

# Disability Town Hall Meeting—March 5, 2020

**Organizer:** Stacey Thompson—Program Administrator, Driver Training Program Office

**DPS Presence:** Julia Tipple—Administrative Professional,

Jeff Graf—Educational Consultant for Driver Training,

Chuck SanFilippo—Field Staff North Region,

Lt. Herb Homan—Ohio Traffic Safety Office,

Michael Black—Assistant Chief Driver Exam Stations,

Amber-Lynn Daniels—Customer Service Manager—Medical Certifications

**Attendees:** Kate Lopez—Mercy Health West

Daniel Cox—Heights Driving School

Sharon Fife—D&D Driving School

Shawn Layne—The Right Layne Driving School

Bill & Karen Blumhorst—Capabilities, Inc.

Christine Rinella—Ohio Health

Mark Allison—Northwest Ohio Driver Training

Debbie Sams—Hillside Rehabilitation

Samantha Stephenson—OSU Driver Rehabilitation

Emily Haffner—Kettering Health Network

Doreen Knapke—Kettering Health Network

Rick Headley—Marietta Memorial Hospital

James Kesler—University of Toledo

Julie Dominik—Mercy Medical Center

Meredith Sweeney—OSU Driver Rehabilitation

Donna Guigas-Siegman—Cleveland Clinic Akron General

Tina Paff—Bick's Driving School of Western Hills

Alex Burc—Marietta Memorial Hospital

Mike Flis—Metro Health

Stacey opened the meeting with an overview of the meeting's purpose. The Ohio Traffic Safety Office has taken over Driver Training, and the purpose of these meetings is to bring all 11 programs together and have a conversation about the positive and negatives of our processes and programs.

Topic 1: Instructor Training and licensing. Instructor training and licenses have never been split in this state. We took a look at the training a few years ago and made it easier for OTs and CDRs instructors. Talk to us about the good and the bad.

Dan: The driving school side has additional training. The instructors have to go through a disability training course

Stacey: Does this make it harder or easier?

Dan: It is necessary. The course and equipment are a necessary evil. It teaches the instructors the ins and outs of how to teach to disability students specifically.

Sharon: You need a baseline of information of what to look for as an instructor. Many instructors won't know what to look for unless they take a specialized course. Not sure if this is still done in the training manager course. Many instructors have no education whatsoever and people do not tell instructors what the issue is.

Tina: Do they still have to have log in hours of experience or just the course?

Sharon: They should need to do a certain amount of teaching hours, a bachelor's, or a teaching requirement.

Mike: Certain hours are needed currently with supervised training if they are with a hospital or clinic, but not when affiliated with a Class D school.

Karen: Where do you go to get the hours if they have a disability endorsement and just need the training course.

Valerie: Are there enough students to make that happens? Are there enough schools? How do you get into contact with schools, hospitals, or rehab clinics?

Debbie: In the ADED it is delineated out that if you do not have a medical background then they need more hours than if they are currently in the health field.

Dan: Originally we wanted people to have to be an instructor for 2 years before they could hold the disability endorsement. However, this never got enforced, and we did this because disability students

can be harder to teach and it gives them time to acclimate to teaching in a car before they are teaching these students. Or if they go through ADED they could come in with the endorsement.

Shawn: I feel like I need more training as a Class D instructor. As an OT they are not trained as a driving instructor.

Debbie: I agree.

Karen: The two years would be hard because they sometimes work 10 hours a week and sometimes work 40 hours a week. I think it should be based on hours not years.

Rick: When ADED started it was mostly people coming from the driver education side, but now more and more occupational therapists are getting into the field than CRDS instructors. Coming from a hospital setting it was very helpful to already have that established background in teaching juveniles.

Topic 2: Hospitals and Clinics: since the training has been changed are you finding it more helpful or more of a hindrance? The change that was made is that OT instructors can either go through an online program or observe at a local Class D school because hospitals and rehabs do not offer classrooms.

Meredith: Found the training okay. The application process was harder than the training. Might have been using an outdated checklist. Once we found out what it was we were missing it was smooth from there.

