

Summary of Proceedings – July 16, 2007
Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council (MISCC) Meeting

MISCC Meeting Participants

Diana Jones Ritter, Chair

Commissioner, Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

Kim Hill

Director, NYS Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities

Constance Laymon

CEO, Consumer Directed Choices

Kathy Bunnell

Director, Broome County Office for Aging

Pat Fratangelo

Executive Director, Onondaga Community Living

Debra Holland

*(representing Carol Raphael,
President and CEO, Visiting Nurse Service of New York)*

Harvey Rosenthal

Executive Director, NYAPRS

Michael Burgess

Director, New York State Office for the Aging

Gail Koser

Deputy Director, Executive Division, New York State Office for the Aging

Carla Williams

Deputy Director, (representing Mark Kissinger, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Long Term Care, New York State Department of Health)

Dr. Michael Hogan

Commissioner, New York State Office of Mental Health

Deborah VanAmerongen

Commissioner, New York State Division of Housing & Community Renewal

Gary O'Brien

Chairperson, Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Person's with Disabilities

Nancy White Martinez

Deputy Commissioner (representing Gladys Carrion, Esq., Commissioner, Office of Children & Family Services)

Ron Epstein

Director of Transit Bureau, (representing Astrid Glynn, Commissioner, New York State Department of Transportation)

Dr. Ed Placke

Assistant Commissioner (representing Dr. Rebecca Cort, VESID, New York State Education Department)

Karen Carpenter-Palumbo

Commissioner, New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse

- OMRDD Commissioner Diana Jones Ritter, Chair, welcomed Council members and people in the audience. She noted that by webcasting the meeting, we are compliant with Governor Spitzer's commitment to making the deliberations of government transparent to its citizens. Webcasting also allows us to demonstrate the Council's progress to a broader audience.
- Commissioner Ritter noted that many state agency heads were participating in the meeting and that two representatives from the Governor's Office were also present: Mike Skrebutenas, who works on housing issues, and Michael Seereiter.
- The Council is gaining momentum and a lot has happened since the April meeting. Commissioner Ritter reported that she had met with advocates to get an understanding of what was most important to them as she charted a course for the Council. Advocates want to see issues of accessible and affordable housing addressed, along with better employment opportunities. Advocates also want state agencies to collect the data needed to measure our state's success in meeting most integrated setting goals. Commissioner Ritter noted that Governor Spitzer has made government based on Performance Metrics a key element of his administration and thus is very much in sync with this advocate issue.
- Besides meeting with advocates, two workgroups met since the April MISCC meeting. DHCR Commissioner VanAmerongen convened the very important Housing Workgroup. Bob Boehlert of CQC held a meeting of the State Agency Implementation Plan Workgroup charged with developing a standardized format for state agencies to report on their progress in meeting most integrated setting goals.
- Commissioner Ritter also pointed to the "People First Collaborative Care Listening Forums" held throughout the state since the April meeting. The Commissioners of DOH, OMH, OASAS, and OMRDD participated in the forums. Commissioner Ritter asked OASAS Commissioner Karen Carpenter-Palumbo to describe the forums.
- Per Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo, the purpose of the listening tour was to bring government to the people and to demonstrate Governor Spitzer's commitment to change the current "silo style" of government. People come first and state agencies need to work together to deliver what people need. This can only be achieved through cross-agency collaborations. Thousands of people participated in the forums, either in person or via the web.

