



Jodi M. Rell  
Governor

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## **Minutes ~ March 13, 2008**

### **Members In Attendance:**

Patti Silva – Chair, Jennifer Carroll – Vice Chair, Karen Hlavac, Lou Richards, Kevin Morey, Jack Frost, John Pelegano, Jim Heffernan, Peter H. O’Meara-Ex-Officio

### **DDS Staff:**

Kathryn du Pree – Deputy Commissioner  
Christine Pollio – Legislative & Executive Affairs Director  
Ed Mambruno - Ombudsperson  
Rod O’Connor – Legislative Liaison  
Ivette DeJesus – Executive Secretary  
Dan Micari, Director QA  
Fred Balicki – License Facility Specialist Supervisor

Patti Silva - Chair opened the meeting with a moment of silence for Chavis Chappell. Chair welcomed the new Council members and had everyone introduce him or herself.

### **Citizen Input:**

Pat Johnson from Oakhill and Alyssa Godutti from CCPA attended meeting.

Mr. Johnson:

- Mr. Johnson wanted to thank everyone profoundly for support this year. He feels the support as parents is vital.
- Mr. Johnson shared that they are trying to prevent providers from going out of business. If what the Governor recommended goes through, it will be difficult to stay in business because the budget provides for no cost of living increase.
- Oakhill currently has 184 vans and 110 buildings. Fuel and utility cost increases are significant. The cost of food will increase by 4.9% this year. There is an increase in all areas and yet the budget remains the same.
- They have been asked what are they doing to cut costs and one thing he shared is that four managers retired this past year and not one was filled.
- He also shared that all vehicles have a GPS system now. The initial cost to Oakhill will save money in the long run. It is a good investment because it tracks a lot of different areas. Parents like it because it can track speeding and should increase vehicle safety.
- Oakhill currently has 38 staff vacancies. These positions are very hard to fill due to the salary and benefits being so low.
- Mr. Johnson wanted to reiterate a “thanks” to DDS staff & Commissioner O’Meara for doing what they can. He is very aware and sensitive to protocol of whom DDS reports to but he has to advocate for his agency.
- He commented on budget options that DDS was asked to present to OPM if cost reductions became necessary. He was very alarmed and providers hope not to have to do any of the options shared.

Ms. Godutti:

- First of all, thank you all on behalf of CCPA for support on the Provider Rescue Fund bill.
- CCPA recently surveyed its members about staff turnover which is currently 25%.
- Ms. Godutti provided a handout that was discussed at the Waiver Workgroup meeting earlier this week. She was concerned that the options presented would reduce the funding available to providers who are over the established waiver rates. She recommended an idea that would hold these providers harmless for their base costs.

### **Minutes:**

February Council minutes were approved with a few corrections to be made.

### **Presenters/Guest:**

Dan Micari, Director QA

Fred Balicki – License Facility Specialist Supervisor

Mr. Micari:

- Mr. Micari shared that Chavis had significant input to the development of the QSR system.
- Council members received copies of what was discussed.
- Mr. Micari discussed the reporting protocol of the Regional Quality Reviewers and shared that there is quite a bit of information compiled and monitored.

Mr. Balicki:

- Chavis was an integral member of the QA Review group. He gave input in ways that helped QA make constructive changes.
- Mr. Balicki shared a nice story regarding Chavis. Since the QA Group met often, for a period of time they decided to bring something to nibble on during meeting. One person brought veggies, another muffins, and Chavis brought chocolate cookies, which he was proud to have brought, and eager to open. Nonetheless, the cookies were eaten and the healthy food went back with whom provided it. ☺ He will be missed!
- Mr. Balicki shared that the QSR Review is based on “What does quality of life mean to you?”
- Mr. Balicki reviewed the QSR Overview that was handed out. He also explained the QSR indicators.
- Mr. Balicki is the supervisor of the group located in Central Office.
- There will soon be a quality service review for Private Providers. They are starting with agencies who provide day and individual residential support services. Once the QSR data application is available these state level reviews will result in provider certification.
- A certification question was posed by Ms. Hlavac. Fred explained that certification means the agency will be certified versus the individual home. Providers will be certified to provide various types of services including CLAs, individual residential support, family support and employment/day services.
- The new data system will be able to analyze the data to show overall agency performance and trends which cannot be done now as all the data is collected and maintained manually.
- A corrective action plan will be required for agencies that do not meet service and support expectations. This will be reviewed and discussed regularly and providers will be given a time frame in which to respond.

- Providers are already required to conduct a quality self assessment and negotiate improvement plans with the regions.

