**Weekly Focus**

**August 31, 2012**

**Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director**

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.

Analytics to Drive RSC Employment Strategy

With Labor Day upon us and a political campaign season devoted to a debate on job creation set to commence, it’s important to share with Weekly Focus readers the RSC strategy that will drive our quest to fulfill our top mission of quality employment for Ohioans with disabilities.

We need to understand our starting point. Currently, *only 43%* of RSC consumers have their cases closed with a successful employment outcome. We must do better. Meanwhile, Ohio has thousands of jobs that are going unfilled, leaving Buckeye state employers without the human capital required to be successful in their business.

The gap we are maneuvering to close is the difference between the needs of Ohio’s economy and the goals of the RSC consumer’s case plan.

**Drive to Opportunity**

Labor market information from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) tells us that the top occupational title in our state over the last two years is cashier. ODJFS estimates 7,050 new openings every year, but an overlay of RSC case files shows just 68 consumers are steering toward those jobs. This is not only an unfulfilled opportunity for RSC consumers; this is a potential crisis for Ohio business. Employers must have money to continue in business and the cashier is actually a financial resource intake agent. The entire organization is normally devoted to causing money to land in the cash register.

**Metrics Matter**

Analytics is nothing more than finding the metrics that matter and using logical analysis to steer decisions where the data tells you they should go. For RSC, devising employment plans without the analytics resulted in a mismatch between the needs of Ohio’s economy and the desires of RSC consumers. Just as every Ohioan has free choice in their career aspirations, an informed choice produces the best results. Comparisons of the top 30 job categories to existing RSC employment plans shows that no category has even 10% targeting and only two categories exceed 5%. There are two other categories meanwhile with 0% from RSC and 18 more with less than 1%.

The metrics of opportunity demand that we change this with a sense of urgency. Next Labor Day, when we once again pause to reflect on the vital importance of jobs, I am confident our link to the needs of Ohio’s economy will be much stronger.

We can make this assertion because our Division of Performance and Innovation, working in collaboration with our Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), has created a dashboard that measures our success rate with case closures in each job category. Most importantly, this tool tells us how well our Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) plans match with the existing opportunities within Ohio’s economy as measured by the ODJFS Bureau of Labor Market Information. You can see by this dashboard chart we have some work to do, but you can also see that we have made the first step toward improved performance at RSC.

TechNoVision

We have recently finished a study of how changing technology impacts Ohioans who are blind or visually impaired. RSC colleagues Elizabeth Sammons and Nate Fernandes collaborated on the research study that will help shape our service to other Ohioans who, like Elizabeth and Nate, are also visually impaired. The top finding in our study is that traditional assistive technology is being pushed aside by much less expensive mainstream technology.

By way of example, a note taker like Braille Sense or Braille Note costs in a range between $5,000 and $7,000. A specially equipped Apple iPad, performing the same functions and more, tops out at $3,500. Moreover, our study reveals that school age youth have a strong preference for mainstream technology customized for their needs, rather than what our school age survey respondents described as “clunky and mysterious technology” .

**Rapid Change Underway**

Our TechNoVision report also reveals that the switch from specialized to mainstream technology is happening rapidly. While JAWS is still the primary screen reader for individuals who are visually impaired, its popularity is waning because the quality of free or low cost alternatives is improving. Two thirds of the blindness community now uses a screen reader on a mobile device as opposed to just 12% in 2010.

The final report provides RSC with detailed information on the products now on the mainstream market, how they are being used and what is ahead to improve service while cutting costs. The products in our report are less important than the unmistakable conclusion that understanding this market gives us the ability to provide RSC consumers with more service while saving money.

Mark Kvamme Confirmed for DisAbility Jobs Summit

Our program just keeps getting stronger for the upcoming *DisAbility Jobs Summit*. JobsOhio President Mark Kvamme is another day one speaker.

The presence of Governor Kasich and the Directors of eight other Ohio state agencies, and now the addition of the JobsOhio leader, provides ample evidence that no one will be left behind in Ohio’s economic comeback. The Employment First Initiative Governor Kasich rolled out this March was much more than a one day event; it is the unifying strategy channeling the efforts of all of Ohio government toward creation of a meaningful job opportunity for every citizen.

Registration for the *Summit* can be made online using the following link:

<http://www.garrisonevents.com/disability_jobs_summit.php>

Department of Developmental Disabilities Holds Employment First Event

Perhaps the best evidence that the Employment First Initiative has helped break down the silos of service between state agencies is the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) event I was able to participate in Thursday in Logan. DODD Director John Martin, county Developmental Disabilities (DD) Superintendents from Hocking, Perry and Fairfield Counties, along with business owners/employers, county commissioners, local media representatives and most importantly consumers and their families, provided feedback on the importance of integrated community employment at a roundtable discussion.

It was wonderful to be part of that panel with the opportunity to illustrate the strong working partnership between RSC and DODD, placing special emphasis on the impact this teamwork has on the Employment First Initiative. Seeing the partnerships at the local level take root is inspiring and being able to document the strong support these efforts are getting from events like our *DisAbility Jobs Summit* will surely strengthen these local and regional efforts across the state. As we move across the state meeting with local leaders and explaining that the Employment First Initiative is not about closing Sheltered Workshops but is simply a program to balance the system with an alternative option, the receptivity to this change grows quickly.

Combined Charitable Campaign Begins Tuesday

We are easing back into our work next week with the Combined Charitable Campaign (CCC) Kickoff on Tuesday morning. It has become an event that brings both of our headquarters buildings together for a little fun and a lot of charity.

Once again this year we’ll have games, prizes, snacks, ice cream floats, lots of fun and most of all…..a big financial goal to help a wide variety of charitable institutions, including many that will be on hand for our kickoff event.

In a tough economic climate, we still made our CCC goal in 2011. Never doubt the power of RSC bake sales. In 2012 our goal is $68,000; and our campaign co-chairs, Michelle Cunningham and Jen Maxson, are already hard at work with a comprehensive schedule of events all designed to produce smiles and extract dollars from RSC employees.

Picture Caption:

*Combined Charitable Campaign Co-Chairs Michelle Cunningham and Jen Maxson*

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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**RSC’s Facebook website:**

[**https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Rehabilitation-Services-Commission/155300754532533?sk=wall**](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Ohio-Rehabilitation-Services-Commission/155300754532533?sk=wall)

**RSC’s YouTube website:**

[**https://www.youtube.com/user/OhioRSCTV**](https://www.youtube.com/user/OhioRSCTV)

**RSC’s Twitter website:**

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