

Weekly Focus

Kevin L. Miller
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.

Breaking Down Barriers to Better Serve Seniors & Veterans

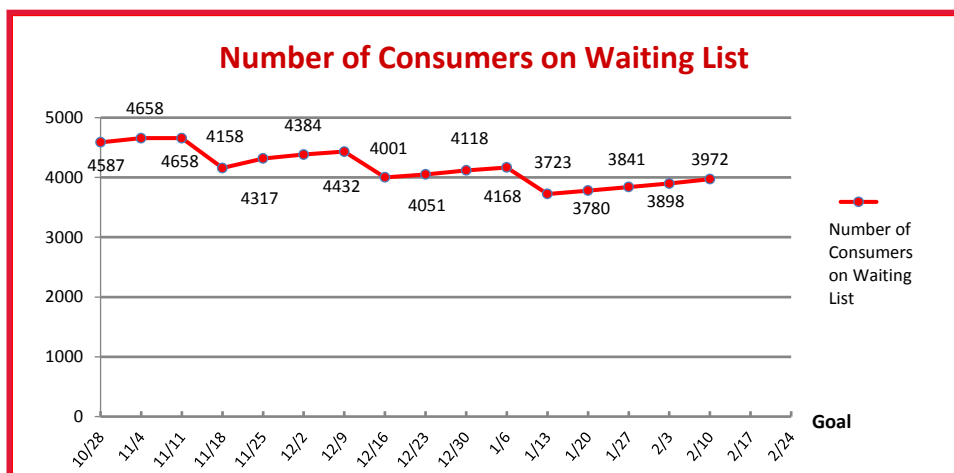
The Healthy U program partnership between RSC, the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) and the Ohio Department of Veterans Services was announced Tuesday in Steubenville before the Governor's State of the State Address. The program comes from Stanford University and has been developed to teach methods to self-manage chronic disease like diabetes or arthritis to keep the ailment from becoming debilitating.

RSC is the financial catalyst for the pilot program, taking \$41,000 from Aging, drawing the \$3.69 federal match, creating \$192,000 for five programs, including one in Steubenville, which will test the concept and be focused on Veterans. RSC Counselors who will be on the frontline of the Healthy U program joined us in Steubenville and were introduced to the Veterans who came to American Legion Post 33 to hear the details of our program.



Director Miller announcing RSC, ODA and Veterans Services collaboration with Veterans Services Director Colonel Thomas Moe (left) and ODA Director Bonnie Kantor-Burman (center)

The Steubenville Herald Star came to cover the event and they did a great job of summarizing the key issues that make the Healthy U program so important. From



the RSC side of the program, keeping people from the ages of 60-65 employed takes enormous pressure off our Disability Determination Division (DDD); and of course, that has major impact on Medicaid expenses that come automatically to each Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) recipient. Aging and Veterans were able to make the point in the story that each agency can serve the public better working in collaboration. Illustrating the ability to break down barriers between state agencies, strengthening the performance of each agency and providing better service to our citizens without need for additional budget, is an accomplishment that exceeds the Healthy U program itself.

<http://www.heraldstaronline.com/page/content.detail/id/570005/New-program-announced--during-Legion-post-forum.html>

Mobile Technology & RSC Productivity

Our executive team meeting this week featured a presentation from our area managers on mobile technology we are experimenting with as a way to make our counselors even more productive. This is a piece of our decision to embed many counselors into offices of partners like the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) One Stops or Veterans Centers. We are not only trying to save money on real estate

costs associated with central offices; we are trying to get our counselors closer to our consumers and make interaction with RSC easier for consumers, who have told time after time in needs assessment surveys, transportation is a serious challenge for them.



VR Counselors discuss RSC's mobile technology strategy

Mobile technology may be the tool that allows our counselors to meet consumers in locations that are the easiest for them to get to. In fact, we could easily make house calls thanks to the power in mobile technology like smart phones and signature pads. Our executive management team and our field managers had a great discussion on the opportunities and the bugs we still have to work out before we implement a mobile technology strategy. The meeting was productive and gives the project a real shot of momentum.

Director's Advisory Groups Meet

The DDD Director's Advisory Group (DAG) met all day Thursday at RSC headquarters, jointly working on issues the collective group of DDD employee leaders believe RSC management should be aware of and working to address.

We also have DAG for the VR side of RSC and this group will report their recommendations to us Monday at the executive team meeting. Just as the mobile technology report gave our entire management team much to consider, recommendations from the VR DAG will help us make informed policy decisions. We will have follow-up coverage on the VR DAG in the next edition of the Weekly Focus.

Hate Crimes Task Force

The United States created a special category of crime based on hate, following gruesome murders targeting victims because of their race or sexuality. Unfortunately, citizens with disabilities had to be added to the hate crime category because they too have been targeted for senseless, violent crime simply because of their disability.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) held a discussion on hate crimes against persons with disabilities this week at the Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati that included RSC. Individuals with disabilities have fought for and won the expectation of full inclusion into society; and with the benefits, have come exposure to bullies who see physical or mental impairment as a vulnerability that can be attacked without consequence.

Crime statistics show a high rate of offense against people with disabilities but the DOJ reports that many victims have never participated in the criminal justice system even if they have been victimized multiple times.

The mission of DOJ's visit is to make sure the communities we serve know that individuals with disabilities are at a greater risk than the general public to be the victim of violent crime; and that the more profound the physical or mental impairment, the greater the risk of criminal victimization. Right now there is an overall lack of awareness of this issue and all others affecting individuals with disabilities in the broader general public. Our mission is to raise awareness of the violent crime issue confronting RSC consumers and through that discussion create better understanding of all the issues that impact the lives of people with disabilities.



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

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