



**National Task Force Meeting**  
Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center  
Atlanta, Georgia  
May 6 & 7, 2009

## Report of the Conference

**Conference Coordinator/ Moderator:** Joy Kniskern, Pass It On Center

**Attendees:**

Lindsey Bean, Paraquad/ Pass It On Center  
Chris Brand, Friends of Disabled Adults and Children, Too! (FODAC)  
Jessica Brodey, JMB Policy Consulting, Consultant to Pass It On Center  
Deborah Buck, Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs  
Elliot Harkavy, EGH Associates, Consultant to Pass It On Center  
Sharon Meek, REACH, Inc., Consultant to Pass It On Center  
Kerri Morgan, Washington University/ Paraquad  
Rhonda Perling, Georgia Tools for Life  
Liz Persaud, Pass It On Center  
Trish Redmon, Professional Resource Group, Consultant to Pass It On Center  
Martha Rust, Georgia Tools for Life  
Sara Sack, University of Kansas/ Assistive Technology for Kansans  
Robert Todd, CATEA/School of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology  
Caroline Van Howe, Assistive Technology Industry Association  
Joanne Willis, Touch the Future/ Reboot

**Participating via Webinar:**

Brian Bard, Rehabilitation Services Administration  
Jeremy Buzzell, Rehabilitation Services Administration  
Rob Groenendaal, Rehabilitation Services Administration  
Lisa Kosh, Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society  
of North America  
Lee Learson, Creative Pathways Associates/ Consultant to NEAT  
Nancy Meidenbauer, Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society  
of North America  
Rik Opstelten, Rehabilitation Services Administration

## The Conference Agenda

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### **Day Two**

#### **Initiatives for Year Four and Beyond**

Data Report on AT Reuse Programs

Knowledge Base Development

Quality Indicators and Online Program Assessment Tool Completion

Sustainability:

- National Collaborations on AT Reuse
- National AT Reutilization Outcomes
- Training and Technical Assistance
- AT Reuse Emergency Preparation and Response
- Manufacturer/Supplier Relationships
- Other Partnerships and Collaboration

## Conference Report

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### DAY 1

#### Objectives

The focus of the Pass It On Center (PIOC) is:

- To review and discuss progress, products and proposed plans
- To further focus the goals of each of the Task Force Study Groups
- To provide a forum for sharing information about national assistive technology (AT) reuse issues
- To explore further the steps necessary in building a national network of AT reuse programs
- To foster an openness to learning
- To incorporate an awareness of a changing economy and a changing ecology and how these will impact AT reuse programs

#### Highlights of Year Three

Joy Kniskern and members of the PIOC Team reviewed the highlights of Year Three. (Carolyn Phillips was recuperating from surgery and unable to attend the meeting.) This review summarized the steps taken in response to priorities set at the 2008 meeting of the National Task Force (NTF).

##### **PIOC Web Site Redesign**

The home page of the PIOC web site was redesigned to incorporate enhancements stemming from extensive usability research in late 2008. Content presentation was rearranged to highlight accessibility features that were sometimes missed, and content that received little attention on right side of the page. The AT reuse program locator was updated.

Liz Persaud shared a draft of a brochure designed for the Pass It On Center.

##### **PIOC Knowledge Base Development**

An online Knowledge Base was identified as a priority in July 2008. It has been developed and a significant amount of content loaded, although much work remains to be done. The goal is to identify content that represents outstanding examples of policies, procedures and practices associated with quality AT reuse programs. The grantees and other programs, especially Paraquad, Assistive Technology for Kansans and Project MEND, have been generous in contributing materials.

The prototype Knowledge Base was redesigned recently to incorporate user-suggested changes. The home page was modified to incorporate an area for recently added content and a special area for downloadable policies and procedures checklists. A second grouping of content within modules was added to enhance usability.

Content additions in process include the development of downloadable step-by-step posters for sanitization, project plans for a sanitization room (from Chris Brand at FODAC) and videos demonstrating sanitization procedures (from Paraquod).

