



# State of Connecticut Council on Developmental Services

# DDS

## **APPROVED** Minutes of the November 21, 2019 Joint Meeting

**Location:** DDS South Region Office, 35 Thorpe Avenue, 3rd floor, Wallingford, CT

**In attendance:** Adrienne Benjamin; Pamela DonAroma; Christine Hainsworth-Straus; Karen Hlavac, Secretary; Jamie Lazaroff; Rick Lenz; Diana Mennone; Dawn Oduor; and Rick Rothstein

**Absent:** Joseph Duffy; Arlene Reith; Dr. Neil Stein; Deborah Ullman; Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Chair; and Kevin Zingler, Vice Chair

**DDS Staff:** Commissioner Jordan Scheff; Edward Mambruno, DDS Ombudsperson; Thomas Dailey, South Regional Director; Fritz Gorst, West Regional Director; Elisa Velardo, North Regional Director; Krista Ostaszewski, Director of Legislation, Regulations and Communications; Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison; and Joseph Carvalho, Executive Secretary

### **Introductions**

Karen Hlavac, Secretary, called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. Ms. Hlavac asked that all members of the Council on Developmental Services and the Regional Advisory and Planning Councils introduce themselves and then she asked if the members of the public would introduce themselves. She asked if anyone from the public wished to speak and seeing none, she proceeded with the meeting.

### **Public Participation**

None

### **Topics of Discussion**

#### **Ombudsperson's Report**

- Edward Mambruno, DDS Ombudsperson, discussed the role of the Ombudsperson and explained that his monthly reports and his annual reports were posted to the [Ombudsperson's webpage](#) under "Public Information". He stated that October had been a busy month for his office and went on to discuss in general some of the calls and inquiries he had handled in the month. Mr. Mambruno discussed his work with the [New England ADA Center](#), which is one of ten centers nationwide that form the ADA National Network. The Center is not an enforcement or regulatory agency, but is a resource supporting the ADA's mission to "make it possible for everyone with a disability to live a life of freedom and equality." Its toll free number, 1-800-949-4232, may be used to get ADA questions answered.

#### **Commissioner's Report**

- Commissioner Jordan Scheff discussed the [DDS Residential Services Waiting List](#) and the progress that has been made over the last year in moving individuals off the list and into appropriate residential services. First the Commissioner explained that the criteria for what residential needs and what time frame the services are needed by an individual on the waiting list has evolved over time and now there are three categories of individuals with residential service needs (1) Emergency (2) Urgent, and (3) Future Needs. Those individuals with Emergency or Urgent residential service needs are on the waiting list and those with Future Needs for residential services are on the department's Planning List. Commissioner Scheff went on to explain that the waiting list also is broken down by individuals who may be receiving some services but are in need of a greater amount of services (underserved) and those individuals who receive no Medicaid waiver services. As of June 2019 the waiting list had 759 individuals on it and the planning/future needs list had

Phone: 860 418-6000 ♦ TDD 860 418-6079 ♦ Fax: 860 418-6001

460 Capitol Avenue ♦ Hartford, Connecticut 06106

[www.ct.gov/dds](http://www.ct.gov/dds) ♦ e-mail: [ddsct.co@ct.gov](mailto:ddsct.co@ct.gov)

*An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer*

1,079 individuals on it. Updated information on the waiting list may be found in the quarterly [DDS Management Information Reports \(MIR\)](#) on the DDS website.

- Commissioner Scheff described some of the ways that the department was speeding the process of getting individuals, who are considered emergencies for residential services, into appropriate homes or are given additional funding and services to stay in their current residence. Barriers to statewide placement options have been reduced. Business is now conducted on a web portal thus eliminating the need for mailing or faxing paperwork. Regional Director, Thomas Dailey, said that with the web-based process, qualified providers could look at all individuals needing emergency placement online as they are added to the webpage.
- Adrienne Benjamin thanked the Commissioner for providing the legislative Taskforce to Study the Needs of Persons with Intellectual Disability with a new Level-of-Need (LON) graph that better communicates the LON information.
- Regional Director, Elisa Velardo, spoke about the DDS enhanced family support system as part of the department's ongoing initiatives to respond to the emergencies involving persons with complex health care needs. The Commissioner said that hospitals had reacted positively to DDS's Step Up/Step Down Unit which allows individuals who need a higher level of care to leave hospitals and receive appropriate care in the unit as they transition back into the community. He also reiterated that DDS is looking into a Step Up/Step Down Unit for children with complex care needs.
- Commissioner Scheff discussed attending the [National Association of Medicaid Directors](#) (NAMD) Fall Conference. The Commissioner and Varian Salters, DDS Self-Advocate Coordinator, participated in a breakout session hosted by NAMD to promote self-direction and self-advocacy and how they correlate to Medicaid. The Commissioner also attended a [National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services](#) (NASDDDS) Board of Directors meeting, where he serves as one of four Board Members-at-Large. Jaime Lazaroff complimented Varian Salters on his dedication to self-advocacy.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the October 17, 2019 Council meeting were approved with corrections. The motion for approval was made by Rick Rothstein and seconded by Ms. Benjamin.

### **New Business**

- Mr. Rothstein asked about the Council's legislative breakfast for 2020 and whether it would be of interest to the members of the Regional Advisory Committee to participate. The date and time of the Council's legislative breakfast has not been determined but it was determined that the members of the RACs would be invited to participate.
- Krista Ostaszewski, Director of Legislation, Regulations and Communications, discussed how the DDS webpage [In-the-Spotlight](#) is highlighting the micro-business successes funded by ID Partnership dollars. The ID Partnership has provided more than 20 grants of \$5,000 to \$30,000 to small businesses owned or operated by persons with intellectual disability and businesses providing employment to persons with intellectual disability.
- Council members reviewed the proposed schedule of Council meetings for 2020. On a voice vote the following schedule of meetings was approved for 2020: January 16; February 20; March 19; April 16; May 21; June 18; July 16; August - No meeting; September 17; October 15; November 19 – Joint Meeting with RACs; and December 17 – Annual Meeting. Council meetings are scheduled to begin at 4:30 p.m. at the DDS Central Office though the time and venue for the meetings may change depending on the needs of the Council.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.

***NEXT COUNCIL MEETING:***  
**Annual Meeting**  
**December 19, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.**  
**DDS Central Office**  
**460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106**

**Schedule of Council Meetings for 2020**

Council meetings are usually scheduled on the third Thursday of the month from 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in DDS Conference Room A, unless otherwise specified.

January 16, 2020	February 20, 2020	March 19, 2020
April 16, 2020	May 21, 2020	June 18, 2020
July 16, 2020	August 2020 No meeting	September 17, 2020
October 15, 2020	November 19, 2020 Joint Meeting with RACs	December 17, 2020 Annual Meeting