

## CRT & Wheelchair Repair Advisory Council

### MINUTES

Wednesday, March 26, 2025

11:00 AM Zoom Remote Meeting Broadcast On Zoom and YouTube Live

Attendees: Maureen Amirault (Co-Chair), Jim Carson (CID), Farrah Garland, Becki Jacobson (OHA), Michelle Johnson, Brittany Kane, Ginny Mahoney, David Morgana, Diane Racicot (NSM), Joe Shortt, Shirley Skyers-Thomas, Jonathon Slifka (ADS, Co-Chair), and Sheldon Toubman (Disability Rights CT).

Absent: Nina Holmes, Darrell Roupp, and David Seifel.

Guest: Gary Gilberti (NuMotion)

- I. CONVENE MEETING: Chair Amirault called the meeting to order at 11:02 AM.
- II. REMARKS BY THE CHAIRS: Chair Amirault welcomed members to the meeting and suggested that items for the agenda, or reports that need to be shared with the group, be submitted in advance of the meeting if possible. She apologized for sharing today's reports on the same day of the meeting. Co-Chair Slifka concurred with the welcome to the meeting and had no further comments to add.
- III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 19 2025
  - a. Morgana recommends the minutes reflect the inclusion of staffing levels and percentage of compliance levels reported by the providers. Toubman agreed this would be useful information. The Council Administrator shared that the reports, as submitted by the providers, are shared with the Council and are available on the web on an ongoing basis.
  - b. Garland mentioned that, of course, important points of discussion ie., compliance, staffing levels, etc., should be recorded in the minutes, however details from reports may not be necessary when the Council has access to the reports. If amended reports are shared between meetings, the updates could be noted in the minutes of the next meeting.
  - c. The Chair opened the floor for amendments to the Minutes. Toubman made the suggestion to submit amendments to the 2/19 minutes in writing prior to the next meeting when the Minutes will be amended and approved. Agreed by consensus. Members of the Council expressed appreciation for the work by staff.
- IV. NUMOTION REPORT (Gilberti: see February 2025 report provided to the Council
  - a. Gilberti reported that NuMotion submitted an amended report of January compliance levels after last month's meeting with corrected information for

compliance (remote = 100%, in-shop = 88%, on-road = 57%). Toubman mentioned the updated information that was provided in last month's meeting that was not provided to the Council as an updated report, although Gilberti stated it was submitted as promised.

- b. February Compliance: NuMotion compliance has improved in February and the company has made efforts to automate their reporting process and will continue that work (remote = 100%, in-shop = 88%, on-road = 60%). He anticipates additional improvement in NuMotion compliance, as they have hired 2 additional staff members and have moved a technician from NY to CT to reduce the backlog and improve service.
- c. Staffing: By the end of April, NuMotion expect to have 21 staff members (8 service techs; 9.3 FTE rather than 7.1 reported last month) and have moved one more tech from in-shop to the road to improve compliance numbers. One additional new hire is in training. Gilberti mentioned they do use cross-training with staffing and then use "load shift" to reassign staffing roles as needed. They are stocking 70 of the top parts in inventory to reduce wait times.
- d. Toubman mentioned the new legislative language under consideration this session would provide a consistent definition of staff roles across the industry. Gilberti reported they are committed to making the investment and doing the work that is necessary to reach compliance with the law.
- e. Amirault asked Racicot for her response to comparison/contrast of staffing (see discussion V1.e. for more detail).
- f. Morgana asked clarifying questions about the staffing report and a listing for an open position, to which Gilberti responded. Retention of staff is an ongoing challenge. The current proportion of in-shop repairs is 23% (77% in-home), whereas in-shop repairs may be 60% in states other than CT.
- g. Becki Jacobson offered the assistance of OHA to assist providers in their quest to be fully compliant with CT law, especially if interfacing with insurance providers as needed, or if there are other barriers to compliance.
- h. Morgana asked about factors that supported the improvement in compliance. Gilberti anticipates the inventory of parts could reduce wait times by 7 days.
- i. Gilberti completed his report and left the meeting because of an earlier commitment.

