



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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Department of Rehabilitative Services


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September 25, 2006

TO: The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia

Members of the Virginia General Assembly

FROM: James A. Rothrock 

RE: Report on House Bill 110

I am pleased to provide you with the Department of Rehabilitative Services' 2006 Annual Report required by House Bill 110 of the 2006 Session of the Virginia General Assembly. House Bill 110 requires the department to annually report on the department's progress for addressing the impact of the aging population in at least five specific items. The five items are addressed in the body of this report.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions that you may have regarding this report.

Cc: The Honorable Marilyn B. Tavenner

JAR/wmr

Attachment: Fiscal Year 2006 Report on House Bill 110

State Fiscal Year 2006
Report on House Bill 110
Department of Rehabilitative Services



James A. Rothrock, M.S., L.P.C.
Commissioner

September 22, 2006

Preface

House Bill 110 (2006 Session of the Virginia General Assembly) amended *The Code of Virginia* Section 2.2-5510 to provide that “(b)ased on guidance from the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, each agency shall report by October 1 of each year to the Governor and to the General Assembly its progress for addressing the impact of the aging population in at least five specific actions.” This report was prepared by William M. Rhodenhiser, Manager of the Department of Rehabilitative Services’ (DRS) Personal Assistance Services Program. Mr. Rhodenhiser also has been designated pursuant to HB 854 (2006 Session) as the person responsible for reviewing policy and program decisions of the agency with respect to their impact on senior citizens and adults with disabilities.

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Executive Summary

The Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) does not provide any programs specifically designed to serve senior citizens. DRS' mission is to provide services to Virginians with disabilities to help them become employed or live more independently. However, during Fiscal Year 2006, DRS provided services to 326 individuals who were over the age of 65. The DRS programs utilized by senior citizens include: Vocational Rehabilitation (160 persons), Long Term Case Management (10 persons), Personal Assistance Services (21 persons) and the services at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (135 persons).

Most of the services offered through DRS have waiting lists. As the number of senior citizens grows, this may present problems in access to services. Of particular import, the Personal Assistance Services (PAS) program serves about 187 consumers per year and has a waiting list of 55 persons of all ages. If PAS is to become a viable service option for senior citizens, funding will have to be increased accordingly in order to minimize waiting lists and access when need arises.

GrandDriver is one new program that provides a needed service to senior citizens. Since July 2004, DRS has seen 119 individuals at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center for driving evaluations and/or driver's training using grant funds.

DRS is developing strategies and revising printed and web based media to be more "senior-friendly" even though the relative numbers of seniors served is small. Telephone and office accessibility is very good due to the commitment that DRS has to address accessibility issues for physically disabled citizens of the Commonwealth.

Introduction

DRS' mission is to provide and advocate for the highest quality services that empower individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment, independence and full inclusion into society. DRS operates the federal-state funded Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program that provides eligible individuals with disabilities with a comprehensive array of services to enable them to obtain, retain, or advance in employment. DRS also operates the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), which provides comprehensive residential and outpatient services to individuals with multiple and complex disabilities. In addition, supports and services to enhance the independence of individuals with significant disabilities are provided through an array of community-based programs, including the Long Term Case Management and Personal Assistance Services programs.

This report outlines the number of senior citizens served, the types of services utilized by senior citizens, consumer oriented publications and websites, and future programs to serve senior citizens, highlighting the GrandDriver Program, which has been utilized to evaluate and train senior citizens on their driving skills.

Number of Citizens Receiving Services

During Fiscal Year 2006, DRS provided services in the following program areas to persons in each of the following age ranges:

Program Area	# ages 65-74	# ages 75-84	# ages 85+	Total
Vocational Rehabilitation	137	21	2	160
Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center	65	53	17	135
Long Term Case Management	10	0	0	10
Personal Assistance Services	13	5	3	21
Total	225	79	22	326

These numbers are more than likely consistent with previous fiscal years.

Agency Services Utilized by Senior Citizens

The DRS programs utilized by senior citizens (age 65 or older) include Vocational Rehabilitation, Long Term Case Management, Personal Assistance Services (PAS), and services at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. Vocational Rehabilitation services assist eligible individuals with disabilities in becoming or maintaining employment. Long Term Case Management provides case management services to individuals with physical and sensory disabilities. PAS, sometimes called attendant care, is a range of non-medical services provided by one or more persons, designed to assist an individual with a significant physical disability with daily living activities. The Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center in Fishersville provides a comprehensive array of services (vocational, medical) to individuals to help them achieve employment or live more independently.

While senior citizens may have access to these programs depending on their ability to meet certain eligibility requirements, none of these programs are utilized by senior citizens in significant numbers. Vocational Rehabilitation, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center services, PAS and Long Term Case Management Services each have a waiting list for services. Given the few number of senior citizens served by these programs, it is likely that the waiting lists contain few if any senior citizens. On average, the PAS program serves about 187 consumers per year and does not have the capacity or funding to expand sufficiently to serve the growing numbers of seniors that will need personal assistance. There is already a waiting list of 55 persons of all ages.

The growing number of senior citizens that could potentially benefit from PAS will need to be funded either through DRS or the Virginia Department for the Aging. This is a vital service that can significantly delay or prevent nursing home placement. Senior citizens who are able to remain in their own homes and stay in control of their day to day lives will appreciate the opportunity to remain independent as long as possible. PAS can provide hands on assistance with bathing, dressing, grooming, toileting, feeding, and transferring. These activities are not provided by the Department of Social Services "chore services". These services can be delivered by home health care agencies using Certified Nursing Assistants. When this route is used the cost is doubled, and there is a loss of direct control by the consumer. In contrast, PAS provides direct control to the consumer. While many persons will receive PAS from Medicaid funded programs, Medicaid is restrictive due to the requirements limiting services to only those seniors that meet extremely low income and resource limits. At the same time, many seniors that need personal assistance cannot afford to bear the cost by themselves. DRS PAS is one program that makes this possible.

Agency Programs Designed to Serve Senior Citizens

DRS does not have any programs specifically designed to serve senior citizens. While senior citizens may access services, DRS' mission is to provide services to Virginians with disabilities to help them become employed or live more independently.

Consumer Oriented Publications and Web Sites

Upon request, DRS provides information to citizens in large print, Braille, or in recorded media. The 1-800 information and referral number is manned by live employees, not automated menus. TTY communication is also offered. All offices are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

Future Programs to Service Senior Citizens

DRS was asked to participate in the GrandDriver effort through the Virginia Department of Aging (VDA) when VDA applied for their second round of three-year funding from the Administration on Aging for the Alzheimer's Demonstration Grants. DRS initially received funding (\$90,000) in July 2004, followed by \$55,000 in July 2006. The funding continues through Fiscal Year 2007. Since July 2004, DRS through the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center has seen 119 individuals for driving evaluations and/or driver's training using grant funds. Nearly all clients have been seen for more than one visit, and many clients received several sessions of driver's training. Therapists continue to travel to the majority of these clients' home areas as part of the comprehensive evaluation and training process. The Department of Motor Vehicles is requiring that persons with questionable driving abilities be evaluated by Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialists before licenses can be considered for reinstatement. As a result, a high number of inquiries have been generated as well as a high demand for this service.

In addition, Mary Margaret Cash, Assistant Commissioner for Community Based Services at DRS, serves on the Streamlining Access for "No Wrong Door" work group convened by the Department for the Aging and the Statewide Advisory Council for the Integration of Community-based Services.