

# WEEKLY FOCUS

**Ohio** | Opportunities for Ohioans  
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

**February 21, 2014**

*The mission of the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency is to ensure individuals with disabilities achieve quality employment, independence and disability determination outcomes through integrated services, partnerships and innovation.*

## Commissioners Focused on Better Outcomes

The OOD Commission met this week, as did the Program and Planning Committee (the Budget and Audit Committee met last week), and I was impressed by the hard work and dedication of so many individuals. The Commissioners are focused on improving outcomes for the people we serve. OOD staff are committed to improving processes, finding efficiencies and developing better solutions. Outside organizations and advocacy groups clearly care about the disability community and are seeking ways to partner with us on improving outcomes. All of this came through clearly in the meetings.

We share the common goal of improving the lives of individuals with disabilities in Ohio. It was great to see the collegial and professional manner in which Commissioners and staff communicated and worked together on this common goal at these meetings.

## State of the State Events Planned in Medina

As you are probably aware, Governor Kasich made the decision to hold the annual State of the State address in communities across Ohio rather than at the Statehouse. This year's event is taking place in Medina on Monday and I am excited to be able to participate.

As part of that participation we have been partnering with the Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) and the Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities (MCBDD) to host a series of events focused on the Employment First initiative.

There will be an "Ability @ Work" Summit bringing together government, business, and community leaders from Medina County to discuss the successes and challenges in the workforce for people with disabilities and spotlight how state supported initiatives have made a difference.

There will also be tours of local employers who are

creating meaningful jobs for those with disabilities. These employers will provide an inside look at the program and highlight how they work collaboratively to create meaningful jobs in Medina County. DODD Director John Martin and I will be presenting these businesses with awards of recognition for this important work.

Governor Kasich will be giving the State of the State address later that evening. I am excited about leveraging this event to highlight and celebrate the important work of Employment First.

## Louise Czatt is Retiring!

To steal a line from the legendary Woody Hayes, you win with people. An important part of the success of this agency is the talent and dedication of its staff. We are sorry to be losing a great example of such a staff person in the retirement of Louise Czatt from the communications team.

Louise is retiring after thirty years in state government. She has been an important part of this agency for a great many years and has contributed to its success by helping with everything from publications, posters, and state printing to the website, digital newsletters, photography and much more. We wish her well as she begins this new journey.

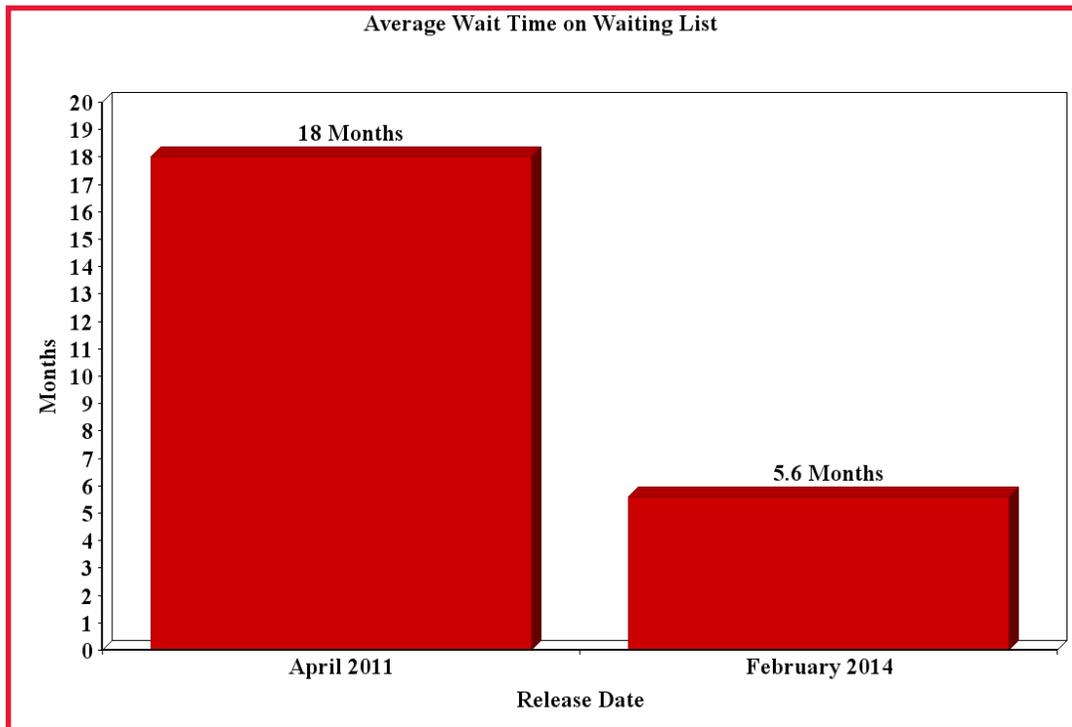
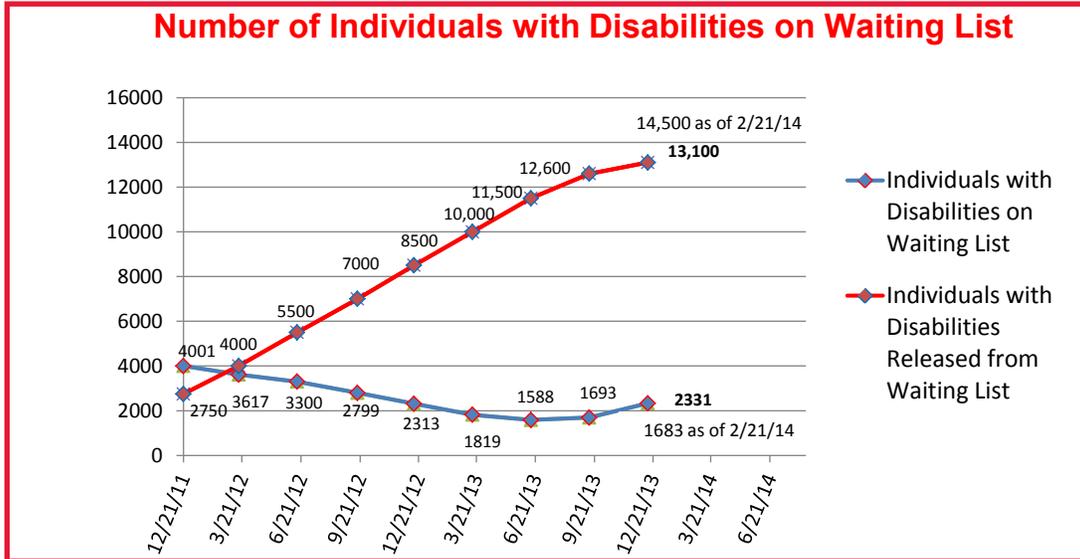


*Louise Czatt, Publications Specialist, is congratulated by Director Miller upon her retirement after 30 years of state government service.*

## February Waiting List Release and Improved Wait Time

After a brief hiatus, we have once again begun releasing individuals with significant disabilities (SD) from the Waiting List. We released another 700 individuals from the Waiting List this week and these individuals are now listed as eligible for services and will be contacted by a VR staff or contractor to move forward. Also worth

noting is the improvement in wait time. When we had our first release in April 2011, the wait time for those individuals was 18 months. The wait time for those who were a part of this week's release has shrunk to 5.6 months. This wait time remains too high and we can, and must continue to improve. But, that is a significant drop and I appreciate the hard work that went in to achieving it.



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