

**DDS North Region
Regional Advisory Council**

September 21, 2016
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Nancy Bilyak, Donna Clauson, Joe Duffy, Collette Bement Langner, Richard Rothstein, Tammy Selinger, Andy Selinger, Elisa Velardo, Claudia Neumann

Guests: Pat Stavola, Ronald Langner, Dr. Rafael Gallegos, Dr. Vincent Covino

Elisa Velardo, Regional Director, began the meeting with introductions.

- Regional Updates – Elisa began by stating that people probably know about what has been occurring recently. Two regional centers have been scheduled to be closed. A number of individuals have transferred successfully to the Hartford Regional Center in Newington and some moved into other Public residences. Ella Grasso is scheduled to close on 9/30 or 10/1. Meriden is also very close. The conversion of 28 homes statewide was also announced. An RFP was issued at the end of August and the process is now underway. Elisa has been holding meetings with the families in the Public homes that are being affected. The formal RFP process is a process dictated by State statute. Families are invited to participate in the selection process to review providers that have submitted proposals. The proposals will be submitted in mid-October. Visits to the homes will be taking place through the end of September. DDS is trying to work closely with the families and the individuals. For the conversion homes, the residents will remain in the same home with the same housemates, only the staff will change. Case management staff will also remain. Quality monitoring and licensing will also remain the same. Licensing is there from day one insuring that all of the systems and training are in place when the new provider takes over. There are 12 homes converting in the North Region and 2 homes in the North Region will be closing. If the timeline that has been set is followed, the conversions should take place in January, however, with weather and holidays there may be some flexibility.

A question was raised about what happens if no one is interested in the home. Elisa explained that in the first round that did happen and there were two proposals that did not meet the requirements. Those were delayed, however, did go through.

We do not know yet what the impact of staff will be.

Grads – Elisa reported that people have been able to begin 5 days a week.

There has been active training around the new WIOA employment guidelines which impacts people who would have been going into a GSE program and made sub-minimum wage. They will go through DORS (Dept. of Rehabilitative Services) and will be evaluated to see if they can be placed competitively. This did no impact grads this year because it began in July, however, it will impact people next year. DDS is working very hard to make sure people are familiar with the new federal guidelines. We are also continually looking to grow the number of opportunities for competitive employment. Amy Blazawski has been working with multiple agencies, i.e. DMHAS, DORS, etc. Parents will be informed about this from case managers and the school.

- Budget Updates –
 - New priority designations should be recommended soon and will be presented to the management team soon.
 - A re-do of the IP is being done and then case managers will need to be trained.
 - Last session, a survey was done for all families on the Waiting List regarding what it is they are waiting for and what they need. They are working with existing systems and everyone with a current IP will be surveyed; hoping over the next year to get the information for a tool for the legislature to use.
 - A sub-committee of the DD Council has been formed to try to come up with some common goals for all of the different advocacy groups. The feeling is that with all of the different groups representing the same population, asking the legislature for different things is not helpful.
- Dr. Rafael Gallegos was invited to do a presentation regarding behavioral programs and how things have changed over time. The goal now is to try to use positive behavioral supports instead of aversive conditioning and working on reducing the use of medications. Dr. Gallegos explained about applied behavioral analysis and looking at the reason for a person's behavior. The behavior program guidelines are being re-written and the goal is to re-evaluate the way plans are written and not use punishment. We need to be sure that the people doing the behavior plans are qualified to do the evaluation and have a standard of care so that plans are developed for the individual person.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, October 19th at 5:00 pm**. Please contact Claudia Neumann if there are any items to be added to the agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

Claudia Neumann

Executive Secretary