

**DDS North Region**  
**Regional Advisory Council**

January 24, 2018  
Meeting Minutes

---

Members Present: Rick Rothstein (Chair); Donna Cohen; Joe Duffy; Collette Bement Langner; Ron Langner; Mary Lou O'Connor; Tammy Selinger; Andrew Selinger

Guests: Laurie McKenney

Staff: Elisa Velardo; Claudia Neumann; Amber Maddox (volunteer intern)

Meeting was called to order at 5:10 pm.

- Legislative Update – Rick Rothstein reported that the session has not started yet, they have, however, been working on the Medicare Savings Program legislation. The Governor had cut funding for the program, and then the legislature came back and restored it. The Governor then vetoed the change to put it back in. The latest is that the House will consider an override to the veto on January 31<sup>st</sup>. The Senate has not given a date when they will consider. There may possibly be an update within the next two weeks. The program is supposed to continue to be funded until June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Opening day of the session is February 7<sup>th</sup>. The Governor will also be making his State of the State address on that date.

Family Hearing Day is February 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:30am at the LOB.

“Have a HARC Day” will be held on February 14<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am.

**It was suggested that the RAC meeting for February be moved to the 28<sup>th</sup> since it is scheduled for the same day as the Family Hearing Day. Motion was made and seconded, and vote was unanimous. The next RAC meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm.**

- Intern Introduction – Elisa introduced our new volunteer student intern, Amber Maddox, who will be working with us here in East Hartford for the next four months. Amber is a student at Goodwin College studying Human Services and Business Administration. She explained that she has always had an interest in the field and has a sibling with ID. She will be attending some NR trainings to become more familiar with different aspects of DDS and the services that are provided.
- RAC Facebook Pages – in November a concern was raised by DDS Central Office that there could possibly be an issue with the RACs having Facebook pages that may appear to be representing DDS. Some of the pages also include the DDS logo. Since the RACs are mandated by Statute, it does become an extension of the Department and as such, it is felt that there needs to be some oversight by DDS. A meeting was held with members from each of the RACs, Commissioner Scheff, and other pertinent DDS staff. After discussion of what the intent was for the pages, which basically is to share information and increase awareness of the RACs, it was decided that one combined page would be created for all three of the RACs. Anything that is posted would be decided on by the regional Council and then sent to the Regional Director's office. The Regional Director would then send it to Central Office to be posted. The change will be reviewed at the next regional RAC meetings. The change will occur sometime after the WR holds their meeting on 2/15.

- Regional Director's Updates:
  - Elisa reported that grad funding did become available and we are working very hard to get grads placed that graduated last June. About half have been placed. We are having an issue with capacity in the private sector. Also, hearing from schools, case managers, and families that the GSE option is very limited. Discussions are occurring to look at how this can be improved. We have been working with schools to try to better prepare students to transition from school. We are trying to refill two Transition Advisor positions that have been vacated so that additional focus can be put into the schools to better prepare students and families. We are making headway but some are not moving as quickly as we would like.
  - Hired Case Managers – we have received six case manager positions in the North Region. New case managers are now going through training in all areas. There have also been some direct support positions that have been hired. Between these positions and staff moved from conversion homes, it should begin to address the overtime issue. There were two conversion homes in the North Region. When the homes close, staff is distributed to other locations within the region which means we should begin to see overtime go down.
  - DDS still has some funding under the I/DD Partnership (approximately \$1 million) which we are trying to use for innovation options. Currently CCH options are being looked at and looking at who could possibly move into CCH settings. We have been working for the past two years to ensure that we have homes licensed and available. There are hundreds of available CCH homes statewide.

The IDASH programs are also being developed, which will be congregate settings in an apartment building where a certain percentage of units will be for disabled residents. There also has to be access to necessary services, such as transportation, within a certain distance. There are currently three proposals in the North Region that have been approved so far, however, none have been developed yet.

Shared Living – This is a waived service. There is only a handful (approx. 5) statewide. Robin Wood has been working with providers to come up with a definition. It was explained that this differs from a CCH where an individual lives with a family in their home, in that this is where someone comes and lives with an individual in their home that they own or lease (not owned by a provider). It is a self-directed model. Elisa will invite Robin Wood to attend the next meeting to explain the program further.

- Future Topics/Presentations – Suggested topics were IDASH, Employment, and Shared Living. Elisa will invite Robin Wood and Amy Blazawski (for Employment) to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

***Claudia Neumann***

Executive Secretary

DDS North Region