



State of Connecticut Council on Developmental Services

DDS

DRAFT Minutes of the September 15, 2022 Meeting

Location: Meeting Held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Arlene Reith, Adrienne Benjamin, Christine Hainsworth-Strauss, Deb Ullman, Diana Mennone, Karen Hlavac, Patti Silva, Rick Rothstein; Rick Lenz, Pam DonAroma; Rick Lenz

Absent: Joe Duffy; Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Kevin Zingler

DDS Staff: Commissioner Jordan Scheff; and Kevin Bronson, Director of Legislation, Regulations and Communications; Krista Ostaszewski, Health Management Administrator; Joseph Carvalho, Executive Secretary

Introductions

Rick Rothstein, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:38 PM.

The Chair opened the meeting with a round of introductions.

Moment of Silence for individuals impacted by COVID-19

Public Participation

Beth - Someone spoke up, didn't announce their name, but mentioned they were present for the Waiver portion of the agenda. She asked Council members to be mindful of individuals for whom competitive employment is prohibitive.

Barbara – described her adult son who needs 24-hour supports, and a limited amount of funding. What does the future look like for aging parents who don't want to have an emergency placement of their child/children at the end of the parent's life?

Chair – shared in Barbara's concerns, and that we will continue to use existing models while advocating for families served by the department.

Pat Tyler – commented on flexibility of new services being developed. She commented on the apparent discrepancies between information and guidance administered by the different DDS regions.

Donna Cohen – a concern for me and my family is that making sure the supports for those with children with complex needs don't go by the wayside. Encouraged everyone to remember that there is a huge spectrum of needs that exist among those who receive DDS services.

Topics for discussion

- Review and Approval of Minutes
 - Rick Rothstein moved that the approval of the July minutes be tabled until the October meeting.
 - Patti Silva seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Commissioner's Report – 20 minutes
 - Opened by emphasizing that group homes are not going away, described the workforce crisis' ongoing impact on DDS and beyond, mentioned the upcoming Q&A sessions the Department will be hosting virtually, addressed concerns raised during public comment re: pre-vocational services and regional discrepancies, and answered questions from the Council.
- Ombudspersons Report

- Ombudsperson offered a summary of her report and highlighted that her primary concerns are related, either directly or indirectly, to the staffing crisis. She proceeded to respond to questions sent to her ahead of the meeting regarding her monthly ombudsperson report
- Waiver renewal and amendments (Krista Ostaszewski)
 - Health Services Administrator, Krista Ostaszewski, gave a presentation on the waiver renewal and amendment process. She outlined the timeline of the waiver renewal and amendment process and detailed some specific changes to some waived services that the department offers, including some changes to encourage and increase flexibility in service delivery and funding.
- Beau Doherty retirement
 - Patti Silva explained that she drafted language for a proclamation, Kevin Bronson submitted that request via the online proclamation request form and are looking for an update on the status of this request for a proclamation. Rick Rothstein will follow up with Kevin Zingler on the status of the proclamation request.
- Discussion: Creation of a Sub Committee to review current DDS investigation procedures
 - Rick Rothstein detailed the history of the Council's interest in this topic, ranging from a prior visit from the Director of Investigations, ongoing reports from the Ombudsperson, inquiries addressed by the Commissioner overtime, and now its interest in creating a Subcommittee.
 - Adrienne Benjamin made a motion to create a subcommittee to review current DDS abuse and neglect investigation procedures.
 - Patti Silva seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
 - Kevin Zingler, Rick Rothstein, Adrienne Benjamin volunteered to participate, and Shannon Jacovino was invited to attend these subcommittee meetings as a guest of the subcommittee.
- Topics for future meetings
 - Report from the Subcommittee on Abuse & Neglect Procedures
 - Update on efforts to thank Beau Doherty
- **Rick Lenz moved to adjourn, seconded by Adrienne Benjamin. Meeting adjourned at 6:38PM.**