### **Ombudsperson Report – Ed Mambruno:**

Mr. Mambruno informed the Council of the following updates:

- He received a call from a family whose son/daughter resides at a group home with another consumer who is currently in the hospital. He told them that unless they were the guardian, he could not speak to them. The guardian then called with a concern that their son/daughter would not be able to return to the same group home because s/he now require complex staffing. He told them that due to the extent of care that was now required, the private provider was probably correct in stating that they would not be able to support the consumer at this group home. However, the individual would be provided an appropriate setting when placement was required.
- He received a call from a mother inquiring about respite for her five-year-old son. He followed up with the region and was informed that there were very few locations available for respite due to the complex medical issues of the consumer. They were however hopeful that they would be able to find an appropriate respite.
- Ed worked with the region and Tammy Garris to find an appropriate hospital placement for an individual with many difficult behaviors requiring specialized care. Many psychiatric hospitals were contacted, however, none of them had the resources available. DDS is now referring to out-of-state hospitals.

### **SNF Meetings:**

Mr. Mambruno shared that he went to the Brittney Farms Nursing Home and that he visited four consumers. He also shared that his visits are going very well. He would like to expand visits to other parts of the state. He is working with a nice network of individuals on this project.

### **Legislative Report - Christine Pollio:**

Ms. Pollio welcomed the new members of the Council.

Ms. Pollio informed the Council of the following updates:

- The session in full swing.
- Has anyone accessed the legislative web page? It's up and running off of the DDS web page. All DDS testimony is there. Go to ([www.ct.gov/dds](http://www.ct.gov/dds)) and then click on Legislative 2008.
- She supplied the latest copy of the legislative update and discussed the status of important bills.
- The transportation bill is of major concern. That bill will require a driver's license check twice a year for everyone who transports consumers. The bill is the result of a lawsuit from 1999. This will be costly to several state agencies. DDS did agree to pursue a budget option for an annual drivers license check and to establish guidelines related to seatbelt safety, however the bill is very broad and goes way beyond this.

- DDS testified in support at the Finance Revenue and Bonding Public Hearing for the funding to build the replacement home at 380 Pomfret St.
- DDS testified this past Wednesday (3/12/08) on all agency bills at the Public Health Committee.
- Approximately twenty-five (25) people testified in support of the Autism bill in Public Health which expands the Autism Pilot.
- People testified on the Day Service study bill this week as well.
- Budget: Appropriations sub-committee is wrapping up their work and should be done by the end of March. DDS's proposed budget adjustment appears to be holding. They will address the COLA issue separately, not in agency budgets.
- There are 2 siting bills: One in the Human Service Committee related to DCF contract provisions around noise and safety. The other is in the Planning & Development Committee and opens up 8-3e. We are still reviewing this bill, it doesn't appear to have a major impact on DDS, but are still tracking. Any change to this statute is on our radar screen.
- The Program Review and Investigations Committee is meeting to decide which topics it will address in FY09. FORCONN's recommendation that the committee study the needs of the aging DDS population has made it to the top 4 projects out of an original list of 28.
- The session ends May 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Commissioner's Updates:**

- Welcome to the new Council members.
- Fred, Dan, and staff have been doing a great job with QSR. At this final stage it is difficult to grasp the years of work and design that has been devoted to creating this comprehensive quality review tool and process. This will probably be one of the most comprehensive quality review systems in the country. We are hopeful of training staff and our providers in its application by the summer and then beginning implementation shortly thereafter.
- Aging Services is moving forward and Siobhan is on board. The system will begin to see much more of a focus on this area.
- A DDS Partners' Convention being planned for 2010. The discussion of this conference has been discussed for a few years. We are looking to make it a reality for 2010. We will need support from different groups. We want it to include many different areas, i.e. workshops, vendors, self advocates, families, provider and employee recognition, etc. The department hopes the Council will be a co-sponsor and become involved in the planning effort.
- DDS is funding \$22m in new services this year. DDS has been discussing with OPM the FY10/11 bi-ennial budget which we will submit next September. We are asking the Council to support the Waiting List Initiative which we will need to continue past the original 5 years of the WL Settlement. We are trying to prepare for the turbulence in the economy.

### **Old Business:**

- Discussion of the by-laws has been postponed for the next Council meeting.

### **New Business:**

- Deputy Commissioner du Pree discussed Respite Services. A copy of our services and the number of families who use them was supplied to council members.

- Reminder: The North Region Legislative Breakfast will be Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> from 8am-10am at the LOB. Chavis was suppose to present on the name change. His good friend Carlos will be presenting.
- The HARC Legislative Breakfast will be Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup> from 8am-10am at the LOB.
- On Monday & Tuesday, 3/17 & 3/18 the South Region will be doing their Vendor Fairs. Monday's will be at Mitchell College in New London & Tuesday's will be at Albertus Magnus College in New Haven.

**\*\*The next meeting will be held on April 10, 2008.\*\***

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned: 8:18 p.m.**