



State of Connecticut Department of Developmental Services



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Acting Commissioner

Council on Developmental Services

Minutes of Thursday March 16, 2017

Location: Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Central Office, Conference Room A

In attendance: Adrienne Benjamin, Chair; Lisa Weisinger-Roland, (via phone) Vice Chair; Jamie Lazaroff, Secretary; Jennifer Carroll; Rick Lenz; Diana Mennone; Arlene Reith; Patti Silva, (via phone); Dr. Neil Stein, (via phone); Deborah Ullman; Kevin Zingler, (via phone)

Absent: Karen Hlavac

Staff: Margaret Castonguay, Executive Secretary; Ed Mambruno, Ombudsman (via phone); Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison; Jordan Scheff, Acting Commissioner

Introductions

Chair, Adrienne Benjamin, called the meeting to order at 4:10 p.m.

Public Participation

Jack Frost, Rick Rothstein, Stan Soby

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the February meeting were approved.

Topics for Discussion

Ed Mambruno, Ombudsman

Mr. Mambruno shared his monthly report with the Council. Last month, he received many inquiries regarding guardianship. Most of the inquiries were for placements, information on guardianship rights, what guardianship means, as well as miscellaneous guardian related questions.

Mr. Mambruno met with an individual we support and his staff. The meeting was informational, as the person and his staff member spoke about difficulties they were having with the regional staff in obtaining certain services. Mr. Mambruno listened and suggested following the guidelines the region had in place.

Mr. Mambruno told the Council about his new role as the DDS Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator. He explained to the Council how the position was created and the training he received from Kathy Gips, an ADA national trainer, which will be instrumental in the ADA training he will be doing for DDS and the private providers. Mr. Mambruno works with the legal department and other DDS staff in coordinating meeting the necessary guidelines given by the Department of Justice (DOJ). He also met with an interpreter from the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) who is willing to help with information concerning the deaf and hard of hearing. The tasks given to complete by the (DOJ) are ahead of schedule.

Izabella Pulvermacher, DDS Dental Coordinator

Ms. Pulvermacher presented to the Council on oral health and dental services. Nine years ago Ms. Pulvermacher started her position as the first DDS Dental Coordinator. Her role is to make sure that all 19,000 DDS individuals have quality basic oral health care. Ms. Pulvermacher provides training on tooth brushing to anyone who requests the training, group homes, individuals, families, staff, etc. She discovered if basic tooth brushing improved and became a habit, then the overall health of the person improved. Information can be found on the DDS web site under the Advocates Corner. Ms. Pulvermacher goes to the dentist with individuals and works with the dental offices, as a team, getting to know the office and supporting the needs of the individuals we support. DDS has four clinics, one at Southbury Training School (STS), Ella Grasso, Lower Fairfield and one in Norwich. They do not take Medicaid but will treat any DDS individual. Each clinic sees about 700 to 800 people a year who are not covered by Medicaid.

Commissioner Scheff explained to the Council how delicate the intellectual disability population can be with health related issues and dental concerns. The DDS dental clinics are particularly specialized and skilled in addressing the needs of our population. We would not be able, through Medicaid and private dental facilities, to receive the level of care to address the needs of our population, as is done in our DDS dental clinics. Ms. Pulvermacher explained to the council how important training is for the professionals who service the dental needs of the individuals we support. She is involved in the on how to work with individuals with special needs, as this is basis of successful ongoing quality dental care. Council person, Jennifer Carroll, told the Council about the hard work of Council person, Karen Hlavac, and others who worked so diligently to get dental care and coordinate with Izabella for services. Jennifer thanked her and everyone who worked so hard to get the quality dental services DDS individuals have today. She also spoke about anticipated hurdles of private providers leaving the program. Connecticut chose to have dental on its Medicaid program. They are proposing to put a cap of \$1000 per individual, as now there are no caps. Because of this some of our private providers are leaving the program. Commissioner Scheff spoke to the Council about Medicaid as it relates to the Trump proposals. The reasoning behind the \$1000 cap has to do partly with some Medicaid fraud, not within the intellectual disability populations but other populations. The Commissioner said DDS would be monitoring the information.