### **Sanitization and Liability Study Group**

Last year the study group recommended the creation of the step-by-step posters mentioned above. It also recommended the delivery of sanitization procedures on CD as an alternative format, including explanations for why certain procedures should be followed, and the consequences and/or benefits of following or not following the recommended procedures.

Additional detail was recommended for basic sanitization room setup, including equipment and supplies. Chris Brand is in the process of building a tiled room for sanitization at FODAC. He will share not only the details regarding the room, equipment and supplies, but also the project planning that could save months of preparation and significant expense.

### **Quality Indicators Study Group**

The Quality Indicators Study Group met in Atlanta on March 23 and 24 to begin the development of Quality Indicators for AT Reuse. Piggybacking on the education-based QIAT (Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology), the group requested approval from the QIAT group to affix an 'R' for Reuse and call the indicators the QIAT-R (phonetically "quiet-er").

The first draft of the indicators was created in a table format that forced contorted choices, and this format was abandoned after review and feedback from several individuals on the Task Force. A more flexible check-box format with variable numbers of responses was adopted. The QIAT-R is in early draft format and will be reviewed in more detail later. Task Force members were given the current draft version.

The PIOC is building an Online Program Assessment Tool in conjunction with the QIAT-R. The proposed Web tool will permit a user to respond to a series of questions and have a program assessment created from the responses. This result will not be a rating but an assessment of the strength of various segments of the program as compared to the best practices identified in the QIAT-R. The resulting recommendation for areas that need strengthening will be referenced to content in the Knowledge Base and other sources of information.

### **Addressing Issues of National Significance/ Networking AT Reuse Programs**

**Identifying programs.** The Pass It On Center and the National Assistive Technology Technical Assistance Partnership (NATTAP) collaborated to identify and classify AT device reutilization programs. The Pass It On Center website now hosts the on-line database of AT reutilization programs in the United States that originally was developed by NATTAP.

As of May 1, 2008, the number of states and programs listed has increased to 169 (from 162 a year ago). Of these:

- 113 conduct reassignment activities
- 84 conduct refurbishment activities
- 42 conduct equipment exchange activities

- 10 conduct reassignment & refurbishment
- 17 conduct reassignment & exchange activities
- 13 conduct refurbishment and exchange activities.

Only three states and five territories have no AT reuse listing on the database of AT reuse programs.

**Promoting the use of standard definitions for AT reuse.** The Pass It On Center staff, consultants and members of the National Task Force promoted the use of the AT reuse definitions established by NTF in 2007 at conferences (e.g., ATIA, NATTAP Annual Grantees Meeting, and MedTrade), during PIOC webinars, on the PIOC website and Knowledge Base and in the PIOC brochure.

**Webinars.** Webinars have proven a useful tool for sharing information about issues and solutions in the area of reuse. The Pass It On Center has facilitated 15 webinars over two years on a range of topics. Those topics have included:

- Data Collection for Reuse Projects
- Applicability of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to Reuse of AT
- Organization and Governance of AT Reuse Programs
- A Closer Look at AT Exchange Programs
- Storage Solutions and Inventory Control
- Transportation Solutions
- Emergency Preparation and Response
- Sustainability
- Marketing Solutions
- Release of and walk-through the Knowledge Base

Participation has ranged from 15 to 50 attendees. The Webinars are now open to the national network of state AT programs and, increasingly, the Center is receiving requests from other groups to participate. The audiences are extremely diverse, ranging from program implementers to administrators and subcontractors.

**Stakeholder meetings.** These meetings were attended by a diverse group of people providing AT services in public agencies, non-profit organizations and private companies. These well-designed meetings also explored a wide range of reuse issues and solutions specific to their states. Year Three meetings included:

- Paraquod, St. Louis – to plan the August grantee meeting
- Tennessee, a statewide reuse summit
- South Carolina – meetings and exposition
- Virginia – a summit of stakeholders
- STAR Network Summit

PIOC was invited to Puerto Rico, but the visit was postponed until Fall 2009.

