

RICAT Minutes

Office of Rehabilitation Services

April 22, 2004

- Welcome: Meeting was called to order by Chair Waller at 2:40 p.m.
- Members present: Jill Waller, Kathy Samways, Emily Lennon, Jeanne Panarace, John Benevides, Harry Dunbar, Brian Chace, William Robinson, Joe Murphy, Charlie Pollock, Margaret Hoye, and Ed Zuromski.
- ATAP Partners: Lezlee Shaffer, Beverly Andrade-Johnson, Lisa Labitt, Judi Carlson, Anne Mulready, and Betsy Dalton; and Regina Connor, Project Director.
- Guests: Pam Corcoran and Roberta Greene.
- Acceptance of Minutes – 2/26/04: Margaret H. made motion to accept minutes; seconded by Jeanne P. Motion was unanimously approved by Council members.
- Chairperson's Report: None.
- Committee Reports
 - Communications – Joe M. stated that the website is on its way. A variety of links have recently been provided to Kerri to incorporate into the web site.
 - Membership/Outreach – Emily read a brief description of the two candidates interviewed for possible membership - Kerri Cicione and Gladys Marinsky. After a discussion on their qualifications and what they could bring to the Council, Pat F. made a motion to nominate Kerri Cicione as a new Council member. Motion was seconded by John B. and was unanimously approved by Council members. A letter will also be sent to Gladys thanking her and asking if she would still like to serve on the legislative committee.
 - Legislative – Regina stated that Bob P. had sent out a couple of emails regarding legislative bills. She also discussed the bill that had been sent to the General Assembly regarding establishing Newsline for the Blind. RI has had this service on a temporary basis this past year. The Bill is sponsored on the House side by Representative Lima and on the Senate side by Senator Roberts. The bill was heard in Senate Financial Services, where it was voted out of Committee for a vote in the full senate. In the House, the bill was heard briefly in the Corporations Committee and transferred to the House Finance Committee. Charlie asked about the funding of this bill. Regina stated the bill would tap into the surcharge on the telephone bill used to maintain the RI Relay program. Providence Journal is in negotiations to get online with Newsline.
- Project Director's Report – Regina stated she would have more to discuss after the teleconference call.
- ATAP Partners Report – Nothing to report due to conference call.

- Association of Tech Act Projects (ATAP) Conference Call – Notes from ATAP Membership Teleconference - April 22, 2004 are as follows:
 1. Representatives from 29 states participated in the ATAP membership teleconference call to discuss recent legislative activities and to receive an update on the authorization process for the Assistive Technology Act.
 2. Sara Sack indicated that Senate staffers plan to introduce and markup a Senate version of the Assistive Technology bill by Memorial Day. There is some concern that this bill will not move beyond the Senate due to the slow pace of legislative activity in Congress. If a bill is not introduced and passed during this session of Congress, the AT Act will expire and all state programs will be eliminated. However, Senate staff has indicated that once a bill is introduced, it will demonstrate congressional intent, and it is much more likely that Appropriations Committee members will pass a waiver of the sunset and continue the programs through fiscal year 2005.
 3. There was an update from each of the workgroups that provided information to staff of the Senate HELP committee with regard to alternative financing, urban and rural issues, equipment loan/research and demonstration, interagency coordination/collaboration, and public awareness. The final reports from each of these workgroups will be available on the ATAP website within a week.
 4. Ron Seiler of the Idaho project will be testifying at a hearing of the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging on Tuesday, April 27. He will have five minutes to describe the benefits of assistive technology and AT Act projects for individuals who are aging. This hearing will be available on the Internet via C-Span. It would be helpful if states could invite their Congressional staff to this hearing so that they can learn more about how AT Act projects address issues of aging and assistive technology. There will also be a hearing on April 28, addressing Medicare payment for wheeled mobility.
 5. Participants were reminded that the RESNA technical assistance project will have a project director's meeting in July in Washington, DC and were also told that ATAP might hold its own meeting sometime during fall 2004 to discuss information technology, policy issues, and related issues that projects are working on with respect to consumer access.
 6. Several states updated the membership on their recent information sharing activities. Cathy Bodine related her experiences visiting staff from the Colorado Congressional delegation, as well as lead staffers in the Senate HELP committee, and the House Committee on the Education and the Workforce with respect to the Assistive Technology Act. She was accompanied by her university Federal Relations representative and the University of Colorado president, who both spoke very highly of the Assistive Technology Act program. Marylyn Howe indicated that she has been working with Senator Kennedy's office on developing language to increase the availability of assistive technology in schools.
 7. There was no date set for a future ATAP member teleconference; however, one will be held in early summer to update members on AT legislative activities and ways in which states serve as an information resource for their congressional delegation.

7. Judy C. suggested that we might want to offer RI's Public/Private Model regarding AT Demonstrations to the national ATAP. RI Medicaid education agreement has been in place for 12 years.
 8. There was a discussion on what the Reuse Program is, as well as discussion on the 2 workgroups involved in the Alternative Finance Program.
- Roundtable
 - o TechACCESS – Silent Auction/Dinner Dance will be held on June 10, 2004 from 5-10 p.m. at the Radisson Airport Hotel, Warwick, RI. The cost is \$30 per person.
 - o Kathy S. showed the new brochure “Assistive Technology for HEALTH” put out by the RI Dept of Health, Disability and Health Program.
 - Next Meeting Date: June 10, 2004 at the Office of Rehabilitation Services, 40 Fountain Street, 5th Floor Large Conference Room, Providence.
 - Adjournment: Motion was made by John B., and seconded by Joe M., that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.