

**DDS North Region
Regional Advisory Council**

February 19, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Richard Rothstein, Chair; Donna Cohen; Collette Bement Langner; Ron Langner; Mary Lou O'Connor; Lori Sandora; Annette Scully; Tammy Selinger; Elisa Velardo, DDS North Regional Director

Guests: Kim Little

Meeting was called to order at 5:05pm and began with introductions.

- Statewide CCH Initiative – Collette Bement Langner asked for an update. She has been reviewing CCH data and said that it appears that the numbers have decreased. Elisa shared that 60 additional placements did occur. A lot of time has been spent on developing. At the end of last year, rate adjustment was being looked at and rates have been increased. There were also a number of licensees who retired. In some cases, however, family continued to support individuals. Some children that grew up in a home where licensees can no longer be the caregivers are now adults and have taken over. In cases where individuals need to move, we would work with the licensee and the person's circle of support to look at other options. Other program options, other than CCH, would also be looked at if a person's needs have changed. The decrease in numbers could be because of retirements. We also moved to e-licensing a couple of years ago. The process has taken some time to adjust to for our systems, but the number of placements should be growing. Elisa will look into the numbers further and will report back for the next meeting.
- There is a new process for providers to get staff med certified. Previously each agency had their own system and requirements; now working on going electronic. The goal is to work on making it be one certification. Dr. Val Bagby-Young has been involved and Elisa will invite her to attend a future meeting to review the process.
- Legislative Updates – The legislative session is very short this year (Feb. to May). If things don't move quickly, they will not go through. Only committees can present bills during the short session. Please email Rod O'Connor (Rod.O'Connor@ct.gov) to get on the distribution list for the legislative updates.
 - Appropriations Public Hearing on Friday at 4:00 pm at the LOB. Sign up will be held between 9:00 and 10:00. Commissioner Scheff will be doing the budget presentation at 10:00am. There are no major cuts for the Department. The residential account was cut by \$1 million which will go to the Rent Subsidy program.
 - There was also a cut of \$2 million to the BSP program. Elisa explained that BSP is open to admissions and there is enough to meet the needs in the program. Right now, all needs have been able to be met and DDS has been able to work more closely with DCF. Agencies have been working more closely together.
 - Six DDS legislative proposals have been combined into one bill. There will be a public hearing on this bill. One proposal would authorize the Commissioner or a designee to give medical consent for emergency procedures. It would extend the consent for only surgery to other procedures. Elisa explained that this occurs very rarely, only when a guardian cannot be reached in an emergency situation.

- ID Partnership Innovative Employment Opportunity – Collette had previously emailed to Council members the new opportunity for entrepreneurs to apply for a \$4,000 grant to help to establish a business. A copy was also shared at the meeting.
- Three task forces have been established:
 - Governor’s Housing Task Force – includes all agencies. Commissioner Scheff has been attending these meetings.
 - Employment Task Force – To develop innovative employment opportunities. This has not gotten off the ground yet this year.
 - Task force regarding people with severe behavioral needs and Alzheimer’s – Several meetings have been held which have been on CHN. Joe Duffy has been part of this group. Dr. Lynn McMunn (former DDS Psychologist) is also involved and had several recommendations. This will be getting an extension so that they can continue and more meetings will be held beginning in April.
- Regional Director Updates:
 - IDASH –
 - The first program will be opening in Canton around May 1st. People have been identified, 20 people total. Twenty-five percent will be set aside for individuals with developmental disability or autism. The building will be state-of-the-art. The next program will be Bloomfield. Applications are being accepted now for nine units. Interested families should contact their case manager. The program should open in the Fall. Some individuals are coming from a CLA or CRS, some were in IHS but need some additional support, and the majority are coming from family homes, with a LON of 3 or higher. People do not have to be affiliated with FAVARH; once they move they would be, but could continue to have a different day provider.
 - There may also be an increase of more clustered IHS settings. There is a committee working on developing guidelines. This could be individuals with the same agency, however, it could also be people that self-direct who could pool resources.
 - HARC has also been working to identify a location and has identified one in Hartford on Asylum Ave. They are partnering with Chrysalis. The building may take a little longer since they are historical buildings. It will probably be ready in about two years. HARC will be the service provider and Chrysalis will oversee the housing piece. It will be 75% community-based and 25% ID among three buildings within close proximity.
 - Emergency Transitional Housing – In July, an RFP for three settings across the state (one in each Region) was issued. They are considered CRS settings. The first to open was the North Region called Branches, run by RMS in Meriden. It opened on January 7th and the first three people in the program are doing very well and are ready to move on. The program is similar to the Step-down Unit for people who are at risk of homelessness. There is clinical support but not to the extent of the Step-down Unit. The South Region unit should open sometime in May. In the West Region, there were not enough proposals received so a new RFP was issued and new proposals are being reviewed. The average stay will be no longer than 90-180 days.
 - Clinical Support Team – This was another initiative to help support providers. A Notice of Opportunity went out and two providers will be providing short-term clinical support to providers.

- Assistive Technology – Since the presentation that was made here last month, Patricia Cymbala and Amy Blazawski have been working with providers, staff, and case managers across the state. Over the last month, all of the NR respite centers have been set up as “smart homes”. This will be expanded to SR and WR homes as well. They all now have Ring doorbells (outward facing exterior cameras), and smart programs for appliances that can be voice activated to turn things on and off for individuals with mobility issues. A statewide steering committee continues to meet.
 - Employment – Elisa shared that DDS has a new Director of Family Support Strategies, Ken Cabral. Ken is working with Amber Burke and a committee should be starting soon now that he has been here and is getting more familiar. Project Search has been expanded to two sites per Region to get more training needed for employment. They are also making sure case managers are getting the information out about the Innovative Employment Opportunity grant for potential entrepreneurs (document shared by Collette). Elisa will invite Ken Cabral to the meeting in March.
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- The Legislative Breakfast will be held on February 26th, 8am-10am (2nd FL Atrium)
 - Family Hearing Day – also February 26th – anyone interested in speaking should sign up before the Breakfast

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 18th at 5:00pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Claudia Neumann

Executive Secretary