Tina: Training someone now, do you have to test at the BMV for a road test?

Mike: Yes we had to do that.

Karen: If they had the option to send an instructor through a 24 hour online class it would make it easier because they only hold class twice a week so sometimes it can take months to finish.

Tina: So we get that option at the regular driving schools but the hospitals don't?

Stacey: Yes.

Alex: When you take the instructor test at the BMV it was not what I expected, thought it would be the teen test, but it has questions about the laws for driver training. It would be nice if instructors knew that ahead of time.

Karen: We offer the classes but to sit through the classes is redundant because it is never taught. Can take months to get someone through.

Shawn: Don't get me wrong, it is good knowledge, but I think it would be much better if someone could work directly with a disability instructor. If someone can sit with an instructor rather than the classroom it would be more practical because the classes are hardly ever taught. Then count that time instead of the classroom.

Julie: Then have them come back and have them teach a class 5 months later.

Doreen: Did the instructor candidates have to take the 8 hour online course?

Alex: Yes, I had to take everything through the state and then I had to take a 24 hour online course as well.

Doreen: So they have to do the online and then also take the Basic Instructor Course.

Meredith: Look through the text books and make sure everything is up to date.

Alex: In the 8 hour one day course it was helpful to understand what is expected of a driving instructor.

Sharon: The purpose of the course was educate instructors on Ohio law specifically, because many people do not know the laws.

Tina: Important to take the online class

Alex: The online course was helpful because it served as a refresher.

Mike: The only problems occurred when everything had been sent into the driver training program office.

### Topic 3: Parental Involvement: Hot topic in our office and governor's office. Tell us your thoughts.

Shawn: Parents aren't there, teens are either with the grandparents or friends.

Dan: In the disability field there is more parental involvement because of the disability. They want to know more about the training and equipment. If the state is paying they also tend to have an additional person.

Mike: I'm primarily with adults so no parental involvement. I do not see many people under age 18. I tell people to wait until they are over 18. No caretaker either.

Tina: Many teen drivers do not need equipment, but some do. Some parents will foot the bill for the equipment and some will not. I use a practice driving sheet for the parents to fill out with the students and bring in so that I can see what they are doing and what they are having problems with. All brand new drivers, even over 18, need to complete the 24 hour online program. DriveTeam has a parent sign a contract and have the parents come in for a class. They require 10 hours of driving instead of the regular 8, they make the parents come to some of the training sessions.

Mark: Once they get their driver's license, they aren't driving in the training car. They are driving in their own car which can be much different. The parents need to emphasize this.

Shawn: Do away with the affidavit, make them document religiously. The affidavit is the joke.

Karen: Some require tutoring, this is where the extra practice with the parent and student is helpful.

Julie: I have cancelled students because they have not had practice.

Shawn: They should come to the driving school first before getting the 50 hours.

Dan: The habits of the parents are being taught first and not the correct way.

Dan: For teens there is always a caregiver or parents.

Shawn: An online course that the parents have to take before the student can obtain their certificates would be nice.

Sharon: The parents do not seem to have any idea how risky it is for a new driver. The students know but not the parents. We need to be educating the parents before they give up the keys.

Kate: When someone on the spectrum comes to us we make the parents sit in the car while they teach, that way the parents are teaching the same way that we are. We don't see these students as often. Parents do not know how to teach the right way.

Sharon: Parents do not realize what incorrect habits students have.

James: Make the policies specialized to each school, would be harder for schools to put certain things in writing than other schools.

Shawn: It would be harder to get parents involved when they have other children or responsibilities.

Sharon: I think parents need an online course or information before the contracts are signed.

Mike: I see a variety, but I'm seeing more and more with learning disabilities. Parents are sometimes involved and it can be very hard to push the parents to drive with the students. I'm having a hard time pushing the students to take the online training, we need to involve the parents in that process as well.

#### Topic 4: Program reviews are done every other year with either Chuck or Charlie. What are the issues with program reviews, what good things are you seeing?

