

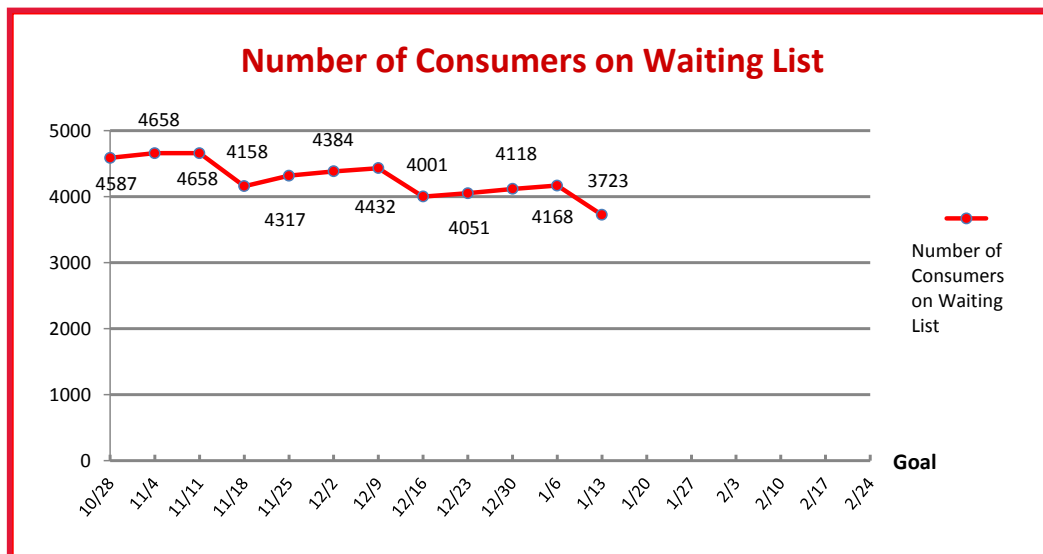
Weekly Focus

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Executive Director

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The mission of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission is to ensure individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through integrated services, partnerships and innovation.

RSC Breaks 4,000 Barrier!



RSC Featured on NBC 4 News

Our status as leader in Social Security Disability fraud detection brought local news coverage in Columbus to RSC on Thursday. The Division of Disability Determination (DDD) saved or recovered \$42 million in fraud last year to protect the integrity of a program that serves 702,000 Ohioans and provides cash and Medicaid benefits totaling nearly \$14 billion.

Because of the rapid growth in citizens receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), there has been enormous attention devoted to the program in national news outlets like the Wall Street Journal and New York Times. Both newspapers have spread the word with alarm that the SSDI program is running a \$4 billion monthly deficit and will exhaust all reserves in 2017. Media driven investigations have prompted a federal probe of locations with excessive approval rates for SSDI. It was a delight to be able to show WCMH-TV Columbus a program with a 98% decision accuracy rate as judged by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and detail how 70% of our applicants are not eligible for benefits under the SSA criteria. This media interest

Social Security Fraud



<http://www2.nbc4i.com/news/2012/jan/12/social-security-fraud-68893-vi-36693/>

documents the high importance of our DDD work and how beneficial it is to public confidence in all of state government that we are able to demonstrate both competence and diligence in the administration of such a massive program.

There was one mischaracterization of RSC's position in the story, as WCMH-TV attributed to us the sentiment that lawyers are part of the problem driving the disability insurance system toward insolvency. What we said is that RSC disability determinations are based on SSA eligibility rules, and the presence of a lawyer has no impact on our decisions. We conclude the 98% accuracy rate for RSC on these decisions proves that we are driven by nothing except adherence to the law. Area Manager Tom Melfo and his team at DDD should be congratulated.

Ohio Association of Goodwill Industries Meeting

There is so much going on at RSC that it's important that we meet often with key partners like the Ohio Association of Goodwill Industries (OAGI) to keep them up to date on all of our plans. We met at RSC headquarters this week for our quarterly dialogue. We discussed our new Accessible Web-based Activity and Reporting Environment (AWARE) and the fee schedule we're in the process of implementing in 2012. As crucial partners to us, we want OAGI to know what we're doing and why we're doing it. I think these frequent meetings help keep this partnership strong.

New VR Staff Training

One way we keep our partnerships strong is to make sure all of the outside service providers we count on are always current on RSC process and procedures. We had about two dozen new staff from partner agencies at RSC all week for comprehensive training. We went over the consumer interview including how to use AWARE. Eligibility and Order of Selection issues were presented along with training in how to make a comprehensive assessment. We briefed partner staffers on individualized plans for employment, authorizations and case closures as well as case load management and layouts. We ended the week with a session on partnership protocols and the VR business process. It was a long and hard week for these partners and for the RSC staff doing the training; but next week, we'll start reaping the benefits of well-trained and highly motivated partners across Ohio, including 6 new case load assistants hired at RSC.

Recovery-2-Work Progress Update

The historic Recovery-2-Work partnership between RSC, the Ohio Department of Alcohol & Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS), the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) and the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) is starting to see results in the field. At year end, there were nearly 1,400 applicants for service, 769 determined eligible, 471 individual plans for service approved and 21 consumers with a job because of this program.

Keeping this partnership strong takes a lot of coordination and communication, so the partners' leadership teams meet quarterly. This innovative financial partnership that turned \$8.9 million supplied by Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health Boards at the county level into a \$35 million statewide program must function within strict federal rules that govern the use of this money. The partners in this program have also been holding regional meetings across Ohio each quarter to address compliance issues and offer technical assistance with the RSC process. This week, we held mentoring meetings in Cincinnati and Toledo; next week, we'll be in Lakewood and Athens; and on January 25th, we'll host a meeting at RSC headquarters.

When working on such difficult issues as Recovery-2-Work, I think it's important to remember the high stakes involved. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports more people die from overdosing on prescription drugs than from heroin and cocaine combined. Ohio's move to coordinate databases with Kentucky to better track prescription abuse was the first combined state attack in the nation, according to Governing magazine. Now, 20 states are working together in this fashion, meaning our innovative programs have the power to spread throughout the nation.

Health Transformation Participation.... Ohio Begins Medicaid Innovation

One of the best aspects of leading RSC is the ability to participate in the transformation of health care in Ohio. The Governor's Office of Health Transformation is out to make Ohio the model of health and economic vitality by using innovative solution-oriented strategies to produce better care at lower cost.

Since the 702,000 Ohioans on Social Security Disability Insurance, administered by RSC, are automatic qualifiers for Medicaid, we are the entry point to the system for nearly one-third of the 2.2 million Ohioans who receive this benefit. Now our consumers will be the first in the nation to participate in Catalyst for Payment Reform, a plan to use the collective buying power of large groups to get a lower cost managed care program. Right now Ohio spends more per person on health care than 36 other states, but our overall health is surpassed by 41 other states. The goal of the health transformation effort is to close the gap between spending and quality. The current disparity between spending and quality is so high, I am confident RSC consumers who get their health care through Medicaid will soon experience an improvement in the quality of their care while taxpayers save money.

For more information or questions on stories in this publication please call Shirley Marchi, Community Relations Liaison, at 614.438.1477.

