally, and across the state and nation.



Megan Rothermel, from the ARC of Portage County, was the inspirational speaker. She gave a wonderful talk about what it is like to grow up being a person with Down's Syndrome. She focused on what you can accomplish in life when you set your mind to it and keep a positive attitude. She also explained how helpful it was to have the resources she did through the county board, like early intervention and therapies. She used humor, personal stories, and beautiful photographs that she took herself, to inspire everyone in the room.

There was an informative and timely presentation by Harvey Yeager, former member of The Association of Cuyahoga Employees for Special Students (ACCESS), now owner of Support for You, a private provider agency in Lake County. Considering that some counties may opt to discontinue direct day services to adults, he shared how to become an independent agency provider. He went through the entire certification process and what he learned about becoming successful.

Melissa Clark received the Friend of DD Award for her continuing efforts to fight for DD issues and causes at the state level. She was very moved and honored by the award.

The OADDP is looking forward to our annual conference next year and hope to see everyone back on March 3-4, 2017!

Local Focus...OADDP

by Jené Wilson

You may have noticed that this newsletter has been published in hard copy on an inconsistent schedule this year. Unfortunately, with the advent of the new federal rules around consumers being in community-based settings, we no longer have access to the county board program that printed and mailed for us at a cost that could be managed within the current dues.

The OADDP executive committee has been considering options to continue to get important information out to members at an affordable rate. It seems that posting it to the website, with notification by email to all members, would be the most efficient, timely, and cost effective. Please be sure we have a current email for you by going to OADDP.org and submitting your name and email on our "Contact Us" page.

We understand that not everyone has personal access to the internet, so if some members need to continue getting a hard copy in the mail, we will try to accommodate that.