

RICAT Minutes
Office of Rehabilitation Services
40 Fountain Street ~ Providence, RI 02903
October 20, 2005

- Welcome: Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Panarace at 2:30 p.m.
- Members present: John Benevides, Kerri Cicione, Kevin Cronin, Kathleen Samways, Emily Lennon, Liz Hubbard, Joe Murphy, Jeanne Panarace, Charlie Pollock, Ron Racine, Ying Sung, Jill Waller-Blaney, and Kim Wennermark
- ATAP Partners: Beverly Johnson, Lisa Labitt, Lezlee Shaffer
- ATAP Program Director: Regina Connor
- Jeanne congratulated Ying Sun and his students on receiving the George F. Moore Memorial Award presented annually by the Rhode Island Rehabilitation Association (RIRA). She added she was very happy about him receiving this award.
- Acceptance of Minutes: John B. moved to accept minutes of 8/11/05, seconded by Emily L. Motion was unanimously passed.
- Chairperson's Report: Chair Panarace stated she had received two pieces of correspondence – one from the manufacturer of the “talking pill bottle” which reads medication label to person; and one from Senator Reed thanking her for contacting him regarding funding for the AT Act programs. She added that it was nice to get an acknowledgement, and added that Senator Reed has always been a strong supporter of the AT programs. Chair Panarace stated there have been discussions regarding the ATAP legislative award recipient which is to be presented at the AT Conference on November 17th. Other activities include the executive committee which had several email discussions about a formalized curriculum for making presentations. Charlie asked if everyone realized 1 in 5 people in Rhode Island are disabled and that we have the highest rate in the country. Jeanne added that a high percentage of that is the elderly. Kathleen added that this is Disability Awareness Month, and from December 5-9 it is National Inclusive Schools Week.
- Committee Reports:
 - Membership/Outreach: Chair Panarace welcomed the two new members – Kevin Cronin and Kim Wennermark. Jill stated she has received 2 more applications, and they are still looking for 2 more spots to fill with consumers. An announcement went into OSCIL's newsletter, and Jill emailed Sharon Brinkworth with the TBI and the RI Association of the Deaf as well. Richard Gaffney added that he had one application sent out. Emily stated there are 4 people whose terms expire in December - Charlie, Margaret, Kathleen, and Richard. Charlie and Kathleen stated they want to continue their membership on the Council.

- Legislative: Jeanne stated that in addition to the letter from Senator Reed, she also receives other letters regarding disability issues. Bob Cooper, Executive Secretary, Governor's Commission on Disabilities, (GCD) had sent a notice to those on his list serve that was sent to him from Charles Feldman of the Low Income Housing Coalition. Jeanne will forward the e-mail message to everyone because it has very broad implications if it passes; adding that everyone might want to write a letter.
- Communications: Joe stated that the committee has met several times. The website, brochure, and refreshing the speakers bureau were discussed. A presentation of the changes that have been made so far to the website was given. Only one person made comments regarding what should be on it, and the Committee members asked again for input. General comments were quite favorable.
- Program Director's Report: Regina stated that the three-year State Plan for Assistive Technology was submitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Regina added that she did hear from RSA last month and stated that Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) has received conditional approval of the 3 year state plan. The reason ORS did not receive full approval is because of non-compliance relating to the composition of the advisory council. The Council had lost several consumer members dropping the percentage under the required 51%, and the Council did not have RIDE and WIA representation. She had explained that HRIC, Rhode Island's Workforce Investment Board, was being reconstituted but assured RSA there would be a representative. RSA wanted to know it had been done. ORS will be in full compliance once she sends in names. Virginia da Mota is the interim director of the Office of Special Populations at RIDE and will be their representative, while Lorna Ricci will be the representative from WIA. ATAP has a number of facts sheets and brochures produced over the last number of years, however many are out of date now. They need to decide if some are even necessary, or what changes need to be made to make it current, as well as what new kinds of information needs to be circulated. Regina added that the ATAP Partners are talking about strengthening the collaboration and coordination among partners. Funding hasn't been resolved for "FFY 06" budget, but the AT programs are forward funded meaning that the federal '05 budget has already been approved. ATAP will receive \$301,520 - the amount they have been at for past 5 years. \$410,000 is the minimum allotment of future funding. Regina stated that the Annual AT Conference is coming up and Bev will discuss. The ATAP Legislation Awards will be presented to Representative Robert Jaquard and Senator Stephen Alves for their efforts to pass legislation to mandate that health insurers cover the cost of hearing aids up to \$400 per aid. Jeanne added that it took many years - at least 10-12 years. This year the ATAP Legislative Award focused on the state level. Regina added that the State Plan will be posted on the ATAP website. Kathleen asked about the Alternative Financing Committee. Regina responded that ATAP will conduct a one year feasibility study. The position for the ATAP Program Coordinator is on the ATAP website.
- ATAP Partners Report:
 - OSCIL: Lezlee stated they had new money (federal funds) and a lot of projects and activities are going on. In September they exhibited at a conference where their staff had created a little apartment replica showing lots of high and low tech. They were asked to repeat at the AT Conference. Lezlee stated she is also starting to get regular fall requests for presentations and exhibits, one being a Safety Week program for a senior center. They are also doing a lot of follow up with individuals who contacted them previously for equipment. They did assessments and verified their need. OSCIL is continuing with the hearing aid and smoke detector programs, and are still looking for grants that are

available. The ATAP position is open again. In the interim, several staff people are taking pieces of the program. Kathleen stated if Lezlee is getting a lot of requests that she be available to help with members of the communication committee.

- EBEC: Lisa brought copies of the Professional Development Menu and handed them out to council members. She stated there are several districts that call her in for presentations. She will be going into four collaboratives and transition centers where she targets students who are transitioning. Lisa is beginning an initiative with the Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) in December where she will talk with parent consultants. The ATAP/EBEC device equipment loan program is available to students, parents and teachers.
 - TechACCESS: Bev stated that the AT Conference will be held on November 17th, adding that they have an excellent program scheduled with which Ron and Joe helped create. This program has a strong VR track, and there are a lot of new exhibitors. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact Bev. TechACCESS is also working to further develop the ATAP demonstration center and equipment loan program. They are currently getting information from other states. TechACCESS also has a lot of trainings and workshops happening. They are updating their website as well. A class starting soon is “AT in the Classroom” being held in conjunction with Rhode Island College (RIC).
 - PARI: Jeanne stated they have a reutilization program. Regina added that PARI will be working with ATAP. They are negotiating a contract with PARI on the reutilization program which will broaden what they currently have.
- Roundtable

Chair Panarace mentioned the eight week course for people working with individuals with disabilities that is associated with Independent Living (IL) and Department of Health (DOH). An IL Administrator must complete this course. There are a lot of issues working with individuals with disabilities. Kathleen stated she had a conversation with a residence service coordinator in housing for elderly and disabled who stated there was a broad job description. Certification by a state agency is required for that position. She talked to them asking if they could put something regarding AT in their job description. The Housing Resources Commission is developing a long-term plan providing support and services to individuals with disabilities or the elderly whereby educating these resident coordinators.

- Next Meeting Date: December 1, 2005.
- Adjournment: Motion was made by Jill W. and seconded by John B. that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.