



Final Minutes of February 11, 2010

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Donna Bouteiller; Jennifer Carroll, Chairperson; Carlos Colon; Jack Frost; Jim Heffernan, Vice-Chair; Tom Kalal; Gregory Kelly; Peter O'Meara; John Pelegano, Secretary; Patrick Vingo.

Absent: Sheila Mulvey, Ted Walen.

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

GUESTS: Kathy Reddington, DDS; Patrick Johnson, CIB.

CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS:

Jennifer Carroll informed the council that Ted Walen will be resigning from the Council due to health concerns. On behalf of the Council members, Ms. Carroll thanked him for his many years of dedicated service to the Council and the consumers and families served by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

Patrick Johnson, President of CIB, spoke regarding the impact of the budget on the private sector. There is concern that with the flat funding for several years and the potential for reductions in funding that human service will be negatively impacted. He urged Council members to preserve resources and advocate for the needs of the private sector to maintain services and quality.

Jennifer Carroll thanked Mr. Johnson for his comments and commitment.

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

One change in wording was recommended and accepted after a motion by Jim Heffernan, seconded by John Pelegano to accept the January minutes with this revision.

OMBUDSPERSON REPORT:

Ed Mambruno gave an update on a resident's status, who is in a nursing home. He is following up to make sure recommendations prescribed by the physician are implemented.

Tom Kalal asked a question about one of Mr. Mambruno's updates on a family issue, which Mr. Mambruno clarified.

AUTISM DIVISION:

Kathy Reddington joined the Council to present the adult program for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). There are 60 participants in New Haven and Hartford. Ms. Reddington shared a recent film produced by UCONN for DDS highlighting the lives of four participants and the changes they've experienced through the autism pilot program.

Gregory Kelly asked a question about Outreach. Ms. Reddington discussed her work with community agencies and schools. Ms. Reddington explained the department's development of three HCBS waivers to serve children and adults, which will be operated jointly by DDS and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The goal is to serve 250 – 300 individuals over three years. John Pelegano asked about medical and clinical support. Ms. Reddington explained the rise of community resources and practitioners' expertise. He expressed concern about ongoing treatment after a diagnosis is made. In better economic times, Dr. Pelegano would recommend the state fund clinics. Jim Heffernan was interested in services for children with autism that will be provided when the waivers are in place.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Rod O'Connor provided an update reminding the Council this is a short session. There appear to be fewer bills and they primarily address budget and revenue issues. The Public Health Committee has combined our separate bill proposals into one merged bill. The DDS bill on sexual assault remains under consideration by the Judiciary Committee. The Human Services Committee raised a study bill about comparative costs between the public and private sectors group homes. This bill will be watched as amendments may be proposed. Jack Frost asked if there might be amendments added to the DDS unified bill. Mr. O'Connor thought it is possible.

Another bill has been proposed regarding victims of sexual assault with intellectual disabilities, which has been raised in the Judiciary Committee for the Chief State's Attorney. Mr. O'Connor informed the Council that most of the bill concepts being raised and none of the DDS bills have been given numbers yet. Mr. O'Connor shared a written summary of the bills. They will not be on the CGA website until the DDS bills get a number.

Kathy Reddington and Mr. O'Connor met with Senator Looney's staff regarding autism and employment. Senator Looney and his staff had toured the Walgreen's facility and were impressed by the employment model. The Senator is considering tax incentives for employers who hire persons with disabilities.

COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE:

Peter O'Meara discussed the Governor's mid-term adjustment proposal. There remains a \$500 million deficit for FY 10. We anticipate another deficit mitigation plan from the Governor. Her FY 11 proposal allows us to continue the core services. Hiring is constrained and reductions in personal expenditures are expected. The department continues to consolidate wherever possible due to the excellent teamwork by staff. DDS will continue to reduce overtime costs and consolidate further at STS. Control on other expenses will continue.

The FY 11 proposal includes new funding for school graduates and age-outs. Day services continue to be reduced, which the department is managing through attendance based reimbursement. The FY 10 Birth to Three deficit is funded in FY 11. The Voluntary Services Program (VSP) account is being reduced given the aging-out of some participants. There is currently no money for expanding VSP.

DDS presents to the Appropriations Committee on February 18, 2010 to address the Results Based Accountability (RBA) for the VSP and for the Commissioner to testify on the impact of the proposed budget. A public hearing on the budget's impact on DDS starts at 6:00 PM.

Tom Kalal asked about the attendance based reimbursement system and its impact on providers. Peter explained that the 90% factor allows individuals to be absent up to 35 days per year before the provider loses any money. Most other states have higher attendance requirements. Medicaid reimbursement can only be sought for services actually provided. We implemented the attendance based reimbursement system on February 1st due to a rescission of \$3.7 million in the day services account. Commissioner O'Meara explained that the rate study legislative group is directed to review this and the rate transition plan developed by the department over the past several years. The majority of the reductions have been to public services, which total \$35 million, approximately 11% of the public budget.

The maintenance of effort for DDS from the Governor's budget is significant in light of the economy and compared to expenses in other states.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Tom Kalal asked about a recent article by Senator Meyer speaking about the high cost of Southbury Training School (STS). Peter O'Meara explained the basis of the cost differential between public ICFs MR, CLAs and private residential settings. The Council may schedule a meeting at STS in the future.

Jennifer Carroll noted the strong advocacy of previous Council members including Ted Walen who set a wonderful example of the role of the Council.

Tom Kalal motioned to adjourn, seconded by Jack Frost. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.