



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Acting Commissioner

Council on Developmental Services

Minutes of Thursday April 20, 2017

Location: Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Central Office, Third Floor Training Room

In attendance: Adrienne Benjamin, Chair; Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Vice Chair; Jamie Lazaroff, Secretary; Karen Hlavac, (via phone); Rick Lenz, (via phone); Diana Mennone; Arlene Reith; Patti Silva; Kevin Zingler, (via phone)

Absent: Jennifer Carroll; Dr. Neil Stein; Deborah Ullman

Staff: Margaret Castonguay, Executive Secretary; Christine Pollio Cooney, Legislative Liaison; Jordan A. Scheff, Acting Commissioner

Introductions

Chair, Adrienne Benjamin, called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

Public Participation

Faye Lenz, Stan Soby, Win Evarts

Approval of Minutes

Minutes for the March meeting were approved with edits

Topics for Discussion

PowerPoint presentation by DDS Self-Advocate Coordinators (SACs), Josie Torres, Genna Lewis and Jamie Louchen

The Self-Advocates took turns highlighting portions of their PowerPoint presentation, "**Fiscal Year 16' Report.**" **August 2016.** Emphasis was made on the 'We are People, Call Me by my Name' campaign launched in 2015. The campaign supports and recognizes "People First Language." The ***We are People –Call Me by My Name*** campaign is asking for everyone to be called by their given name. The SACs are hoping to eliminate several words; "client", "patient", "ward", "them", "handicapped", and the "R" word - "retarded". "Some of these terms have been around for a long time and old habits are hard to break," said Genna Lewis, South Region SAC. "We are asking everyone to remember to call people by their name and be respectful." The Coordinators also invited everyone to take the Disability Awareness Pledge which reaffirms a commitment to seeing the person and not the disability. The SACs are challenging each one of us to be the change that makes a difference. There have been over a thousand people who have taken the pledge. Josie Torres, Self-Advocate Coordinator, West Region SAC, testified in March before the Public Health Committee promoting the Governor's Bill SB No. 796, An Act Concerning The Use of Respectful and Person-First Language.

Take the Pledge

Disability Awareness/People First Language Pledge

I PLEDGE:

- To advocate and accept my responsibility to be respectful to the individuals I work with and for.
- To RESPECT and treat all individuals equally.
- To Call each person by their name and refer to them as “INDIVIDUALS/PEOPLE” and stop using the word “CLIENT”
- To Support self-advocacy and stand up for individuals’ human rights.
- To be an advocate for “No More R Word” in my work place and everywhere I go.
- To Assist and make sure that each person that I work with can make their own choices, be part of a community of their choice, and feel accepted to be themselves.
- I will use People First Language, which means seeing THE person NOT the disability, using words and terms that are easier for people to understand.
- To be an ambassador for Self Advocates, Speak up for People First Language, and Be the voice for change that makes peoples’ lives happen!
- To the best of my ability I solemnly swear to live by this pledge.

Commissioner Scheff told the Council about the national recognition Beth Aura Miller and other self-advocates received regarding the National Core Indicators (NCI) helping develop a tool that self-advocates use nationwide when conducting the NCIs.

Commissioner Jordan A. Scheff

Commissioner Scheff updated the Council stating the legislative session continues to be very busy with a lot of activity going on. The Governor released today that he has developed a contingency plan that includes additional layoffs and he will be holding a press conference the beginning of next week. Negotiations have not gone as well as the Governor or Secretary Barnes from the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) have anticipated, but, as expected. So, at this time, we are seeing all sorts of discussion on several budget ideas.

Over the last month, there has been stability at DDS. The Commissioner did not have a conversions update, at this time, because of ongoing negotiations but will give an update as soon as information becomes available.

DDS is working on language for the Office of Protection & Advocacy (OPA) to stay at DDS. The Commissioner reached out to representatives from the ARC of Connecticut, the Council and a few other places to come together in checking-in on concerns over the move of investigators to DDS just to help and oversee some of the transition.

The Commissioner answered Council questions concerning the safety and protection of the individuals we support. OPA coming over to DDS does not change the way mandated reporting is currently being reported.

