



State of Connecticut Council on Developmental Services

DDS

APPROVED Minutes of January 17, 2019 Meeting

Location: DDS Central Office, Hartford, CT

In attendance: Adrienne Benjamin; Pamela DonAroma; Joseph Duffy; Karen Hlavac, Secretary; Jamie Lazaroff; Rick Lenz; Diana Mennone; Dawn Oduor; Arlene Reith; Rick Rothstein; Dr. Neil Stein; Deborah Ullman; Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Chair; and Kevin Zingler, Vice Chair

Absent: Christine Hainsworth-Straus

DDS Staff: Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner; Krista Ostaszewski, Director of Legislative Affairs; Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison

Presenter: Katie Hanley, LMSW, Senior Director, Oak Hill Centers

Introductions

Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

Public Participation

Tony Loomis, Wellness Curriculum Coordinator, Wallingford Public Schools; Stan Soby, Oak Hill

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 20, 2018 Council meeting were approved. The motion for approval was made by Kevin Zingler and seconded by Karen Hlavac.

Topics of Discussion

- Rod O'Connor presented a review of how Robert's Rules of Order and the Council's bylaws inform how Council meetings are conducted.
- **#seventimes initiative Presentation and Discussion** - Adrienne Benjamin introduced Katie Hanley from Oak Hill Centers. Ms. Hanley presented on [Knowledge is Power: How Relationship and Sexuality Education Can Help Keep Students with IDD Safe](#). She began the discussion with the fact that persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities are sexually assaulted at a rate seven times higher than persons without disabilities. Persons with IDD also are at a greater risk of assault throughout the day and by someone they know. Ms. Hanley asked members what were factors that would make persons with IDD more vulnerable to sexual assault. Council members responded that persons with IDD (1) were more trusting of others; (2) had communication disorders or the way they communicate is not understood; (3) have few reciprocal relationships and an eagerness to please; (4) lived in a culture of compliance and were taught to acquiesce; and (5) were not given comprehensive sex education in a way that could be understood.

Ms. Hanley noted that persons with IDD often pick up bits of information about sex and relationships but do not have a true understanding of what this information means. Persons with IDD, by the way their decision-making is treated, are taught that them saying "no" means nothing because caregivers often override their decisions. Sexual messages are everywhere and available to persons with IDD in the media and on the internet. Persons need to balance what these messages say is appropriate adult behavior with real information about sexuality and consent. Council members discussed various issues around sexuality, sexual assault, consent, safeguarding persons with IDD and training staff, family, and medical professionals to look for signs of sexual abuse. One way of letting persons with IDD know what is appropriate behavior

is to have caregivers model good behavior. The discussion ended with next steps offered for how to move forward with training, curriculum development and information sharing on the #seventimes initiative.

- **Council Legislative Breakfast** - Mr. Zingler told the Council members that the Council's Legislative Breakfast had been scheduled for Wednesday, March 13, 2019 from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. in the 2nd Floor Atrium of the Legislative Office Building (LOB). Mr. Zingler said that he was looking for providers who would donate food and beverages for the breakfast. An invitation needed to be drafted along with the bookmark that the Council would hand out at the breakfast.
- **Topics for future Council meetings** – Ms. Weisinger-Roland asked Council members for topics for future meetings. Suggestions were made that a tour of the Hospital for Special Care be organized. Other suggestions included a presentation on expanding employment opportunities. The Commissioner told the Council that Amber Burke, who is DDS's new Director of Employment and Day Services, would be a resource for the Council on employment opportunities. The Council decided to have additional discussions on future topics at the next Council meeting.
- Ms. Weisinger-Roland made a motion, seconded by Rick Lenz, to open the agenda to discuss the upcoming I/DD Caucus Family Hearing Day on February 25, 2019 at the LOB. It was determined that the Council would write testimony to present at the hearing and that Jamie Lazaroff would read that testimony. There was a discussion concerning what could be expected of the I/DD Caucus in the current legislative session.

Legislative Update

- Krista Ostaszewski told Council members that the Governor's proposed budget for fiscal years 2019 and 2020 would be presented to the legislature on Wednesday, February 20 2019. Appropriations Committee public hearings on the Governor's proposed budget are scheduled for February 25th through March 5th. Ms. Ostaszewski detailed the number of proposed bills that had been introduced this session. Because of the number of new legislators this session, the number of bills being introduced has reached an all-time high.

Commissioner's Report

- Commissioner Scheff told Council members about his meetings with Governor Lamont and his staff concerning his renomination as Commissioner. He expressed that the Governor and his staff were very supportive of his continuing as Commissioner.
- The Commissioner discussed the roll-out of the minimum wage increase to providers and their staff beginning January 1, 2019. The feedback that he has gotten from staff who received raises has been very positive.
- The Commissioner said that the Step-Up/Step-Down Unit is scheduled to open by the end of January on the Hartford Regional Center campus. The Unit's staff is participating in training for the type of services they will need to provide to individuals who will be coming to the unit.
- Commissioner Scheff, also, discussed the DDS mobile crisis response initiative and how the department is working to partner with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to use those agencies' established mobile crisis networks and integrate services with the Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHA).
- The department sponsored a provider readiness training for 300 private provider employees to prepare for the transition to direct Medicaid billing.
- The Commissioner described how DDS wants to pilot a program to combine an individual's funding for Day Services and Residential Services. This would provide more flexibility for individuals who might need more funding for either residential or day services but not be able to use all their funding because it had been allocated to the two separate accounts. Currently an individual cannot juggle money between these separate accounts.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: February 21, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.