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*Karen Wiley*

*Chairman*

**NEW MEXICO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES**

Monday, July 17, 2017

Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM) Conference Room

3916 Juan Tabo Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111

ATTENDANCE:

**Members Present:** Karen Wiley (Chairperson - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/DVR); Katharine Gutierrez (Vice Chair - Consumer of AT); Curtis Chong (New Mexico Commission for Blind/CFB); TJ Chester (Independent Living Resource Center/ILRC - Proxy); Chris Zafra (Workforce Solutions); Andrea Valles (Disability Rights New Mexico/DRNM); Nat Dean (Consumer of AT); Sam Cueto (Consumer of AT); Richard Bailey (Consumer of AT).

**Member Absent:** Hilario Melendez (Gadsden Schools Transitions);

**NMTAP Staff**: Anthony Alarid (GCD/NMTAP Deputy Director); Tracy Agiovlasitis (NMTAP Supervisor); Erin Gallegos (AT Specialist)

**NMTAP Partners:** Jim Bullard (Back In Use/Adelante); Tim Carver (San Juan Center for Independence/SJCI).

**Guests:** Victor Baca; Alice Cueto

**CALL TO ORDER:**

NMTAP Council Chair, Karen W, called the meeting to order at 1:03pm. The chair called the roll and established that a Quorum was present. Karen W asked for everyone to introduce themselves.

Council member Katharine G moved to approve the agenda, Curtis C seconded the motion. Agenda was approved unanimously.

Nat D noted spelling correction for voting polling places. Andrea V moved to approve the minutes with correction from April 10, 2017. Sam C seconded the motion. The minutes of April 10, 2017 were approved unanimously.

**NMTAP PROGRAM UPDATE:**

Tracy A reported a statistics comparison from full FY16 federal year and the first three quarters of FY17, noting that the program has surpassed the number of consumers served with a full quarter of the year to go. In FY16, note that 518 devices were loaned to 262 consumers. So far this year, 678 devices have been loaned to 277 consumers. In FY16, the program provided 424 device demonstration events that evaluated equipment for 576 consumers. So far this year NMTAP has provided 131 events that evaluated equipment for 1259 consumers. This indicates that, this year, the program was able to gather more individuals to attend a device demonstration event versus demonstrating for one individual at a time. In FY16, NMTAP provided 87 training events, increasing Assistive Technology (AT) knowledge considerably for 753 persons. So far this year, 73 training events have been conducted, increasing knowledge for 1350 persons. Tracy A recapped a few events NMTAP has organized in this last quarter. NMTAP staff will be providing AT demonstrations for teachers, professionals and parents/students in the Taos schools Exceptional Program this fall. In the same trip, NMTAP will provide a demonstration of AT for consumers with Intellectual Disabilities, their providers, families and therapists. Both of these events will be an opportunity for both, persons with disabilities and professionals.

A comparison of the budget and attendance was provided between the Assistive Technology Conference in 2016 (ATC16) and the one held in March 2017 (ATC17). Note that there were no funds available from ATC17 for the Community Fund.

Due to the accessibility at the Sheraton Uptown, ATC18 will be held there on May 7 & 8, 2018. Note that a full day workshop hosted by the Advisory Committee on Hearing Loss Awareness may be held on May 9, 2018 so that anyone interested may easily attend both events. The educational sessions planned will include AT related to wheelchair mobility, speech generating devices, environmental control options, emergency planning, AT funding, blind and near blindness and AT for higher executive functioning. Our lunch presenters will include Know Your Rights and Independent Living panel of speakers. Any Council members are welcome to provide referrals as presenters. Note that these sessions are primarily decided from previous conference requests.

Tracy A noted that NMTAP provides an annual report to both NM state and the federal government. The NM statistics are slightly different and information has been submitted to GCD. The federal reporting will have some changes and data will be due from program partners by mid-November. She will be in touch with partners regarding data and any changes.

