



Montgomery County Commission of People with Disabilities  
June 10, 2015

Seth Morgan, Chair, convened the meeting and introductions were made. A motion was made to approve the May 13 meeting summary and a motion was made and they were approved. He encouraged everyone to come to the steering committee meetings over the summer. The next steering committee meeting will be June 17 from 5:30 to 7. We're going to have Gabe Albornoz, Director, Department of Recreation, come to the July 15 steering meeting to discuss recreation and accessibility for people with disabilities.

Dr. Morgan updated the group on the Wynne vs the State of Maryland Case as it has been ruled upon by the Supreme Court and they ruled in favor of the Wynnes, which creates the need for counties to pay significant amounts of money, as was predicted would occur, with such a ruling. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/5-key-takeaways-from-supreme-court-ruling-on-maryland-tax-case/2015/05/18/9ff71a94-fd76-11e4-805c-c3f407e5a9e9\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/5-key-takeaways-from-supreme-court-ruling-on-maryland-tax-case/2015/05/18/9ff71a94-fd76-11e4-805c-c3f407e5a9e9_story.html)

He also shared that the Commission has been discussing with the County Council the issue of the enabling charters for commissions and our commission in particular, the commission -- but commissions in general and they're going to be taking up that topic at their July 2 HHS Committee meeting at 2. He will be attending as well as Sue Hartung.

Marcie Povitsky reported that there's a lot going on in the public libraries outside about the new story time book club, intellectual disabilities at Montgomery -- there's been a forum that has been doing a lot of their meetings at different libraries.

### **Healthy Montgomery Conversation on Health and Wellness**

Mark Hodge, Public Administrator, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human services led off with the presentation. He stated that they came to help the County with our community conversation on health. He explained that this is their chance to tell them about the things that affect you, your health and well-being, and so we can use that information to improve our services, to change our services, to add new programs, as possible in the budget

There are 17 of these community conversations. This was their second. Their first was a couple weeks ago, the kids in high school have the same questions you're going to have tonight and their intent is to capture as many as they can over the summer from a geographic standpoint, from a race and ethnicity standpoint and other diverse populations that all are here in the County.

Healthy Montgomery has established an improvement process and what that means is it's a steering committee encouraged to -- people in the hospitals, people from other organizations throughout the county interested in health involving and we have several areas of focus that we're looking at such as, behavioral health, heart disease, things like

that. So those are our topics that they are focusing on. They have work groups that are working on those issues and trying to figure out around the county. We're hoping tonight's conversation and the conversations that happen after this will help inform future topics we address through Healthy Montgomery. If you're interested in hearing more about Healthy Montgomery, you can go to [www.healthymontgomery.org](http://www.healthymontgomery.org). There's a lot of information about that project there. Mark then introduced Nancy Martin, the facilitator. She explained that she works with communities all over the country to try to help them improve services, mostly to youth and young adults.

### **Summary of Feedback from Whole Group (Q1, Q2)**

#### ***Q1: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HEALTHY / VISUALIZE YOURSELF IN YOUR HEALTHIEST STATE? WHAT HELPS YOU TO BE IN THE STATE?***

1. Freedoms to engage in leisure activity
2. Meaningful employment
3. As a parent - emergency system that does a good job
4. To feel more included in community activities - feel excluded so often and if felt included would feel happier and connected to community
5. When I need a medical or government service I should not feel stressed out trying to acquire that service - should not become unhealthy from accessing services
6. Access to mental health - place to go to be stabilized
7. Financial stability and security
8. Good eating habits starting with breakfast
9. Having the capacity to engage in those activities that I enjoy and desire without being impeded by unnecessary obstacles and to be able to do that in peaceful and calm setting
10. Healthiest with good amount of sleep, able to exercise, able to have time to myself

#### ***Q2: HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY? WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE? WHAT ACTIVITIES? WHAT WOULD IT LOOK LIKE PHYSICALLY?***