Karen: I did not know that the program review forms were on DETS.

Doreen: DETS is not customer or client friendly. If you need a form you cannot find that.

Rick: We are like the red-headed step child, we do not provide the same services as the other programs. Hard to have a training manager assess the instructors. Communication between the field staff and office is not up to par. We want to be legal with the office and we do not always know when changes are made.

Donna: It helps to ask what forms are needed from the field staff for the different programs.

Stacey: So what I'm hearing is, the program office needs a checklist for the program reviews.

Karen: I don't think we should not have to hand in the same forms from renewals.

Meredith: When I started with the program, I was clueless, but the staff was very helpful when things were missing. I developed a file on the computer that is continuously updated with the things that are needed for the program reviews. Organization is key. I needed a one-on-one guide in the beginning and it is not readily available.

Kate: We do not need the same things as the Class D schools and this can be confusing since we operate more than one program.

Meredith: It is a challenge to get the assessments done. The hospital staff does not know what we do, so we have to go to another school for the assessments and that is hard.

Kate: Can have the field staff complete the assessments?

Julie: Isolated schools have more of a burden when assessments are needing to be done.

## Topic 5: Communication—we have been told that we do not communicate enough. How can we help you to make your job easier?

Meredith: Can we have an email message pushed out when a bulletin board post is created that tells us we have a new DETS message?

Kate: I'm not on DETS as often because we do not order certificates.

Mike: I do not check DETS often because the program office does not post often.

Shawn: We need more communication between schools, Ohio Traffic Safety, and examiners.

Donna: I had to spend four hours with all of the examiners and educate them on what they do. It is not just communication with the program office it is with a much larger group including other agencies.

Karen: Whenever I email I always get an email back quickly. Always a kind email.

Kate: This is a change from when I started, it used to be slow.

Mike: If we get that bulletin board notification email it would be more helpful.

Julie: DETS is not a friendly system to navigate and find things. I am not computer savvy. Uploading documents is hard.

Donna: Thankful you can call. Harder to do the abbreviated adult. It is hard to find forms when some are on DETS and others are on the public facing website. They need to all be in one area.

Dan: Put all the forms on DETS as well that way you do not need to go back and forth.

Tina: I use the public facing website often to explain where the adult courses are located. It takes an extreme amount of time to complete program reviews compared to the hospitals.

James: From a hospital setting, we have to be clean and provide billable services in an 8 hour setting. When the paperwork is not billable the hospitals come down on us. Very little of what the occupational therapists do is actually in the car. We are doing patient care.

Julie: Hospitals do not understand what we do.

Bill: We do not want to be spinning our wheels; if we can make renewals and reviews more efficient it would be helpful.

Debbie: If we had the checklists it would be much more helpful.

Karen: If the forms have the update date on the form it would be helpful.

Tina: Would it be possible to not have to do a renewal the year that the reviews are done?

Stacey: This is a law.

Kate: Not needing passport photos anymore was very helpful.

Dan: Can we change the rule to say we do not need a new picture every year?

Karen: Can we change the rule that says we need a physical every year?

Meredith: Do physicals through the employee health, OSU does them every two years. For staff that needs them annually they have to be done through our primary care provider.

Tina: We need to change the policy to include nurse practitioners and physicians assistants because most offices are moving towards this.

Samantha: My doctor says this is worthless because there is no place to indicate that the instructor is responsible for their own medical condition or explain what might be wrong and how it would or would not impact how they instruct.

Emily: Communicating to Class D schools that disability schools exist. Heard the comment often that they do not know the disability schools exist. Also communicating to parents that they exist because they will send them to class D schools first and then disability.

Donna: Does the basic instructor course mention disability schools? It needs to be covered more in depth. New rules about driving need to be communicated. Changes in the laws.

Sharon: Is there interoffice communication between us and the BMV? There needs to be if there is not.

Stacey: Would interagency communication be helpful?

All: Yes. Especially changes.

## Assistant Chief over Exam Stations Q&A:

Email Question: How would a company know if someone who is coming in to test has a mental or physical disability?