**Training and Technical Assistance.** This included a range of activities.

An Annual Conference of AT Reuse Grantees was held at Paraquod in St. Louis in August, 2008, with many thanks to Carla Walker, Kerri Morgan and Lindsey Bean for coordinating. It included excellent presentations by many model demonstration grantees on different topics, as well as opportunities to share and bond. Attendees visited the Paraquod Repair Shop and the tiled sanitization room.

The STAR Network Southeastern Reuse Conference, a collaboration of NATTAP and PIOC, was held in Atlanta. A summary of the conference was presented at the NATTAP Annual Conference in Philadelphia.

Joy Kniskern and Carolyn Phillips co-authored a paper on AT Reuse that was published in the *Assistive Technology Outcomes & Benefits Journal* (ATOB Fall 2008).

The Pass It on Center presented a Reuse Strand at ATIA Orlando (January 2009) consisting of 12 sessions, and it offered two more in the NATTAP strand. These presentations are now loaded to the Knowledge Base with attribution to ATIA and the presenters.

## Review of Current Initiatives

### **PIOC Website and Knowledge Base**

**Liz Persaud, Sharon Meek & Trish Redmon**

Sharon Meek and Liz Persaud reviewed the results of the usability studies of the PIOC website and the Knowledge Base, and the changes that will be implemented to address what was learned. Some of those enhancements have been made and others are pending. One of the usability studies specifically addressed accessibility and several changes are based on those results. The group discussed the desirability of making PowerPoint presentations more accessible.

Liz has updated the AT programs linked to the map on the home page.

The prototype Knowledge Base has been enhanced for a second release (scheduled for the end of May) based on the results of extensive usability studies conducted in November and December, and interviews done in January 2009. The new release features a redesigned home page with icons for modules, a dynamically-updated section featuring new content additions, and an area to assist programs in the development of appropriate policies and procedures. A second level of content organization was added within the modules to assist users in locating categories of interest.

### **Quality Indicators for AT Reuse**

**Lindsey Bean & Trish Redmon**

The status of the QIAT-R was reviewed with the Year Three initiatives. The indicators are in draft stage and need extensive review and re-writing for appropriateness, completeness and usability. Trish explained that editing changes were made to accommodate the change from the fixed table to the more flexible format, and that some feedback had been taken into account. Nancy Meidenbauer's suggestion that the indicators be reorganized into Core and Optional groupings will be addressed in a later draft after a definitive set of indicators has been constructed. This version does not include indicators for statewide AT reuse programs.

The QIAT-R is projected to be completed by September. The NTF asked for additional time to review the draft and the deadline was extended to May 31.

Once defined, the indicators will be used to create an Online Program Assessment Tool. The user of this tool will respond to a series of questions or checklists to describe the existing status of the program. The responses will be used to evaluate the

relative strength or weakness of the program by category. It will not generate numerical scores or ratings, but an indication of strength on a scale. In addition to the category result, it will identify reference material from the Knowledge Base to support actions that are needed to strengthen the program.

Sharon Meek presented a hard-wired prototype of the proposed Online Program Assessment Tool. The intent was merely to demonstrate the ease of use, and how it will be constructed with branching options depending on the nature of the AT reuse program.

### **National Equipment Exchange Depot (N.E.E.D. AT)**

**Sharon Meek**

The objective of this project is to create a unified Web site for device exchange programs. This site would aggregate the existing exchange listings. It is not possible to "crawl" existing sites, so each program that agrees to participate will write a script permitting their listings to be grabbed and loaded. This site also would permit an individual to load a listing directly to the site. This is primarily an application of technology requiring a minimum of human intervention.

In the future, the aggregated listings might be used to support emergency response. Perhaps some portion of this site could be used to spotlight an area in need during a natural disaster. It could also be used to support alliances with manufacturers and suppliers. Deborah raised the issue of the future of N.E.E.D. AT if the PIOC ceases to exist at the end of this project.

