

**FINAL Minutes of December 10, 2009**

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Donna Bouteiller; Jennifer Carroll, Chairperson; Carlos Colon; Jack Frost; Tom Kalal; Sheila Mulvey; Peter H. O'Meara, Ex-Officio; Dr. John Pelegano, Secretary; Patrick Vingo; Ted Walen.

Absent: Jim Heffernan, Vice Chairperson; Gregory Kelly.

DDS STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Kathryn du Pree, Deputy Commissioner; Christine Pollio, Legislative & Executive Affairs; Sarah Kasacek, Director of Investigations; Ed Mambruno, Ombudsperson; Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison.

GUEST: Robin Wood

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm. Jennifer Carroll introduced the newest member who is Donna Bouteiller. All members introduced themselves as well.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Diane Martin and Jean Berg attended to discuss current issues with Lighthouse's transitional program. The program at North Washington is being closed by Lighthouse due to funding shortages. Ms. Berg discussed how difficult this will be for her family. She asked the Council on Developmental Services to consider funding these young women. Ms. Martin spoke about her daughter's positive experience and growth since participating in the Lighthouse program. Families are frustrated because of the short notice of the program closing and the lack of follow-up communication from Lighthouse. Jennifer Carroll extended her concern for the families' current situation. She will still plan to visit the Niantic program and extended an invitation for other members to join her.

NOVEMBER MINUTES:

Jack Frost made minor corrections to the November minutes. His motion to accept the minutes as corrected was seconded by Tom Kalal and approved by the Council.

OMBUDSPERSON REPORT:

Ed Mambruno summarized his monthly activities. He will be visiting the regional centers. He feels his initiative to visit nursing homes is completed and is planning to undertake new activities with other consumer groups.

Issues brought to his attention this month included reimbursement to families for visits to children who are placed out-of-state and questions about durable medical equipment. Sheila Mulvey asked about reimbursement for equipment under the HCBS waiver but this item is not covered.

EMPLOYMENT:

Robin Wood, Director of Employment Support Services, showed the Council the Employment Idol video, which highlights the work of six individuals who have intellectual disabilities. She then reviewed other employment related initiatives. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) received \$25,000 from Connect Ability to produce the Employment Idol video, develop an IP Buddy Program and develop employment related materials. Recently, this was increased by \$10,000, which we will use to send the Employment Idol video and other materials to employers, libraries and Chambers of Commerce. More federal funding will be available in 2010. Ms. Wood has issued an RFP for four projects to promote employment goals including training, expansion of the IP Buddy Program, technical assistance and sharing benefit information.

Robin explained the premise of Connect-Ability, which focuses on improving employment outcomes and opportunities for people with disabilities. The Council was interested in the Walgreens project and whether it can be replicated. Lowe's is one business showing interest in the Walgreen model. Many more companies are now hiring employees with disabilities and finding it to be a good business decision. Stimulus money has been available to promote this employment goal.

Connecticut DDS is a member of the Supported Employment Leadership Network (SELN). SELN is working with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to update the waiver definitions of employment support services. SELN involved DDS in a national project for job development training, assisting 14 providers in Connecticut. Other training opportunities have been offered to case managers, families and providers.

Another project is coordinated by Rutgers University, which includes business and humans service agencies from Connecticut and other states focused on universal design within employment settings. DDS has an Employment Advisory Committee including consumers, families and providers, which helped sponsor a mentoring day last fall. They are linked with APSE, a national organization providing employment training.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Christine Pollio Cooney provided an update on legislative activity including the special session scheduled for December 15, 2009 on the deficit mitigation plan. A public hearing was convened December 9, 2009 to hear public comment about the Governor's rescission and deficit mitigation plan. The legislature may or may not take action on the Deficit Mitigation Plan on the 15th. DDS has submitted its non budgetary legislative proposals to the Office of Policy and Management and the Governor's office and is awaiting final approvals.

Rod O'Connor discussed regulatory activity. The Regulations Review Committee approved the Medication Administration regulations, which are posted on the website. Regulatory changes to Birth to Three regulations are under review related to parent fees. Implementation of the Birth to Three changes is planned for January 2010 pursuant to legislation. The next set of regulations to be revised is the Regulations Concerning Licensing of Community Living Arrangements (CLA) and Community Companion Homes (a.k.a. Community Training Homes (CTH) and Regulations Concerning Individual Home Supports. Dr. Pelegano asked about changes to the Birth to Three regulations which include a 60% increase in parent fees and a discontinuation of free service for the first two months.

