JOINT COMMITTEE ON OLDER PERSONS WITH MENTAL RETARDATION

The Joint Committee on Older Persons with Mental Retardation (MR) was created in 1987 to promote collaboration between the Department of Public Welfare and the Department of Aging.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to promote dignity and quality of life as determined by the individual as well as full community inclusion for all older Pennsylvanians with mental retardation.

Personal Values

All older persons with mental retardation should be entitled to the following:

- A full range of choices, opportunities and options to obtain the quality of life they choose;
- Opportunities that include options for life-long growth and development appropriate for their changing needs;
- The opportunity to live at a maximum level of health, safety and self-sufficiency.
- Support in an environment which maximizes the autonomy, personal rights, dignity and uniqueness of each individual with sensitivity to personal, ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Recognition of caregivers as vital positive forces in the lives of people for whom they care. They should be afforded all the services and supports needed to effectively carry out their roles.

The Committee may include PA Dept. of Aging and Dept. of Public Welfare staff, county and provider staff from both service systems, advocates, educators, older individuals with mental retardation, their families and other interested parties.

Committee Functions

1. To develop, implement and evaluate goals and objectives based on shared values and our Mission Statement.
2. To collaborate on activities designed to enhance the quality of life and promote community inclusion for all older persons with mental retardation
3. To make recommendations to the Office of Developmental Programs and the PA Dept. of Aging concerning policies, inter-agency initiatives, innovative services, supports and funding.
4. To promote strong linkages between the Developmental Disabilities and Aging service systems at all levels.
5. To advocate for the supports and resources needed to support older persons with mental retardation in their homes and communities.
6. To provide a diversity of educational opportunities and experiences to enhance the knowledge of people involved in the lives of older individuals with mental retardation, including the planning and development of the annual *Building Bridges Conference.*

Joint Committee Members

Patricia Clark (Co-chairperson), Department of Aging, Office of Long Term Living
Carmen Donegan (Co-chairperson), Department of Public Welfare, Office of Developmental Programs
Jill Buhrman, Dauphin County Area Agency on Aging
Steve Evrard, Allegheny County, Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities
Mary Figlar, Allegheny County, Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities
Kay Haldeman, Office of Developmental Programs, Central Region
Sherry Hoffman, Potter County Human Services, Area Agency on Aging
Maureen Jordan, The ARC of Pennsylvania
Joanna King, Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging
Pat McClintock, Somerset County Mental Health/Mental Retardation
Sean Outen, Philadelphia Corporation for Aging
Judy Rex, Northampton Community College
Judith Stanczak, Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services

AGING/MR COUNTY TEAMS

Since 1995 the Departments of Aging and Public Welfare have jointly sponsored Aging/MR County Teams comprised of representatives from the Area Agencies on Aging, the County MR Agencies, and other community partners. The teams strive to effectively utilize the resources available to both systems; develop effective intervention strategies for older adults; and encourage the development of integrated community services.

The following counties have Aging/MR Teams:

Allegheny
Armstrong/Indiana
Bradford/Sullivan/Susquehanna/Tioga
Butler
Cambria
Cameron/Elk/McKean/Potter
Carbon/Monroe/Pike
Chester
Cumberland/Perry
Dauphin
Delaware
Erie
Fayette
Franklin/Fulton
Greene
Huntingdon/Bedford
Lackawanna
Lehigh/Northampton
Luzerne/Wyoming
Montgomery
Northumberland
Philadelphia
Schuylkill
Somerset
Washington
York

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