### **Third-Party Collaborations**

**Sara Sack**

Sara provided an overview of who pays for AT (based on Carlson and Erlich study), with 37 percent being self-funded, Medicare leading the list of third-party payers at 18 percent, followed by private insurers (16 percent), Medicaid (five percent), the Veteran's Administration (five percent), and Vocational Rehabilitation (two percent).

She reported an increasing interest in collaboration with third-party payers. Some common questions were: How could this fit within our agency? What are the contractual obligations? What are some of the legal issues? PIOC received requests for information from Medicaid managers, AT Directors and a State Assistant Attorney General. Requests came from Vermont, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Colorado, Idaho, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and Oklahoma, and covered all aspects of program development.

Materials and support were provided in various formats in response to inquiries: PowerPoint presentations describing various models and considerations regarding selecting a model, PowerPoint presentations on program operation, contracts, regulations, equipment refurbishment lists, program operation manual, program reports and data analysis, prior authorization standards, budgets, sanitization training materials, electronic database and database manuals, and real-time database training.

The tone of inquiries shifted as the economy softened. There is a need for evidence that reuse can be cost-beneficial. Programs have many questions about how to approach third-party payers about reuse and how to find a third-party collaborator.

The Kansas reuse program was identified in *Medicaid Transformation Process—Executive Summary—January 2009*, a report of the Kansas Health Policy Authority, as a best practices program that saved the state a significant amount of money (Chap. 4, p. 33). The Kansas program keeps an online inventory that is accessible to Medicaid case workers.

Another form of successful third-party collaboration in Kansas has been partnering with the Red Cross to combine AT equipment drives with blood drives. Kansas also is targeting short-term rehabilitation centers for equipment donations.

### **E-Waste**

**Jessica Brodey**

Jessica has drafted but not finalized a memorandum concerning E-waste. Twenty states now have E-waste laws, and AT reuse programs may be affected by those laws with regard to their end-of-life disposal practices. More information will be provided in the upcoming Webinar on E-waste.

### **Applicability of FDA to AT Reuse**

**Jessica Brodey**

Jessica is finalizing the memorandum explaining the applicability of the Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act to AT reuse. She has specified concerns for programs in Webinars for the Pass It On Center. She is attempting to include in the memo a list of common items that can be “safely used” without fear of violating the Act. She has asked a colleague who specializes in this area to review her draft document and the proposed list of items that would not be subject to prescription use. When he has completed his review, Rita Hostak will be asked to review the document from the perspective of the manufacturers. All agree that “remanufacturing” is an activity that poses liability issues and should be avoided by re-use programs, and that this advisory position should be noted in PIOC materials.

### **ATIA and Pass It On Center Initiatives**

**Caroline Van Howe**

Caroline reported that the reuse strand presented at the Orlando ATIA Conference was very strong. ATIA will be offering its first Chicago-based conference this fall. All PIOC affiliates will be offered discounts to that conference.

The call for papers for Orlando 2010 will be issued soon. One additional possibility is a special Pre-Conference on “How to Establish an AT Reuse Program”. These are typically eight hours. The program could include a panel of successful programs and a workshop on developing policies and procedures.

Another possibility to expand collaboration is a special issue of *AT Outcomes and Benefits* dedicated entirely to reuse issues. *ATOB* occasionally does such special issues. For example, one on autism is coming soon. This special issue will consist of five or six articles. Guidelines need to be prepared with suggested topics for a call for papers.

ATIA hosts the PIOC Webinars and would like to open them to a wider audience. One option is to start a public webinar series by repurposing some of the PIOC sessions.

An additional suggestion for strengthening the use of PIOC conferences and Webinars is to create online curriculum from the content to provide specific training for AT programs. These instructional modules could be used as personnel development tools, but would not purport to offer professional "certifications."