The Commission on Enhancing Agency Outcomes (CEAO) is charged with identifying statewide savings based on efficiency improvements and organizational changes to save \$3 million in FY 10

and \$50 million in FY 11. There is a public hearing on December 14, 2009 on the Commission's list of preliminary areas of focus.

The Commissioner testified on November 8th at the deficiency hearing. Testimony was emailed to members and is available online.

The January Council meeting is at HARC starting with a tour at 6:00 PM. Directions were included in members' packets. The schedule for the meetings in 2010 has been finalized and distributed.

The Rate Study Committee has not started meeting. DDS has made its appointments and awaits the scheduling of the first meeting by the Co-Chairpersons (to be appointed by the Speaker of the House and Senate President).

Ms. Pollio Cooney shared the draft of the respectful language policy and asked for input from Council members. Carlos Colon will share with other self advocates and Ms. Pollio Cooney will join the SAC meeting in January.

Ms. Pollio Cooney shared information on dental coverage from Izabella Pulvermacher who presented to the Council in November. The governor's deficit mitigation plan recommends cutting Medicaid coverage for non-emergency dental care. This requires approval by the legislature.

COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE:

Peter O'Meara discussed the budget status and adjustment to the changing revenue projections, which increases the amount of the deficit. The budget has steadily declined since the summer of 2008 and has not yet stabilized. The department's growth over the past several years provides some financial cushion. DDS has continued to be flexible in responding to changing need. To date, the majority of the reductions have been absorbed on the public side. DDS has reduced its public expenditures by \$35 million since early FY10. Because of new development, the private sector funding has increased. To date, DDS has not reduced provider contracts, but with the recent proposed rescissions, this will no longer be possible. The department's quality indicators demonstrate that the level of quality in the private sector is being maintained.

The newest rescissions total \$7.7 million in the private sector. Approximately 50% of this will be addressed by closing program admission, delaying the initiation of new services and recouping money from underutilization of authorized services. To achieve a cut of \$3.6 million in the day services account, the department is proposing to implement an attendance based reimbursement system. DDS is in the process of implementing all of these rescissions.

DDS also has \$21 million in deficiencies of which \$9 million is attributed to Birth to Three.

DDS and all other state agencies were directed to submit budget options for FY 11 to reduce expenditures by 5%. For DDS, this is over \$50 million. DDS has proposed continued public sector consolidation, overtime reductions, wage and benefit changes and private sector rate changes. The submission of budget reduction options is only a first step in a lengthy and detailed budget adjustment process.

Commissioner O'Meara reflected on comments made at the public hearing regarding privatization of all public services. There are oversight and coordination functions that are appropriately done by

DDS. Services are provided by unionized staff that cannot lose their employment as the result of privatization.

Sheila Mulvey asked about the move of the West region office to the Rowland Office Center, which will result in a cost savings.

A discussion ensued about the impact of the rescissions. Kathryn du Pree summarized the impact on forensic services, VSP, autism and day services.

Tom Kalal discussed the importance of a creative program like the Lighthouse Transitional Academy, which combined various funding sources. Commissioner O'Meara indicated that the current program is funded mainly by the Local Education Authority (LEA) and is not a DDS licensed program. The department will continue to explore how to address the needs presented by these young women, but cautioned that the current budget limits the department's options.

OLD BUSINESS:

Jennifer Carroll proposed holding meetings with Regional Advisory Council chairs to begin the Council's outreach efforts and to meet the requirement in the Council bylaws. Ms. Mulvey suggested they be invited to a DDS Council meeting possibly when the Self Advocate Coordinators present in March. Other suggestions were made to expand the Council's goal to educate families. Ms. Carroll suggested inviting the Regional Advisory Council chairs to the March DDS Council meeting to discuss initiatives and priorities. Rod O'Connor will work on securing a larger room for the March meeting to accommodate invited guests and any public participation.

Ms. Carroll discussed possible dates to visit the Lighthouse program. She will email two dates to members and will choose the one with the majority of votes.

The Nominations Committee included Tom Kalal, Jack Frost and Ted Walen. The Committee unanimously agreed to nominate Ms. Carroll as Chairperson, Jim Heffernan as Vice Chairperson and John Pelegano as Secretary for 2010.

A motion was made by Mr. Frost and seconded by Mr. Kalal to accept the proposed slate of officers. There were no nominations from the floor. The group unanimously voted in the proposed slate of officers.

Ms. Carroll thanked the Council members for their faith in her leadership and officially closed the meeting at 9:30 PM after a motion by Mr. Frost, seconded by Mr. Kalal.