1. Know where to go to contact and the feedback and there needs to be more proactive about seeking input from people and maybe more task forces to be more proactive
2. Mental health services - service to the groupings (disabled, those w learning disabilities). Service to you provides victim mentality ... Prejudices are built in
3. In a community where we are not over medicating individuals to make sure they can function effectively
4. Healthy communities are where there see people families churches government and non-profits coming together to work together and sharing resources
5. Use successful strategies not those that have failed
6. Training and professional development at college level and throughout
7. Biggest complain about accessing health has been from deaf community in Montgomery county - nobody facilitating / helping at medical facilities
8. Honors and respects differences between people - anticipate that the difference are good things - share those in a way that becomes part of the system to cares for others
9. Libraries are seen as places where "unhealthy" go - healthy community would have best possible care for people who cannot care for themselves - people should not be on the streets
10. Incorporates the concepts of universal design - so instead of after the fact - doing it from the beginning - accommodations are built in and not considered as an after thought when someone needs something

***Q3: WHAT STRENGTHS DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE THAT ALLOW FOR HEALTH AND WELL BEING (Quality of Life)***

**Q4: WHAT CHANGES HAVE YOU NOTICED IN YOUR COMMUNITY OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS THAT HAVE IMPROVED HEALTH, WELL-BEING and/or QUALITY OF LIFE?**

*Community Spirit / Culture / General*

- County has substantial financial and community expertise and knowledge resources and also have -- generally politically oriented towards service to others. Not excessively bent towards taking care of everyone to the point that it creates dependence
- Sentiment is there throughout most of the community
- Second highest median household income in State

*Transportation/ INFRASTRUCTURE*

- There is medical transportation if you have medical assistance
- Call and ride taxi program
- Other modes like metro bus , ride on, riding for free between 930-3, lots of benefits
- Transportation is better here - this county in particular is both a blessing and a curse because we benefit from being so close to dc we gain room a lot of the resources that DC has like metro access because of DC we have (and the federal gov like NIH etc being in county) we benefit enormously from intellectual wealth (universities hospitals technology medicine and transportation)
- Not as geographically isolated
- Metro access very helpful. Very grateful

*Resources*

- Mo county has a unit for people with disabilities and the elderly that provide a lot of resource information much more so than any other county
- Mo county Aging and disability services
- Lots of services that aren't available everywhere

*Online Resources*

- People can always bring up their thoughts and issues ... Strength is that you can go to the internet or the website for county and find departments that might be informational
- We explain the services and also encourage people to contact resources to get info but we provide a lot too and combined with lots of different assessments
- Don't go everywhere to find resources have a one stop shop
- Very informative web page

*Insurance Coverage*

- State of Maryland - expansion of Medicaid (still issues with eligibility/enrollment)
- Expansion of Medicaid added a lot of people to eligibility - catching much more people than before
- Lots of transportation resources u have to work hard to find out where to go

*Outreach*

- Pushing young people- youth outreach
- if you can find the right person or right staff they will be more engaged compared

to other place

- If you can find the right person - very good
- Really knowledgeable people u may be told there isn't or get switched to wrong place but when i find it it can be really helpful

#### *RESOURCES / ACCESS TO RESOURCES*

- Senior centers
- Help programs
- Food banks
- Gaithersburg help
- Rockville fish
- Mana food bank
- Many organizations
- County school system is very accessible
- County tried to put computer in each person home internet cost is concern
- (Project reboot) - private
- Free phones
- WAG - welfare to work - fully funded - vehicles for change provide cars, bus passes, help people get to work to get them off welfare and get them self sufficient - helps people get cars so they can be independent
- Bike share
- Free clothing
- Volunteer center and other ways of getting volunteers
- Pro bono programs for legal help
- Crisis center
- Shelter system is better than most places
- County jail - very knowledgeable about mental health issues - have hands tied but do help
- Lions club for eyeglasses
- JCA (Jewish org)

