

WEEKLY FOCUS

Ohio | Opportunities for Ohioans
with Disabilities

Kevin L. Miller, Executive Director

June 20, 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.

Ohio Business Leadership Network Named 2014 Affiliate of the Year



The Ohio Business Leadership Network (OHBLN) has been named the 2014 U.S. Business Leadership Network (USBLN)

Affiliate of the Year. OHBLN was selected from among five nominees and will receive the award at the USBLN Conference in Orlando, Florida this fall.



This well-deserved recognition is testament to the leadership at OHBLN. It also reflects our renewed focus on

business relations and partnerships. Just a few years ago there were only a handful of OHBLN members. Today we have over 40 corporate members, representing some of Ohio's most prestigious companies. The OHBLN Central Ohio Workforce Initiative (COWI) has garnered a grant from a respected national family foundation, aimed at helping 100 job seekers find employment with member companies, and is already seeing success.

Jon Hackathorn, Division of Performance and Innovation's Business Relations Manager, and the Business Sourcing Analysts, along with partners like OHBLN, have brought a great deal of energy and focus to building relationships with the business community and increasing opportunities for individuals with disabilities. It is clear that this emphasis and approach is making a difference.

Congratulations to the OHBLN for this well-deserved recognition.

Commissioners Approve State Plan

The OOD Commission held their bi-monthly meeting this week to approve the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and conduct other needed business. The Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) requires the Commission to approve the State Plan which the

agency must then submit to RSA no later than July 1. Public forums were held throughout the state earlier this year to gather public input and feedback. Staff then incorporated that feedback and drafted the plan. The Program and Planning Committee, which had approved the State Plan at their May meeting, also met this week to receive updates from staff on agency priorities and strategic initiatives.

Along with the work on the State Plan, staff and commissioners have been working closely to more effectively communicate agency progress on key goals, priorities, policies and procedures. This makes better use of everyone's time, makes commissioner feedback and guidance easier and more effective, and positions the commissioners to help communicate the true impact of our programs and policies to communities across the state.

VR Director's Advisory Group

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Director's Advisory Group (DAG) met this week to discuss issues surrounding AWARE updates and to continue work on a VR recruiting brochure. The group was pleased to have Commissioner Blake Haxton briefly join their meeting and meet the team. Commissioner Haxton was able to learn about the purpose of the DAG, some of the projects they have worked on in the past, and spend some time listening in as the group discussed the development of an updated VR recruiting brochure.



Commissioner Blake Haxton (right) made a surprise visit with the DAG team before attending the Commission meeting.

Division of Disability Determination Welcomes New Employees

Forty-four new employees started this week in the Division of Disability Determination (DDD). It was great to have the opportunity to welcome these new employees to the agency and share with them about our mission and vision and the important work they are doing. I always enjoy stopping by employee orientations and meeting the diverse and talented people who have joined our team.

DDD also anticipates adding a class of Disability Claims Examiners (DCE) in the fall, and the DCE job is posted on Ohio's Hiring Management webpage (<http://careers.ohio.gov/>).



Director Miller (left) welcomes new employees.

Governor's Council on People with Disabilities

The Governor's Council on People with Disabilities (GCPD) met this week to welcome two new members, Sean Bailey and Melinda Kale, and address issues affecting the disability community in Ohio. The Council received updates from Communications Director Kevin Holtsberry on agency outreach and communications strategy and discussed effective ways to collaborate. Legislative Liaison Stephen Wilson also provided an update on legislative activities prior to the General Assembly leaving for summer break. Community Relations Liaison Shirley Marchi provided an update on topics covered at the Commissioners' Meeting.

OOD Wellness Recognition

The OOD Wellness Committee was recognized last week at the Quarterly Statewide Wellness Ambassador Meeting hosted by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). The committee received a certificate recognizing OOD "as the agency with the strongest Statewide wellness committee for Take Charge! Live Well!"

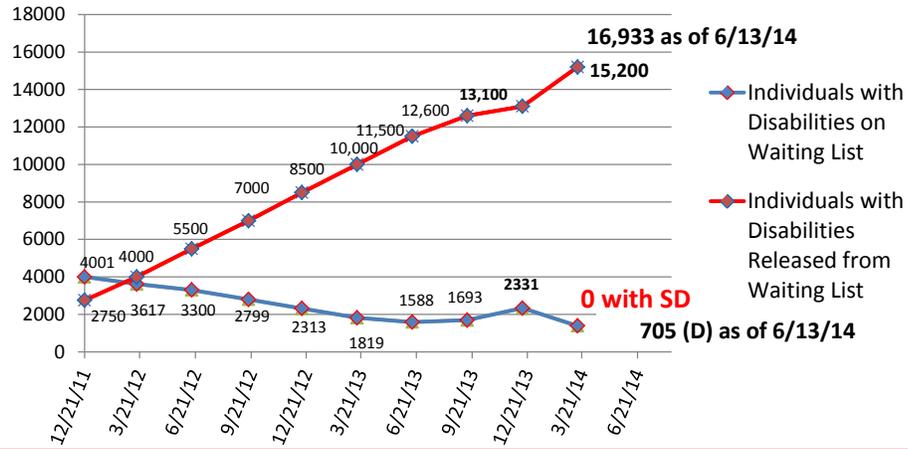
OOD Wellness Committee:

- Gwen Biglin – HRC North, Toledo
- Kristina Bright – Caseload Asst., Cleveland West
- Dan Dawkins – HRC South, Broad St.
- Roya Hood – VRC, Broad St.
- Anne Lewis – VRC, Dayton
- Mike DeNoble – DDD Supervisor
- Andrew Meador – DDD Disability Claims Adjudicator
- Janine Kocher – HR/OOD Wellness Ambassador, 150 Bldg.
- Jan Roederer – HR, 150 Bldg.

Gwen Biglin was also recognized for the Best Collaborative Effort statewide. Congratulations to the committee and to Gwen. Thanks for your efforts to help OOD get healthy and fit!



Number of Individuals with Disabilities on Waiting List



For more information or questions on stories in this publication, please call the Office of Communications at 614.438.1476.

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