**National AT Reuse Conference, Sept. 15-17, 2009,  
Co-hosted by NATTAP and PIOC**

**Nancy Meidenbauer  
& Joy Kniskern**

Lisa Kosh announced that the National Assistive Technology Technical Assistance Partnership (NATTAP) and the PIOC will co-host a National Conference on AT reuse at the Omni Hotel in Atlanta in September.

**In-Depth Survey of AT Reuse Programs**

**Joy Kniskern, Jessica Brodey  
& Trish Redmon**

The Pass It On Center is working on *Shaping the Future of AT Reutilization: A Report of AT Reutilization Programs, Outcomes and Recommendations*. All AT reuse programs in the PIOC database were sent a survey earlier this year. In addition to the survey results, this report will draw on information from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) demonstration grant proposals, annual report data from the past three years, AT Act Program reporting to RSA, and in-depth interviews with selected AT reuse programs.

In addition to the brief surveys, Joy, Jessica and Trish will conduct in-depth telephone interviews with a selected number of programs (probably six to ten) in May and early June. The report will address AT reuse as a safe, appropriate and effective practice, and will promote the use of standardized definitions of AT reuse activities. It also will include stories from people and communities.

The information from written and oral surveys will be used to compile profiles of AT reuse programs for the September conference, to identify successful policies, practices and procedures, and to identify technical assistance and training needs.

The proposed audience for this report includes the RSA, the NTF, state AT programs, AT reuse grantees, legislators, manufacturers and suppliers. The schedule calls for a first draft to be complete by July 31. After input from NTF, RSA and AT reuse grantees (by August 15), a second draft will be completed by August 31, 2009.

## DAY 2

### Data Report on AT Reuse Programs

Deborah Buck

Deborah shared data that is not yet official from 55 reporting programs. She also noted that there are some pending issues in the RSA data center. Among other issues, they are trying to clarify the “under-insured or uninsured” data. The reported data may not include Wisconsin Easter Seals, Oklahoma Sooner Ambucs or Paraquad.

The data includes programs engaged in recycling, refurbishing, repair, exchange and device loans. Of the 55 programs reporting, 42 have device exchange programs and 40 engage in refurbishing, repair or recycling. The NISAT reporting definitions of these activities are not consistent with those being promulgated by PIOC, making it difficult to define the extent of reutilization activities. NISAT combines reassign/redistribute, refurbish and recycling. “Recycling” falls under the PIOC definition of “refurbishing.” Separate reuse reporting from the states would be helpful.

Rob Groenendaal added comments about the data issues at RSA, indicating that some of the issues make it impossible, at this moment, to report conclusively on the savings attributable to AT reuse. He expects those issues to be resolved soon.

Joy Kniskern shared data from Project MEND (based in San Antonio and serving communities in the Texas coastal bend region) that was not included in the aggregate reporting. It showed 1,243 clients served with durable medical equipment and fitted mobility devices for a total savings of \$724,888. Paraquad has similar numbers.

One of the major challenges is the valuation of used devices. There is no AT reference comparable to the automotive “Blue Book”, so most programs start with the manufacturer’s suggested list price (MSRP) for the new device to compute the cost savings from reuse. Unfortunately, beyond that point, the valuation methods are not consistent. Some states reduce the MSRP by ten percent; others by more. Kansas reduces by 20 percent because of Medicaid.

#### Recommendations:

1. Work toward consistency of definitions between NISAT and PIOC. (Deborah, Rob)
2. Develop tracking by category. (Deborah with Chris Brand and Joanne Willis)
3. Develop a report with reuse data for the September conference. (Joy, Jessica, Trish)
4. Attempt to identify methods of measuring the environmental impact of reuse. (Trish)

## Initiatives for Year Four and Beyond

The Pass It On Center solicited input from National Task Force members on priorities for Year Four and how to address the recommendations from Day One. After review and discussion, **the NTF concurred that the three primary goals for Year Four should be:**

1. Expansion of the Knowledge Base to include basic information in all areas
2. Completion of the Quality Indicators for AT reuse (QIAT-R)
3. Work to support the sustainability of AT reuse programs (i.e., the initiatives identified in the discussion below)

## Primary Goal 1: PIOC Web Site and Knowledge Base Enhancements

Appropriate content must be identified or developed to complete the categories of information identified as useful for AT reuse programs. This requires identifying successful practices and finding models or examples.

