



# State of Connecticut Council on Developmental Services

# DDS

## Minutes of the July 16, 2020 Meeting

**Location:** Meeting Held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

### In attendance:

Adrienne Benjamin; Pamela DonAroma; Christine Hainsworth-Straus; Karen Hlavac; Dawn Oduor; Rick Rothstein, Secretary; Diana Mennone; Deborah Ullman; Kevin Zingler, Chair; Arlene Reith

**Absent:** Joseph Duffy, Dr. Neil Stein; Lisa Weisinger-Roland; Vice-Chair; Rick Lenz

**DDS Staff:** Commissioner Jordan Scheff; Krista Ostaszewski, Director of Legislation, Regulations, and Communications; and Joseph Carvalho, Executive Secretary

### Introductions

Kevin Zingler, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

### Moment of Silence

### Public Participation

No public participation.

### Topics of Discussion

- **Review and Approval of previous council meeting minutes – 5 minutes** o June 18, 2020 - Kevin moved to accept minutes as presented, motion was seconded by Adrienne and passed unanimously

- Legislative Breakfast from February Update – o Still have folks who haven't been reimbursed. Some folks still owe money. Around \$20 is expected per person. Kevin fronted all money, will follow up with council members

o Next year's leg breakfast? Krista - difficult to know what LOB procedures/accessibility will be like given the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Commissioners Report – 25 minutes** o COVID-19 Response Update ▪ Monitoring progress about other states, but remaining vigilant.

- Approx. a dozen DDS Committees continue their work to plan and execute safe reopening of DDS services, including Camp Harkness.

- Some frustrations and pushback on visitation guidelines, but DDS must continue to stay cautious.

- Commissioner Stopped for questions • Christine ▪ Regarding testing, like STS, are there any options for oral tests? • JAS - need to investigate, but something to consider is 15-20% of mouth swab test can be false negatives

- Anything done with advocates to communicate if shutdown needs to happen? • JAS - will add to list of things to work on.

- Have not provided formal guidance

- Krista added - in plans that were approved for employment and day service providers, one requirement was to include how it would look like if we needed to close supports again

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• Karen o Who's in charge of the clinical folks? Is that Val Bagby-Young? ▪ JAS – the public has personnel concerns should be brought to, then Cres. Not sure at which point Val would be involved

o Some practitioners won't keep masks on and won't let people into buildings without masks on. ▪ JAS / Krista - in the interim, like Commissioner said, have had internal convos about this. Some public and some private folks weren't allowed into Dr's offices regardless of their ability to comply with mask requirements. Regional staff should be talking to doctors' offices before appointments to notify them of lack of individual toleration to masks. DDS will also continue to engage in conversations with DPH on this.

o Pending litigation regarding special education eligibility until age 22 ▪ Jordan was not privy to the state's decision to appeal this judgment.

o Kevin introduced Ken Cabral. ▪ Overview, have had a busy last month

▪ 30/140 providers were told not to submit a plan, as their services never really stopped. This was specific to facility-based reopening.

▪ Received 118 plans, most were timely submitted.

▪ All regions reviewed providers in their region, and went back and forth to negotiate a sensible resolution

▪ One outstanding provider who is still finalizing the plan with the region.

▪ Each plan is specific to the provider to comply with the various guidelines given their circumstances based on region, staffing, and other realities particular to each provider.

• Will recap the best of the best ideas and share • Electronic ozone equipment

• Creative ways to provide supports (staggering time)

• Creative ways of disinfecting/cleaning facilities

▪ Some issues presented from surveys • Anticipated 40 - 47% of the population to come back, but several families and individuals were reluctant to come back today. The number is lower. Not necessarily a bad thing on a programmatic basis.

• If a person lives in a group home, other folks in the home may be recommended to not go out. How to mitigate exposure to some individuals in these settings is still being worked out

• **Reopening of Day & Employment Services – 20 minutes**

• All teams were supposed to meet to discuss the plans. There was an issue, but hopefully, these issues have been resolved by now.

▪ Some providers opened up on July 14, but July 15 (yesterday) was formal opening for plans and things are going well so far

▪ Questions? • JAS - thanked Ken for his work.

• JAS - have a handful of providers who have out-of-state parent companies, or multi-state companies. Receiving directives from a perspective, not CT-focused.

- Kevin -from a provider perspective has a chance to see at first hand. Providers appreciate the candid and transparent process by which DDS has operated. A couple of comments that he's seen: o Transportation is a huge issue. Big busses can only carry 1 or 2 individuals at a time.

- o, Thank DDS for partnership re: CM's practical and aggressive strategies to serve individuals.

- o Providers having issues with Regional Centers and people reentering

- o As Residential Providers decide to be conservative, and decide on low-risk tolerance, some are offering in-home supports. Some providers are beginning to expand their territories.

- Ken - working with Krista and others to identify transportation and other issues needing troubleshooting re: sanitizing, cleaning, sneeze guards, etc. while we understand some Providers are risk-averse, but we are working to make sure providers and DDS provide services in a way that works. o Adrienne: What's the plan with tests for staff moving forward? ▪ JAS - Demand for testing components has risen greatly in the past 6 weeks, which has affected CT's testing readiness. Estimated 7-10-day turnaround time. We are looking at different options that include but are not limited to monitoring symptoms for 24-48 hours to stay in the clear, but it's harder to have them stay home for 7-10 days. Some contributing factors are limited amounts of reagent. Would like to have more robust testing. The Chief of Staff is working on testing all public and private staff, but there are lots of moving parts that make these plans difficult to pin down. The testing situation has changed a lot even since the beginning of July.

- o Medical & Dental care for individuals supported by DDS. ▪ Adrienne described a consulting group working with the Office of Health Strategy to identify different stakeholders to identify problems with medical and dental care. 5-year plan to help cut down costs. Adrienne wants consultants to hear from the aggregate of the DS Council to hear from our collective experiences re: challenges re: finding proper medical staff and how to properly care for unmet needs of individuals in our lives.

- o Kevin - we will not be meeting in August but recommended we put this on the agenda for September
  - o Kevin - are there any other topics for September? ▪ Deb Ullman - some of us are coming near the end of their term is up. Looking for folks who wanted to get on the council from WR. Deb is a Governor appointee. • JAS - while your term expires, you continue to serve until a replacement has been named by your appointing authority. If you would like to stay, you may, but if you would like someone else to serve, DDS can assist in making contact with the appropriate appointing authority to ensure a council member may be relieved of their service to the council.

- Joe to send out the roster of the membership list and term expirations

- o Kevin - saw news of a special session to occur soon ▪ Krista - going to have a short special session the week of the 20th. • Will include 4 topics o Policy accountability

- o Absentee Ballots

- Topics for Future Council Meetings – 5 minutes

- o Insulin

- o Telehealth

- Will hold another special session later in September for budgetary items.

- o Kevin - shout out for the census

- Adrienne moved to hold all meetings virtually until the end of 2020, 2nded by Christine, passed unanimously

**Diana made a motion to adjourn at 2:08 pm.**