

# **DDS North Region Regional Advisory Council**

January 20, 2021

Meeting Minutes – Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

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Members Present: Richard Rothstein, Chair; Kathleen Hayes, Vice Chair; Tammy Selinger, Secretary; Donna Clauson; Donna Cohen; Ellyn Little; Kim Little; Mary Lou O'Connor; Lori Sandora; Annette Scully; Tammy Selinger; Elisa Velardo, DDS North Regional Director

Guests: Pat Tyler; Susan Lucek; Leslie Prior

The meeting began at 5:05pm with introductions.

- Regional Director's Update – Elisa Velardo

- Appendix K – Appendix K has allowed some to provide services at home. DDS will be applying to the Federal CMS for an extension of Appendix K, although not all areas will be able to be extended. DDS is working with DSS, who is working with the federal government, on what can be extended. They have been working with Krista Ostaszewski, who previously worked at DSS and understands the DSS system. More detailed information should be available by our February meeting. Details will also be posted on the DDS website. Elisa will also share if she becomes aware of any updates.
- Covid-19 testing has been going well.
- PPE is well stocked.
- Vaccines – Connecticut is doing well (top 10 in the country) with vaccine distribution. We are still in phase 1a, which includes direct support staff and individuals in ICF settings. Many clinics are currently occurring and coordination for individuals in ICF settings is taking place. We will now be entering phase 1b, which will include those 75 years of age and above. 211 has been helping with scheduling which has been difficult for some without computer access. It has been reported that the VAMS (Vaccination Administration Management System) is not very user friendly. The next phase will include those 65-75, and then people in congregate settings and additional frontline workers. Some providers have been working with local health districts to schedule people in congregate settings (non-ICF) but only in small pockets. They will be getting further information this week.

There has been a significant amount of direct support staff that have declined to be vaccinated. DDS and the providers are encouraging staff to be vaccinated and have been working to distribute accurate information to staff about the vaccine. Videos are also being produced to answer questions about the vaccine and increase people's comfort.

The phase after 65-75 will apply to those with underlying medical conditions. It will also apply to individuals living in their own home or family home who have an increased risk of severe illness. The State will provide more information regarding this in the upcoming weeks.

There was discussion regarding CVS and Walgreens clinics that were scheduled with a provider however had to be cancelled due to a supply issue. Elisa stated that she had not heard that there was an issue but will follow up to try to get further clarification.

- IDASH – Programs are being developed in Canton and Bloomfield by FAVARH, and in Hartford by HARC. The Canton program had been delayed because of an elevator inspection however people should be moving in this month. The Bloomfield program should open in late Spring. They are on schedule for April or May. The Hartford program, Asylum Hill, should be about a year, but meetings have started to plan in advance and identify who may benefit. More clustered IHS settings are being explored for those that don't really need CLA (24-hr) support but need to have someone close by, not necessarily in the home.

- AT Notice of Opportunity – A Notice of Opportunity (NOO) was sent out for Assistive Technology in conjunction with the IDD partnership for people who do not already have funding. It asked people to submit what they have as a basic need for things such as hardware, connectivity, apps, etc. In the end, things such as Wi-Fi connectivity for a year and small tablets will be able to be provided. There will be a number of individuals and self-advocates that will now be able to have technology that was not available to them.
- Nomination of Officers – It was agreed that nominations for RAC Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary should be submitted by email and a vote will be held at the February meeting.

A motion for adjournment was made and seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 6:32pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm by virtual teleconference.

Respectfully submitted,

*Claudia Neumann*

Executive Secretary