After the Day One review of progress, the Task Force suggested a number of changes and enhancements for the PIOC home page and the Knowledge Base.

### Recommendations:

1. A professional panel should review the KB content. (Chris. Sara, Lee Learson)
2. Develop a Presenter's Guide to assist speakers in making presentations (that will be loaded to the site) more accessible. (Sharon Meek will be responsible for this. Trish and Liz will assist.)
2. Add the following content to the Knowledge Base as it becomes available. (TR)
  - Warehouse layouts for various types of equipment storage
  - Reports from AT summits highlighting successful practices
  - Project plans and specifications for a tiled sanitization room
3. Expand the disclaimer language to include "This does not constitute legal advice. You should check your state and local laws." The problem of adding a disclaimer to contributed PDF documents should be examined. (Trish)
4. Edit articles to include references to standard industry practices. (Trish)
5. Include mechanisms for feedback, including comments and ratings, on articles. (Sharon)
6. Add Program Profiles to describe different types of successful programs. (TR)
7. Consider use of Browse Aloud and/or gHBraille to improve accessibility. (Sharon)
8. Consider loading documents in Word as well as PDF. (Trish, with Sharon)
9. Have the site reviewed by the Dept. of Education for Section 508 compliance.
10. Include models/outlines for Policies and Procedures Manuals. (Jessica)

## Primary Goal 2: Quality Indicators (QIAT-R)

The status of this project was reviewed on Day One. Much work must be done to complete a set of appropriate quality indicators and to develop the online tool. The draft will be loaded to the Internet to facilitate group review and comment.

### Recommendations:

1. Add tags to define and explain terms used in the QIAT-R document. (Trish)
2. Load the next draft to Google Documents to facilitate group review, and allow until the end of May for this. (Liz)
3. Review the language of the indicators and rewrite where needed. (Lindsey Bean, Kerri Morgan, Brian Bard, Rik Opstelten and Jeremy Buzzell)
3. Identify people with specific areas of interest to review categories of indicators.
4. Add more outcomes indicators.
5. Add indicators for statewide AT programs. (Lindsey, Joy, Trish)
6. Repackage into core and branching options after all indicators are written. (TR)
6. Complete development of the Online Program Assessment Tool after the indicators are finalized. (Sharon)

### Primary Goal 3: Sustainability Initiatives

It is still imperative to address the roles of all parties (PIOC, OSERS, NATTAP, NISAT, ATAP, ATIA as well as Congress and the programs) in the sustainability of AT reuse programs. This will include the following steps:

- Complete the program surveys and compile the results.
- Determine AT reuse outcome measures that can be collected and analyzed to understand the benefits of these programs to consumers and others.
- Explore Homeland Security options related to Emergency Preparedness.
- Explore possible stimulus funding and green initiatives.
- Explore the use of social media for marketing and engaging stakeholders.
- Capture "best practices" in the Knowledge Base.
- Analyze ways to measure return on investment, including a cost-benefit analysis of third-party payer relationships. (See study group participant list under "Third-Party Payers" below.)

### In-Depth Survey of AT Reuse Programs

The Pass It On Center reported Day One on *Shaping the Future of AT Reutilization: A Report of AT Reutilization Programs, Outcomes and Recommendations* and the tasks remaining for its completion for the September conference. Joy is interested in recommendations for the report, suggested strategies for disseminating the report, and NTF members who would like to participate in the study by providing additional information about their program.

### Training and Technical Assistance

**Webinars.** Four additional Webinars are scheduled for this fiscal year: Emergency Preparedness (May 19), Sanitizing Computers and Other Digital Devices (June 23), Sustainability (July 28) and Inventory and Tracking (Aug. 25).