V. NSM REPORT (Racicot: see February and March 1-21 reports provided to the Council)

- a. Compliance: February compliance levels were 87.8% in-home, 89% in-shop and 100% remote. March compliance (as of 3/21) was 91% in home, 100% in-shop, and 100% remote. She directed attendees' attention to the summary report. Manufacturing days (from PO to delivery) still show some slow processes, pointing out the variance among sites. Discussed the "no bill" interactions with customers that may include an adjustment, or response to a request; NSM averages 85-95 encounters/month. Focused on achieving and maintaining 90% compliance.
- b. Staffing: Hiring and retention of staff is a continual problem; NSM lost one technician and have another technician that is not showing progress in training.

NSM focuses on over-hiring to try to stay out ahead of the anticipated turnover. Moved MA techs to CT to reduce back log. NSM has hired an admin person to collect information and assure full compliance going forward.

- c. Morgana asked for clarification on staffing, expressing particular interest in the proportions of staff in-shop vs. on the road. Racicot reported 12 (plus 1 in training) on-the-road at Niantic and 7 techs at Newington (1 tech currently out with illness); 7 total techs in-shop between the two sites, with two administrative staff. Toubman followed up with questions regarding staffing ratios. Racicot reported they move assemblage of new equipment between the 2 sites. Racicot expressed concern that legislation currently under consideration includes a compliance of 95% which may be unrealistic, when faced with a staff illness for a day or two can affect the efficiency. Their analysis indicates the average time exceeding compliance levels was 1.8 days.
- d. Jacobson asked a clarifying question about repairs in SNFs and offered the assistance of OHA. A common constraint with services in a SNF facility is the schedule availability of PT/OT staff for coordination and they may need to schedule an additional CNA for help with patient care.
- e. Morgana asked about average times to complete service within a facility vs. in the community. Racicot reports service within a facility usually adds one week to completion of service or at least 3-5 days.

## VI. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS AND DISCUSSION

- a. Chair Amirault invited additional comment from Becki Jacobson (OHA). Jacobson has offered help with facilitating resolution of complaints, and proposed the Advisory Council consider creating a form that could give permission for OHA to participate in a situation in which a WC user files a complaint. OHA is developing a form for filing a complaint regarding wheelchair repair. Current OHA forms for Request for Information (ROI) are longer and more complex than may be necessary. Racicot mentioned NSM has an internal form for this purpose.
- b. Shortt mentioned he had a WC repair completed yesterday that took 13 business days (slightly out of compliance with the 10-day goal); discussion ensued regarding what part of that process counts toward the compliance specified in the law. His bill was for \$485/hr, for 4.5 hours of work, although the tech was there only about 2 hours. Racicot clarified they are allowed to bill for 15-minute increments and certain specific repairs are assigned a specific number of increments, which works out to approximately \$56/hour. She speculated there may be difference between estimates and actual times.
- c. Toubman pointed out the differences between the practices and marketing of the two companies. Racicot mentioned the efficiencies of in-shop repairs, including access to more parts, etc., and their staff asks about that option early in the interaction with customers.
- d. Racicot reported they have their own ROI forms. Some discussion ensued regarding the potential utility of a short form for ROI if OHA if that would facilitate their getting involved in helping with WC repair complaints. Morgana described the process he has used for filing a complaint and interacting with OHA regarding that complaint.

- e. Toubman noted the contrast in staffing between NSM and NuMotion and asked for an opinion from Racicot regarding NSMs improved compliance report. Morgana asked clarifying question, as well. Racicot mentioned differences in business practices and the fact that NSM has access to enhanced IT options available to them because of their business association.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENT OF TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be remote because of the legislative session; the date TBA.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 12:32 PM.

Breanne Clifton

Rebecca McClanahan, Asst. Clerk

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Council Administrator

Minutes Prepared by