Commissioner Jordan Scheff

The Commissioner updated the Council on having a busy month testifying before the legislature. The Commissioner commented that today was probably the most challenging of the testifying. It was not challenging in terms of providing the testimony itself, but in the follow-up questions before the Committee on Education, as it relates to a small number of individuals, whom we do not think DDS should be necessarily paying for and are. DDS does not have current plans to disrupt or change anyone's current services based on the Governor's recommended budget, but has set the tone that we are not going to be paying for individuals who may be covered by another agency and is otherwise responsible for paying through both federal and state law. When residential placement is sought because it will provide an educational benefit, it is incumbent upon the area LEA to pay for such placement. When there are other reasons you might seek residential placement, maybe there is a medical necessity, that can't be provided in the home, maybe there is a lack of failure to thrive, that has nothing to do with education. They could be thriving in education, but, failing at home, there are other reasons you might place someone that is not incumbent on the LEA and we have a number of individuals who are placed just for those reasons.

The Commissioner told the Council the Abuse Investigations Division of OPA will be moving to DDS. We will be hosting a welcoming party on Monday. Currently, DDS already investigates most of our own programs. At Southbury Training School (STS) and the regional centers, DPH has oversight of our investigatory process. There will be an informal transition oversight committee for the next six or eight months. The Commissioner wants our investigators to know if they feel the administration is trying to push back on something, there is a place where they can bring that information. There will be a system where people can call in and their information will be received. The Commissioner will testify before the Public Health Committee on the move.

The Commissioner spoke about Charting the Life Course curriculum. The Community of Practice (COP) materials were of a very strong interest by Dr. Terry Macy. The promotion of the COP will be part of the ongoing curriculum the Commissioner would like to see continue and grow at DDS with the guidance, dedicated hard work and perseverance of Robin Wood. Getting the core practice message out is a great way to help people look at planning in a way that is more meaningful to individuals with disabilities and less based on compliance with how we measure deficits and accommodate for them. For

those reasons, the Commissioner is particularly excited about our opportunities to promote Charting the Life Course curriculum, letting people lead more meaningful lives.

The Commissioner testified in front of the Public Health Committee on the Waiting List. There is an archived video on the testimony as well as documents which will be sent out. The Waiting List will be added to an upcoming agenda.

The Commissioner will send to the Council the January 2014 Final Settings Rule, Health & Humans Service Services correspondence from the Secretary and the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS). The Department of Justice (DOJ) and Center for Medicaid Services (CMS) took a look at where people live and what Medicaid should or shouldn't be investing in in terms of habilitative community bases services. Topic to be put on the Council agenda for a future meeting with invites to Peter Mason, Robin Wood and Siobhan Morgan.

Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison

Mr. O'Connor regularly sends legislative updates to the Council. There has been up to 3500 bills so far this session and they are still coming out. Mr. O'Connor advising the Council to keep track of the bills important to them for easy referencing. He outlined the fiscal note attachments. Mr. O'Connor explained to the Council what happens to a bill as it travels through committee, hearings and possible amendments. There is a deadline of April 27. The Commissioner commented on how helpful Mr. O'Connor and Christine Pollio Cooney are in guiding him and Mr. O'Connor getting him signed up for early testimony. The Commissioner spoke about Josie Torres, DDS Self-Advocate Coordinator (SAC), who testified on behalf of DDS on the Respectful and Person-First Language Bill, S.B. No. 796, and what a great job she did.

Ms. Benjamin updated the Council on The Alliance hosting the CT Nonprofit Alliance weeks at the Capitol with week I: March 13 -17, encouraging members to come and talk about DDS topics. Also, adding to next month's agenda, Sub-Committee update and Council visibility.

New Business:

Council meeting time change to 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. starting with the April 20th meeting

The Self Advocate Coordinators (SACS) to present at the April 20th meeting

The Regional Advisory Council's (RACS) coming to the May 18th meeting in the DDS Wallingford office

Council members spoke about forming a subcommittee on dental care

CMS Community Living Right Changes 2019, Peter Mason, Siobhan Morgan and Robin Wood to be invited

Waiting List

Robin Wood to be invited to present on the Community of Practice

Melissa Marshall, new DD Council director to be invited to present

Members of the ARC to be invited

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.