#### *CHALLENGES (15-20 MINUTES)*

**Q5: WHAT QUALITIES DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE THAT MAKE LIVING A HEALTHY AND QUALITY LIFE DIFFICULT / WHAT MAKES IT HARD FOR YOU TO BE HEALTHY IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

**Q6: WHAT CHANGES OR CHALLENGES HAVE YOU OBSERVED OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS THAT HAVE DECREASED HEALTH, WELL BEING, OR QUALITY OF LIFE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?**

#### *IMPLEMENTATION / PROCESS*

- Better in theory than practice ...
- Implementation of procedures and protocol
- Process issues

#### *INFORMATION/ RESOURCES*

- Lots of programs but hard to figure out where and what

- Bad attitudes and bad information
- Social services has tried to accommodate a lot of people, working to do so (overwhelmed)
- Mo county has wealth of community resources but poorly coordinated
- Falls back on individual but becomes overwhelming because too. Any choices and do not know how to pick
- Not always the service organizations sometimes falls back on the person but when you have so many it becomes confusing
- State has bad, offensive information in the transportation apps
- Inconsistency
- Websites are not user friendly

### *INSURANCE COVERAGE*

- Lots of people that fall through the cracks - not disabled enough but do disabled that I can't function in society - nothing in between - fall through the cracks- disabled and have problems but u haven't worked so we won't take you
- Metro access has been nightmare - have the service but can't count on there for appointments
- Even though more are becoming eligible - still take long time to get it, and some fall through the cracks
- Big positive but doesn't mean everyone eligible (Medicaid expansion)
- Wrong information delayed enrollment
- Bugs in the software that delayed enrollment
- Barriers to enrollment and receipt of services and incorrect information
- State issue

### WORKFORCE/ TRAINING and DEVELOPMENT / COMMUNICATION

- Social workers in hospitals believe in taking people out but are not as knowledgeable as they once were
- Health care providers in general not as knowledgeable
- Doctors - something has to be done about doctors - most have never worked with an individual with disabilities
  - If you are sick - you are not going to soak into take in all this information - telling you a lot of information - most of the time you need someone to be with you - get a written summary
- Qualified and knowledgeable personnel (Needed)
- Misguided and bad knowledge about billing and process of how to submit claim
- Pet peeve - don't give me the crap that is generic for my age sex and gender
- Hard to get in contact with the right person
- Don't know right person or right agency so while u have the services you don't have the people who really know
- Drivers enforcing ADA to get priority seating - -adequate training needed
- Many not qualified to discuss these issues
- Problem is that there are employees that need to be trained
- Material and knowledge maintenance
- Need to know policies for metro ID - long time did not know bc did not know about the policies

### FUNDING / BUDGET

- problem/tensions between financial cost of fully complying with ADA
- spending money trying to become compliant - not a physical structure for bringing groups into compliance
  - Adequate salary and competent training to remove this frustration
- high rate of cancellation of classes/ programs - discourages consistent engagement

## UNIVERSAL DESIGN/ BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Lack of bus shelters while waiting for bus and bus benches
- Sometimes the lift doesn't work and telling u to catch the next one
- Investment in infrastructure that is lacking
- Check safety
- Maintenance of buses
- Accessible parking
- Doors that are accessible
- County has been trying to minimize number trying to abuse handicapped parking
- many non-ADA compliant facilities

## Priorities/Actionable Items (Votes - PICTURE INCLUDED)

- skilled facilities
- to enforce current laws - business and individual level
- improve disability awareness training - all employees, mandatory, refresher trainings for employees at the county (other sectors as well)
- increase county council involvement
  - increase accessible parking (state determines this but county council can get involved - should get more involved in state issues)
  - county should take back some things that are state functions
  - county council enforcing businesses to comply
  - county should get involved at a greater degree
- increase website usability / family friendliness
  - need intelligent tree / decision tree to structure montgomery county information resources (online)
- need to decrease inconsistent and unreliable information
- increase employment and increase self sufficiency
- increase ADA compliance