As examiners and testers we do not know who needs retested because of mental disabilities.

Email Question: What are the requirements for testing and teaching with bi-optics?

Two offices in the state do bi-optics testing: Canton and Hilliard. They do a road test, cone test, and environment test during the daytime and at night.

Email Question: What accommodations are available for someone with disabilities taking their permit test?

Headphones and paper testing are available. Sometimes they can go in and ask an examiner others should be taken through exam supervisors. Schedule with the supervisor to have oral testing done.

Dan: Some exam stations make them fail the test first. Why?

Michael: This is not required, you should speak with a supervisor.

Bill: Are all exam stations supposed to offer oral testing?

Michael: All testing stations have the headphones. You need to schedule if you want a physical person to read the test because some exam stations are smaller and busier than others.

Sharon: I have been told they will not be given paper tests and oral tests.

Michael: I will send out a broadcast to all exam supervisors letting them know this should be done everywhere.

Bill: If they are continually failing they should be given the option to take the test in another way.

Shawn: Is there a true or false test?

Michael: Yes it does exist, but we try to encourage them to take the normal test in another way.

Dan: Can examiners expand or define a word if they do not understand a word?

Michael: Yes the examiners can explain but cannot give answers.

Karen: What about sign language?

Michael: There is a sign language DVD at all locations and they do have a contract with the state for interpreters.

Stacey: When they have issues like this is there a general number they can call?

Mike: They should speak with a supervisor first, but if that doesn't solve the problem then they can contact me.

Tina: Are examiners trained on adaptive equipment?

Michael: No.

Tina: This needs to be done, examiners need to understand what the challenges are for disabled persons. All exam stations need disability friendly equipment (i.e. eye exam tests, countertops, etc.)

Mike: I will review our training manual and I will try to make corrections so that examiners are more aware.

Kate: Do you have an index of the abbreviations to describe the medical conditions for our use when we get a client that has been given the restriction?

Michael: It is in our manual but is not publically available.

Meredith: The BMV is aware that examiners are not educated. They have reached out to OSU doctors for assistance in training their examiners.

Donna: When examiners did continuing education classes with the highway patrol there was an opportunity to be trained in disability and adaptive equipment, this should be available again. Do they still do education in this way?

Michael: We do education but not in the same way. Regional managers can do education with their examiners but this could cause stations to close.

Karen: Is there anything in the rules that says they cannot have the camera in the vehicle used for teaching?

Michael: In general we do not allow cameras because people record the examiners testing.

Sharon: Is there a list of deputies that are now offering testing?

Michael: Website by county is available. However, they are not set up to do the adaptive testing.

Donna: Can we let schools know that the testing is done in different languages?

Michael: All of the computers can test in nine languages, but I will warn that there are different dialects and sometimes they are different. Digests are only in select languages.

Michael: The person does need to understand the examiner in English for the road test.

Michael: Can fail for being unable to follow instructions.

Tina: Do you foresee in the future a certified disability rehabilitation specialist being able to test someone for a license if they have a disability or if they need adaptive equipment?

Michael: We would not speculate because the legislature would make those decisions.

Vehicle Inspections: our office has taken over the inspections from the MVI teams because the field staff are under the highway patrol. If it is the program review year they will complete the inspections then. If you have 10 or more they will automatically come to you. If it is an off year for the program review then you need to go to a regional site. If you are going to a regional then you will need to call in and schedule a time slot during the regional site.

Debbie: Why can't we go to OSHP?

Stacey: They are not trained to do the inspections anymore. If you have it done at the post it will be rejected by our office.

Julia: You will be issued a DTO 0142 during renewals not throughout the year.

We are trying to improve the public facing website, what can we add?

General: Law changes, meeting minutes, recordings of town hall meetings, do not put internal policy changes, would like to be able to send us updates and have them put on the website.

Forms on the website do not work very well if there is long information.

Stacey: If you see anything or any forms on the website that need fixed please let us know.

Sharon: Add a link to the ANSTSE website on the resources for parents' page.