Christine Pollio Cooney Legislative Liaison

Ms. Pollio Cooney gave a legislative update. The Governor issued a press release on the creation of a State Workforce Reduction Contingency Plan in the event that it be needed, which will be shared with council members. Both chambers were in session on 4/19/17; some non-budgetary related bills are progressing. The Senate passed DDS's technical agency bill on 4/19/17; the bill still needs to pass the House of Representatives. The majority of focus right now is on the Appropriations budget which is scheduled to be distributed on Tuesday, April 25th at 9:00. DDS will share a copy with the Council on that day and then share information on a comparison as soon as staff have an opportunity to analyze. The Finance Committee is scheduled to meet later in the week to vote on a proposed revenue plan for the budget. Their deadline is April 30th. All the other committee deadlines have passed.

Bills may continue to be referred to the other committees if they have jurisdiction over the certain issue. There are approximately six weeks left in the legislative session to pass any legislation. Proposed bills with any kind of fiscal impact are going to be tied up until the budget is decided. DDS is tracking a large list of bills. Many proposals have died in committee; however they can always resurface in the form of an amendment. As an example, the bill which proposed to move the Office of Protection & Advocacy's Abuse Investigation Division to DDS died in committee, but will need to be amended to another vehicle. As bills are voted out of committee with a favorable report, they receive a file copy which essentially attaches an assessment by the non-partisan staff at the legislature that includes a fiscal note and general summary of the proposal. A bill's file copy includes the language that has been successfully voted out of the committee. We generally pay more attention to these bills as they have momentum.

SB 39 is in file copy. The bill would expand public DDS respite and in-home supports and allow funding increases for private providers. The bill has a fiscal note on it and we will be watching it in the context of budget discussions. Senate Bill 246 is the Waiting List bill. DDS is supportive of the bill conceptually, but is working on revised language to mirror the intent. HB 6155, is the deemed status bill which has to do with national accreditation for providers that could potentially take the place of licensure. It is a large bill and the substitute language that came out of the committee is very different than the original version which did not include DDS. Section 7 of the bill specifically talks about DDS establishing a process to allow national accreditation to take the place of the DDS licensure, if certain requirements that were set by the department were met. Concerns have been expressed regarding necessary assurances that certain health and safety standards would continue to be met if this proposal were to move forward.

Ms. Pollio Cooney described a siting issue in a town that issued a cease and desist order for a non-community Living Arrangement (CLA) residential program, by referencing the thousand foot rule which only applies to CLAs. Time was spent helping a provider and the individuals who live in that home to respond to the zoning board's cease and desist order.

Mr. O'Connor will be sending out the legislative update with the most recent list of bills we are following and their current status. Be on the lookout for information from the Appropriations Committee next week. Ms. Pollio Cooney answered questions on a few bills from members.

Council Chair Adrienne Benjamin

Council Sub-Committee update

Council Visibility

Opportunities for Advocacy

Ms. Benjamin spoke about the Council Sub-Committee disbanding and having their final meeting today. The Sub-Committee had many successes working with legislators, families and each other for a unified voice of support. Ms. Benjamin gave the Council a chronology of the Sub-Committee and Council's joint activities and minutes. Many Council members applauded the work of the Sub-Committee and appreciated the efforts of Ms. Benjamin in bringing the group together to advocate, educate and make sustainable changes for the ID community, as well as, becoming close working colleagues sharing a common agenda.

Ms. Benjamin reported to the Council, there is a great need for advocacy for the day programs and asking how could the Council be helpful. Ms. Benjamin, as a parent, sent a letter to the social worker at her daughter's school and also at her school district pleading with parents to call and reach out to legislators who have connections with the school system. Each school has several children who are going to be graduating and what are the next steps for them after graduation. Encouraging families to make phone calls to legislators and appropriate people would be helpful. The ARC of Connecticut web site has bulleted talking points which may be useful for narratives. One issue Ms. Benjamin has come across is Council awareness and how to bring the Council together as a collective group bringing forth their advocacy advising the Governor, legislators, the community and DDS. The Council agreed to share information about the I/DD Caucus such as a member list, meetings and notices.

New Business:

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
Peter Hughes and Kendres Lally to be invited
Council advocacy opportunities

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.