Tracy A asked Advisory Council members to provide feedback on AT needs in NM for persons with disabilities and outreach of services available to New Mexicans with disabilities, as indicated in the statute. She welcomed feedback and thanked the members for providing outreach. As requested, Sam C talked about a recent presentation about NMTAP services that he provided to La Clinica de Familia in Sunland Park, NM.

Erin G, new AT Specialist for NMTAP, was introduced and talked a little about her experience and her first two weeks on the job.

Anthony A, GCD Deputy Director, reported that all federal financial reports have been filed appropriately and we are now spending the FY17 funding for the statewide program and that a $994 reduction for next year, as well as reduced state funds from GCD support of the program, should have a small impact.

**FINANCIAL LOANS (NMSEEDs loans, Access Loan NM & Community Fund) UPDATE:**

Tim C reported on both the statewide financial loan programs available through the NMTAP partner SJCI. He stated that both Access Loan NM, available for anyone with a disability to obtain needed AT, and SEED loans, available to purchase equipment for entrepreneurs with disabilities, are financially secure. He noted that three (3) new loans were provided through the Access Loan program, one for a home modification and two for van access. Since the beginning in 2005, they have provided 99 loans through the Access Loan program. No new loans were approved in the SEED loans program since February of 2016. This is due to their bank partner changing. Curtis C asked how many loans were approved to provide AT for blind access and Tim responded that he can only recall two (2). It was suggested that Access Loans be advertised at the National Federation of the Blind Conference next year. Tim C reported the small balance for the NMTAP Community Fund program and that there was no assistance provided in this last quarter.

**BACK IN USE UPDATE:**

Jim B reported that they did lose the donated space for the durable medical equipment (DME) component, requiring them to rent storage and clean equipment at a vacant Adelante home. Since July of 2016, they have provided 851 pieces of equipment, including 300 computers, to 564 unduplicated persons with disabilities. Jim B notes that they do have a waiting list for DME. Regarding the computer component, they have had few donated from Intel since January with Intel changes in NM and are looking at other major donors of good computers. They do continue to get $5000 from Intel for upgrading computers each year. He notes that BIU does ask for donations from consumers, but no payment is required. Tracy A noted that when Council members tell consumers about the computers available to persons with disabilities, it does stipulate that they are for individuals that do not currently have any computer access.

**NEW BUSINESS (DRNM SERVICES OVERVIEW PRESENTATION):**

Andrea V reviewed the advocacy provided by DRNM including the systemic and individual assistance they have provided within their 2017 priorities. Their approach is to begin advocating at the lowest level, using support and guidance through the advocates prior to involving attorneys. She also provided forms that request input on the needs of people with disabilities in NM. These will be provided to Council members in digital fillable format as well. This input impacts the DRNM priority goals for the future.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There was discussion on a variety of needs for persons with disabilities related to AT. Curtis C noted that there are concerns for the pedestrian signals that will be posted for blind individuals who need to access the buses on Central Ave. in the new Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) project. Anthony A said that GCD has had discussions with that department regarding accessibility in general. Nat D stated that she has noted that employers of individuals she has worked with recently do not seem to have a form for reasonable accommodations. Anthony A will follow up with her, as this falls into GCD awareness activities and TJ C said that Independence Living centers can also help with that. There was also general discussion on how often people with disabilities are not included in the planning phase of changes such as release of a new app to track bus location in Albuquerque or mobile banking for smart phones. Also updated websites that are not compatible with screen readers was noted, as well as voting for blind individuals. Andrea V noted that DRNM can help with voting issues for anyone with a disability. Nat D encouraged anyone to call the Legislative Council Service to request items on the agenda for needs that persons with disabilities may have.

**ADJOURN:**

The next NMTAP Advisory Council meeting was scheduled for October 30, 2017 in the Albuquerque area, location to be determined. Karen W adjourned the meeting at 2:55 pm.

**Approved at October 30, 2017 meeting**