- Commissioner Ritter added that the listening forums provided great synergy – and got things moving in the direction the Governor and MISCC are working to achieve.
- Next, Commissioner Ritter called on Deborah Sturm Rausch, OMRDD Director of Public Affairs, for a brief presentation on the new MISCC website. Council members and advocates have asked for such a website.
- Deborah Sturm Rausch reported that in response to the Council's request, OMRDD has developed a dedicated website for the MISCC. There are multiple Web Addresses for the site, all of which point into the OMRDD web page for the MISCC. [The links are: www.nysmisc.com, www.nysmisc.org, www.nysmisc.net, www.misccnys.com, www.misccnys.org, www.misccnys.net. You can get to the page from the OMRDD website at: www.omr.state.ny.us.] Information on the MISCC website includes: Background on the MISCC, a copy of the report, MISCC Meetings Scheduled for 2007, Press Releases and Important Documents, and a Council Membership List. It was requested that a List Serve be created for the site, and that an email to the site be established. Content will be added as recommended and approved by the Council. Requests for inclusion on the website made and approved by the Council workgroup at Monday's meeting are: MISCC general meeting minutes, minutes for workgroup meetings, and list serves for contact purposes.
- Following, Commissioner Ritter called on each state agency representative to report on its progress toward identifying or creating a Stakeholder Group to work with the state agency on its MISCC Implementation Plan. In keeping with a people first philosophy, stakeholder groups must include people who use the state agency's services.
- Commissioner Hogan, OMH, reported that while there are many OMH stakeholder planning groups that operate based on statute, he had selected the "Campaign for Behavioral Health Transformation" for MISCC advisement. This group is comprised of leaders of various advocacy groups.
- Commissioner VanAmerongen, DHCR, said that the MISCC Housing Workgroup and the Money Follows the Person Task Force will serve as DHCR's MISCC stakeholder groups. In addition, DHCR has visited disability advocacy groups to discuss housing issues. These contacts are important to DHCR as it shapes its agenda.
- Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo, OASAS, reported that her agency's stakeholder group would be a committee of OASAS Governor's Advisory Council. The committee will include advocates

and consumers of OASAS services and, very importantly, people in recovery. Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo noted that she hopes to create the kind of advocacy among those in recovery from addictions that she sees in other groups such as cancer survivors.

- Mike Burgess, Director, SOFA, said that a special MISCC subcommittee would be formed under the aegis of SOFA's New York Connects Long Term Care Council.
- Dr. Ed Placke, Assistant Commissioner, VESID, said the department would include in its MISCC stakeholder group representatives from each of VESID's three councils: the Commissioner's Advisory Panel on Special Education, the State Independent Living Council and the State Rehabilitation Council.
- Ron Epstein, Director of DOT's Transit Bureau, said that DOT has a United We Ride partnership group, and that an advisory group would be added.
- Gary O'Brien, Chairperson, CQCAPD said that the Advisory Council to the Commission would serve as CQCAPD's stakeholder group and that new members representing people with physical and sensory disabilities were being added to the body. CQCAPD will also consult on its MISCC Plan with its Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Advisory Council and with its newly created Interagency Coordinating Council for Services to Persons Who Are Deaf, Deaf-blind and Hard of Hearing.
- Nancy White Martinez, Deputy Commissioner, OCFS, said their stakeholder group will be a MISCC committee of the OCFS Advisory Board. The committee will include advocates and people served.
- Carla Williams, Deputy Director, Office of Long Term Care, DOH, said that DOH's Long Term Care Restructuring Advisory Council will be used to work on MISCC.
- Finally, Commissioner Ritter asked Carl Letson, OMRDD's Director of Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs and her point person on MISCC, to report on OMRDD's MISCC stakeholder group.
- Mr. Letson said that while OMRDD has many consumer, parent, and advocacy groups that participate in the agency's policy-making, the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State (SANYS) would serve as OMRDD's MISCC stakeholder group. SANYS, which is comprised of people who use OMRDD services, is very much a partner in OMRDD's endeavors.

