

DDS North Region
Regional Advisory Council

October 21, 2015
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Collette Bement, Donna Clauson, Joe Duffy, Annette Scully, Elisa Velardo, Claudia Neumann
Guests: Mary Lou O'Connor, Andrew Selinger, Tammy Selinger

Introductions were shared with Elisa and those who were not in attendance at the last meeting.

Announcements:

It was shared that the IDD Caucus will be convening next Thursday, 10/29, at 10:00 around the budget concerns for DDS. It is being convened by Senator Bye. It is a public forum, everyone is welcome.

- RAC Membership – Elisa asked members to consider assisting with sharing the meetings. It was also asked that members consider possibly becoming chairperson. The meetings are not intended to be run by DDS. This group is supposed to be independent of DDS and have elected officers elected by the group. The agenda is also supposed to be the agenda of the committee, not solely DDS. Elisa stated that agenda items are always welcome. Members may contact her or Claudia to have items added to the agenda. It was also asked that those that have been attending meetings regularly who are not official members, to consider submitting a request to become an official member.
- Budget – A concern was raised that it has been stated that 181 positions are going to be filled. It was questioned how and why this would be happening with the budget the way it is. Elisa explained that overtime is a big issue and, in order to bring that down, positions that have been frozen and unable to be filled are being filled to reduce the overtime. That number of the 181 positions is statewide.

A question was asked about privatization of public homes. There is no recommendation for public homes to be privatized at this point.

- PRC – Elisa introduced Dr. Vincent (Jim) Covino and explained that he was invited to attend tonight's meeting to share information regarding the PRC pilot here in the North Region.

Dr. Covino shared a presentation and statistics regarding the number of individuals on multiple medications. He explained that back at Mansfield Training School and at Southbury, it used to be that medications could be given for anyone who had a bad night, for example. There were no controls in place and abuses were occurring. The PRC (Program Review Committee) was developed to provide some controls and reduce the abuses. People are on psychotropic medications for an average of 15 years with an average of 3 medications per person. PRC is a group of people who would review a case and discuss it with the provider for about 15 minutes. Recommendations would be made, and the provider would come back for a review in a year or two. The idea behind the pilot is that since we do not have control over the medications, we should try to look at the person's life and the person as an individual beyond the medication, and possibly other reasons for certain behaviors and to possibly be able to reduce the amount of medication needed. The process will take a little more time, however, it may help in the long run to arrive at a better outcome. The purpose is to better understand the person. The Committee oversees both Public and Private cases. The pilot began with people that were on 5 or more medications. People that are on less than the average (3 or less) will have a paper review. Everyone else will come in for a full review.

The pilot began in the North Region and now it has been asked that Dr. Covino begin to expand it to the other two regions.

It was asked if DDS ever reviews the provider agencies. There is quality monitoring that is done by our Central Office. Fifty percent of monitoring visits are unannounced. Elisa suggested that quality monitoring could be a future agenda item for further discussion. She will invite someone from the DDS Quality Monitoring or Licensing Division to attend that can share more information. It was also asked if Supported Employment sites and others like OWC were also monitored. Elisa will invite Amy Blazawski to attend a future meeting to discuss Supported Employment.

- Senator Beth Bye is sponsoring a Bill to change the symbol on the handicapped sign. Elisa shared the new image that is being proposed which has been printed on a postcard that is being distributed by FAVARH. They are circulating a petition and have already obtained over 1600 signatures. 10,000 signatures are needed.

The next RAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. at the DDS East Hartford Office.

Respectfully submitted,
Claudia Neumann
Executive Secretary