#### Recommendations:

1. Add E-Waste and Third-Party Payers as topics for October and November.
2. Develop a Presenter's Guide to ensure accessibility of PowerPoint presentations used in Webinars and loaded to the web site. (Referenced earlier in document.)

**ATIA – PIOC Partnership.** The Pass It on Center will repeat the reuse strand that was developed for the Orlando conference at the Chicago conference this fall. It was recommended that PIOC develop online course modules using Webinar and Knowledge Base content for training. Trish Redmon will work with PIOC to design these training modules.

#### Recommendations:

1. PIOC: Prepare an ATIA Orlando 2010 Pre-Conference on "How to Establish an AT Reuse Program". (Planning: Trish, Jessica)
2. Outline the guidelines and desired content and prepare a Call for Papers for a special issue of *ATOB* on AT Reuse. (Joy, Trish)
3. ATIA and PIOC: Begin a series of public webinars on AT reuse.
4. PIOC: Create online AT reuse program coursework from Webinar and KB content. (Trish)

**AT Reuse Summits.** PIOC will participate in a reuse summit in Puerto Rico this fall. Other summits will be scheduled as requested and if feasible.

### **Third-Party Payers**

This work will escalate as the group reviews the information gathered on Medicaid and other agencies involved in reutilization efforts. Sara Sack reported Day One that matching interested AT reuse programs and interested third-party payers is a frequent request. There is a lot of interest in exploring relationships, but both sides need more information and better ways of communicating. Tools need to be developed, as she reported on Day One. Programs need to talk to different payers in different ways: Medicare, Medicaid, the Veterans Administration, and other agencies or private payers.

Medicaid may be the area of highest interest, especially in light of the fiscal instability of states now. Sara gets many calls for information. The challenge is to get information on paper to share with other programs.

Rhonda Perling suggested that private insurers also may have interest in pursuing AT reuse, but that a live inventory of available devices should be accessible to case managers to demonstrate the viability of such a partnership. She noted that the issue is not for the insurer to avoid payment, but to minimize the cost to the users, and to extend their lifetime coverage instead of using up benefits.

Vendor relationships are critical in these collaborations. Wheesie Walker, a Georgia resident and supplier, is currently President of NRRTS. Perhaps she should be recruited for the National Task Force, and some of these ideas discussed with her.

#### Recommendations:

1. Develop operational guidelines specific to third-party payers. (Sara Sack)
2. Develop materials and provide support for approaching third-party payers. (Sara)
3. Develop a template for "How to Find Third Party Collaborators for Reutilization Efforts in Your State." (Sara)
4. Perform a cost-benefit analysis of third-party payer arrangements. This is included in work of the Return-on-Investment Study Group. (Lee Learson will lead this study group, with Deborah Buck, Sara Sack, Caroline Van Howe, Joy Kniskern, Chris Brand, Jessica Brodey and Trish Redmon participating. Cathy Valdez of Project MEND will be invited to join.)
5. Replicate the Italian study on reuse shared by Caroline Van Howe of ATIA. (Dr. Sack and the University of Kansas)
6. Work with RSA and ATAP to determine current level of involvement of third-party payers in reuse efforts.
7. Share data and reach out to National Governors Association and Health and Human Services.
8. Develop a campaign targeting private insurance and short-term rehabilitation centers.
9. Address Emergency Management and cost-reimbursement strategies.
10. Investigate the use of the Olmstead Act to support reutilization efforts. Georgia has used this as a stop-gap measure while the client waits to qualify. (Chris has used this.)

## **Emergency Preparedness and Response**

This initiative focuses on recommendations for proper deployment of reutilized AT matched to the specific needs of consumers affected by emergencies. This issue was highlighted in two sessions at the Southeastern Regional AT Reuse Conference, at ATIA in Orlando in January, and in a report at the NATTAP 2009 Annual Meeting. On May 19, the PIOC will present a Webinar featuring two experts in the field, Elliot Har-kavy, a consultant specializing in emergency response issues, and George Heake of Temple University who has experience with emergency response teams.