- At this point, Commissioner Ritter said each state agency should ensure that it has a meeting with its MISCC stakeholder group prior to the next MISCC meeting in October.
- Constance Laymon asked Commissioner Ritter to restate the purpose of the MISCC state agency stakeholder groups.
- Commissioner Ritter responded that the stakeholder group must advise the state agency as it develops and implements its MISCC Implementation Plan. Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo added that the stakeholder group role goes even beyond this – the group will be used to influence overall state agency policy and will be a force for change.
- Harvey Rosenthal added that the stakeholder groups should work with state agencies as they review and implement the specific recommendations in the MISCC report.
- Next, Commissioner Ritter called for reports from the State Agency Implementation Plan Workgroup headed by Bob Boehlert of CQCAPD, and the Housing Group chaired by DHCR Commissioner Deborah VanAmerongen.
- Bob Boehlert presented on the standard format and timetable for submission of State Agency Most Integrated Setting Implementation Plans for consideration by the Council. The proposal, which calls for the submission of the first annual plan by each state agency by October 1, 2008, was reviewed and adopted by the Council.
- Both Commissioner Ritter and other members reiterated that while the State Agency MISCC Implementation Plans would serve to memorialize the work of the agencies over the reporting period, there is a clear expectation that agencies, in consultation with their respective stakeholder groups, will begin working immediately to implement the MISCC Operational Plan adopted in November 2006, and will report their progress at MISCC meetings throughout the year.
- In discussing the Implementation Plans, the issue of redundancy in planning was raised. State Agencies are also responsible for other planning documents.
- Also on the topic of the State Agency Plans, Commissioner Ritter noted that our focus must remain on the Most Integrated Setting principles and actions that flow from MISCC. Constance Laymon and Pat Fratangelo agreed and said that we need to focus on what's happening in peoples' lives. Harvey Rosenthal stressed the need to keep focused on concrete outcomes for the state's citizens with

disabilities. Pat Fratangelo added that the plans need to have stakeholder input – stakeholders can keep state agencies focused on what matters – they can be the “heart and soul” of the planning process. Finally, Gary O’Brien, Chairperson, CQCAPD, stressed the need to impact peoples’ lives and Commissioner Ritter noted that this outcome is a priority for Governor Spitzer.

- Commissioner VanAmerongen next reported on the MISCC Housing Workgroup meeting, which was well attended. The group is working on a mission statement and has asked each state agency to define “most-integrated setting”. DHCR’s housing inventory was also discussed; making it more user friendly and developing procedures for keeping it up-to-date are priorities. The Workgroup will also tackle issues of “Not-in-my-Backyard” or NIMBY.
- Commissioner VanAmerongen then showed a brief video developed for a national conference by DHCR called Access to Home. The video, which will be on the DHCR website, very dramatically shows real life situations where the addition of ramps and other modifications allowed people with disabilities to remain in their own homes. ADAPT was a participant in this “person by person” project. The project needs a permanent source of funding and DHCR is making this a focus of its efforts.
- Next, Lorrie Pizzola, DHCR, described the activities of the Interagency Task Force for Housing for People with Special Needs, and provided copies of a “Program Inventory” prepared by the Task Force. Other Task Force activities included convening representatives of the banking industry to discuss ways in which various public and private funding options might be utilized to partner with human service agencies to support development of a wider array of housing options for individuals with disabilities. Lorrie thanked, in particular, Bob Melby from the CQCAPD for his efforts in bringing together OMH, DHCR, and other public and private sector entities who collaborated in the transformation of a former adult home on Long Island (Family Lodge) into a new and more integrated residence now named “Pollack Gardens”.
- Commissioner Ritter next announced a very significant development in OMRDD’s Home of Your Own (HOYO) program. The program, headed by Dr. Lucinda Grant-Griffin, assists people with developmental disabilities to purchase their own homes with a very low SONYMA mortgage at a 4% fixed interest rate of 30 or 40 years, 100% financing and reduced closing costs. In a new and historic development, Dr. Grant-Griffin has worked with SONYMA to expand the HOYO program and extend these terms to parents of children with developmental disabilities. Parents must be income-eligible and first-time homebuyers.

