



COUNCIL OF STATE ADMINISTRATORS OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

4733 Bethesda Avenue, Suite 330

Bethesda, Maryland 20814

(301) 654-8414 phone

(301) 654-5542 fax

www.rehabnetwork.org

Executive Director

Carl Suter
csuter@rehabnetwork.org

OFFICERS

President

Paul Leather
Concord, NH

President-Elect

Butch McMillan
Jackson, Mississippi

Secretary/Treasurer

Linda Mock
Portland, OR

Immediate Past President

Steve Shivers
Montgomery, Alabama

REGIONAL REPS

Region I

Raymond Carroll
Providence, RI

Region II

Tom Jennings
Trenton, NJ

Region III

Andrea Guest
Wilmington, DE

Region IV

Larry Bryant
West Columbia, SC

Region V

John Connelly
Columbus, OH

Region VI

Barbara Madrigal
Austin, Texas

Region VII

Frank Lloyd
Lincoln, NE

Region VIII

Joe Mathews
Helena, MT

Region IX

Mick Coleman
Carson City, NV

Region X

Michael Graham
Boise, ID

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Legislative Committee

Bob Burns, MD. Combined

Committee on Deafness
Tom Jennings, NJ General

Direct Client Services
Allen Harris, IA Blind

Employment
Steve Wooderson, IA General

Human Resource Development
Mike O'Brien, WA General

Management Services
Blaine Petersen, UT. Combined

Rehabilitation Research
Charlene Dwyer, WI. Combined

Social Security Relationships
Brenda Moore, Conn. General

August 26, 2005

Donna Nagle

U. S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Ave. S.W. Room 6030

Potomac Center Plaza

Washington, D.C. 20204-2700

donna.nagle@ed.gov

Dear Ms. Nagle,

I am responding to the Department's request for comments on the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) – Notice of Proposed Long-Range Plan for Fiscal Years 2005-2009. The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) is providing the following comments and recommendations on NIDRR's proposed long-range plan.

CSAVR recommends that NIDRR develop options for and implement strategies that will more closely connect research projects to the field of rehabilitation practice. This would include the involvement of practitioners in research projects, the dissemination of products to practicing professionals and the delivery of information in a manner that it can be transferred or applied to the field of rehabilitation practice.

In reviewing the document, I noted that vocational rehabilitation (VR) was referenced in one section, the focus on employment. While employment outcomes are key outcomes for the vocational rehabilitation system, researchers must have an understanding of the comprehensive and holistic approach that is required to provide services to VR consumers with disabilities. The comprehensive assessment and the services that are delivered through the individualized plan for employment are designed to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment. The plan may include a wide range of services, including transportation, housing, physical restoration and other independent living or medical support services related to the individual's success in a targeted career. The successful employment outcomes resulting from a comprehensive vocational rehabilitation plan are based on the needs of the individual and are addressed in a holistic approach to services, as required by the Rehabilitation Act.

The VR system also works from multiple points of contact with employers. Based on the experience of the company and their history of successfully employing individuals with disabilities, there may be a variety of VR services that can be tailored to meet the needs of the business to support the successful hiring, promotion and retention of employees with disabilities.

Membership consists of the chief administrative officers of the state rehabilitation agencies responsible for administration of the state-federal rehabilitation programs in each of the states

I fully support the involvement of practicing professionals in all phases of your long-range plan. For example, I promote the involvement of VR staff as peer reviewers and the requirement that researchers be required to work directly with the field of practice. I am looking forward to my role on the Steering Committee and will actively promote the importance of connecting research and practice as an opportunity to improve the rehabilitation process and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carl Suter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Carl Suter
Executive Director