In addition to training, PIOC will consider the potential use of the N.E.E.D. AT Web site to locate available AT, the creation of regional depots ready to deploy AT, and encouraging AT reuse programs to complete memoranda of agreement with appropriate agencies and associations to facilitate timely response.

Elliot will participate in an upcoming PIOC Webinar. He addressed potential roles for AT reuse in disasters, but emphasized the need for advance preparation. He recommended that programs get involved with response by building relationships at the local level, especially with the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. Existing responders need to know that the program can be counted on to provide support. It is also important for staffers to take the basic FEMA courses online and focus on networking and outreach.

Mechanisms exist to deal with the issues of medical licensure reciprocity and mal-practice in emergencies. Some organizations working in this area are the Medical Reserve Corps and the Emergency Medical Assistance Compact (which has been ratified by all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands.)

PIOC is developing a collaborative agreement with a Temple University group that has voluntarily responded to significant natural disasters in order to address the AT reuse needs of those affected by such events. A national stakeholders meeting of key individuals interested in the AT reuse preparation and response will be held in Washington in December.

Lindsey Bean, the PIOC lead person on Emergency Response, indicated that some documents, including guidelines and a sample Memorandum of Agreement, have been contributed to the Knowledge Base by the Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network.

### ***Recommendations:***

1. Local programs should collaborate with local response organizations, especially the Red Cross and Salvation Army.
2. Program staffers should take the basic FEMA courses online.
3. Programs should execute Memoranda of Agreement for working with local responders.

## **National Equipment Exchange Depot (N.E.E.D. AT)**

This proposed unified web site could play a vital role in future disaster response. However, the issue was raised of the future of N.E.E.D. AT if the PIOC ceases to exist at the end of this project.

Recommendations:

1. Address the issue of PIOC sustainability: What happens to the web site when this project ends?
2. Explore potential sources of funding or partnerships to support N.E.E.D. AT.
3. Explore potential participation of manufacturers.

## **Manufacturer and Supplier Relationships**

This initiative should communicate the interests of the Pass It On Center and explore the possible interests of suppliers and manufacturers in developing quality standards for refurbishment.

A second initiative that could start by the middle of Year Four would be potential involvement of manufacturers with N.E.E.D. AT. This model might be akin to a marriage of the National Cristina Foundation and TechSoup for reused DME/AT. In the Cristina Foundation model, the equipment goes directly from manufacturer to non-profit. Is this a potential model for a one-stop connection for manufacturers and suppliers to move demo devices? Could PIOC establish a central point of contact between manufacturers and reuse programs? Another possibility is the expansion of N.E.E.D. AT to manufacturers and suppliers. The group recommended exploring these ideas more fully and with caution. Many AT reuse programs already have relationships with manufacturers and suppliers that they rely upon, and care must be taken not to damage those relationships.

Recommendation:

Explore potential for DME program between manufacturers and reuse programs modeled on computer reuse program operated by National Cristina Foundation.

## **Other Partnerships and Collaboration**

Many of the proposed collaborative initiatives were discussed in previous sections of the report, including:

### **ATIA – PIOC**

- Publish ATOB Special Issue on AT reuse.
- PIOC create ATIA Pre-conference for Orlando 2010 on “How to Set Up an AT Reuse Program”.

### **PIOC – Georgia Tech School of Architecture**

- Attempt to initiate use of student projects to create facility design and layouts. (Robert Todd)

### **Reuse Programs – American Red Cross**

- Following the successful model of Kansas, consider joint equipment donation and blood drive events.

## **Alternative Communication Methods to Engage Stakeholders**

The use of social media was discussed at the conference. Attendees were urged to explore the potential for using blogging, Twitter, Facebook, My Space and other new media to engage stakeholders. *Groundswell*, a book by Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff based on analysis from Forrester Research, was recommended by both Joy Kniskern and Caroline Van Howe.