- Commissioner Ritter next turned the discussion to the issue of data needed by the MISCC to achieve concrete results. She noted that Governor Spitzer has called for governing by metrics and thus data needs to be a Council focus. We need data on people in institutions who want to return to their communities. We need to know how many people in the community are unserved and need services and supports to remain at home.
- Dr. Placke, VESID, pointed to the importance of data in tackling the problem of children with disabilities who are being educated out of state. There were 1400 children in out-of-state placements and this has been reduced to 700. SED, OCFS, and OMRDD are working jointly on a data base that is critical to bringing all the children home.
- The next agenda item was the launch of the new Point of Entry System, a collaboration between SOFA and DOH. Mike Burgess, Director of SOFA, and Gail Koser of his staff made the presentation. The system, called NY Connects, provides a consumer-centered entry point into long term care services. Its goal is to provide uniform, unbiased information on service options available in each area of the state. While New York has a rich inventory of long term care services, the service system is often confusing to our citizens.
- NY Connects will operate in 57 counties and New York City. It will provide information and a “light screening” as well as public education. There will be a single phone number in each county/NYC as well as a website, an actual service location and opportunities for offsite visits, if necessary. The program is being built with the counties, although there are statewide standards. Local councils will advise NY Connects in each county, and these councils will include consumers of long term care services.
- Commissioner Ritter asked MISCC members for their input on NY Connects. Constance Laymon asked that SOFA send the Assessment section of the MISCC report to each county/NYC. This will ensure a people first approach in looking at needs. Gail Koser said this would be done.
- Mike Burgess, Director, SOFA, said that the success of NY Connects requires the counties/NYC to enthusiastically embrace the program and to ensure coordination across local government in meeting peoples’ needs.
- Commissioner Ritter said the voices of consumers need to be louder – they must press the counties to make NY Connects a success. She asked the audience for their comments.

- Chris Hildebrandt of ADAPT raised the issue of “entry into what” – besides information, people need services that are not available in every county. He also raised the issue of the Department of Health’s proposed “mega waiver” which would encompass all long term care services. He spoke strongly against the waiver.
- Bruce Darling of the Regional Center for Independent Living (RCIL)/Center for Disability Rights (CDR) noted that his organizations were not allowed to participate in Monroe County’s NY Connects Council. Bruce also cautioned that NY Connects needs to reach out to younger people with disabilities – not just older citizens.
- Mike Burgess said that he would discuss with Monroe County the issue of RCIL/CDR involvement in its NY Connects Council.
- The role of transportation in long term care services was discussed, with Commissioner Ritter noting that transportation is a major issue in the North Country and other rural areas of the State. Clearly, MISCC must pay attention to transportation as a key factor in the lives of people with disabilities who are supported in the community. Ron Epstein of DOT strongly endorsed this view.
- Before ending the meeting, Commissioner Ritter asked for open comments from MISCC members and the audience.
- Pat Fratangelo raised the issue of peoples’ needs which can cut across various state agencies. The federal Medicaid rule that restricts access to services from more than one waiver is a concern.
- Anita Cameron of ADAPT asked whether there would be feedback from the “People First” listening forums. She asked how people who participated in the forums will know what progress has been made
- Commissioner Carpenter-Palumbo said this feedback would occur in a variety of ways – including actual policy changes and press releases.
- Commissioner Ritter said that the issue of follow-up to the listening tours would be added to the October MISCC meeting agenda. She again emphasized that we need to keep the MISCC momentum going. The Housing Workgroup needs to meet and state agencies need to convene their stakeholder groups and begin to develop MISCC Implementation Plans. She closed the meeting with thanks to all and a call for a continued commitment to our purpose.

Action Items

1. Each State Agency will convene a Stakeholder Group meeting to review MISCC Report contents and set a course for achieving MISCC goals.
2. DHCR will provide to each MISCC member a copy of the Access to Home video shown at the meeting.
3. Gail Koser, SOFA, will send a copy of the Assessment section of the MISCC report to each county and ask that the assessment concepts be used in operationalizing NY Connects.
4. Mike Burgess, SOFA, will reach out to Monroe County regarding the Regional Center for Independent Living's participation in the county's NY Connects Council.
5. The MISCC Housing Workgroup will meet prior to the October 2007 MISCC meeting.
6. The October MISCC meeting will focus on housing issues. It will also include a discussion of follow-up actions to the "People First Collaborative Care Listening Forums". The issue of state agency data needed to achieve most integrated setting outcomes will also be on the agenda.

Reminders

- The new MISCC web site is now available at: www.nysmisc.com
- For support information on MISCC contact Lisa Kagan of NYS OMRDD at (518) 402-4315 or at lisa.kagan@omr.state.ny.us