

# **DDS North Region Regional Advisory Council**

March 15, 2023

Meeting Minutes – Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams (meeting was recorded)

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Members Present: Richard Rothstein, Temporary Chair; Annette Scully, Vice Chair; Lori Caughlin; Donna Clauson; Donna Cohen; Kim Little; Ellyn Little; Mary Lou O'Connor; Susan Prihar; Tammy Selinger; Stacie Silva-Gordon, DDS North Regional Director (ex-Officio member)

Guests: Cynthia Lichtsteiner; Adrianna Ramirez; Dawn Frey, Private ARD (DDS)

Meeting called to order at 5:02pm.

- Introduction of Dawn Frey, Private Assistant Regional Director – Regional Director Stacie Silva-Gordon introduced the new Assistant Regional Director for Private Administration in the North Region, Dawn Frey. Dawn introduced herself and shared that she joins DDS from the private sector where she had worked for 28 years.
- Member introductions
- Open Forum for Public Participation – no public participation
- Legislative Update:
  - Rick Rothstein reported that this is the most exciting year for legislation possibilities. The group of legislators on the Human Services Committee is very determined to get things done that people have wanted for a long time. They are working on a bill numbered 5001, which has 12 sections that are each major.
    - One is dealing with the transportation issue which will be done in cooperation with the Department of Transportation, looking at affordable, and free if possible, transportation for all people with disabilities. It is a statewide initiative. All committees of the legislature are going to work together on this to make sure it happens and is as comprehensive as possible.
    - Broadening of the Autism Waiver – Currently, an individual can functionally not be able to do anything in your personal life and you are still not eligible for DDS services unless you have an IQ of 69 or below. The autism waiver is designed for people who have higher IQ's but there are very limited services and it is limited to an amount of \$50,000 a year. The bill includes a provision to expand the current number of approximately 300 slots that are authorized by the CT General Assembly and approved by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to approximately 900 slots.
    - Workforce development – There is a workforce development program that is being coordinated with the Dept. of Labor with the idea of developing a pipeline for people coming out of school and into various fields where they are needed, such as direct support professionals and nurses. Also, behavioral specialties.
    - Also working on getting more individuals to be able to work and expanding opportunities.
    - Effort to ameliorate the waiting list.
    - Voluntary program to register people in the event they get lost. Using technology for a registry to track is someone gets lost.
    - Most controversial part of the bill is the redefinition of who is eligible to receive DDS services. Currently if IQ is over 69, except in very rare circumstances, someone is not eligible for DDS services. Advocates are pushing for a more functional test, rather than the scientific method of determining ability based on IQ.

- Regional Director's Update – Stacie Silva-Gordon:
  - Reminder for the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday Forums with the Deputy Commissioner; next meeting scheduled for Mar. 28<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm. Topic will be Employment Transformation and ARPA funding. All forums are recorded and posted on the DDS website. If anyone has suggestions for future topics, members can email Claudia or Stacie.
  - ARPA committees are still meeting; information with committee members and agendas/minutes is on the website.
  - So far there have been no transformation plans received from any providers in the North Region, however, our Resource Administrator is in touch with providers and there are some that have expressed interest in submitting a plan for the region to review. Stacie will update as proposals are received.
  - Stacie again welcomed Dawn Frey.
  
- Officer Nominations
  - Rick Rothstein had agreed to be temporary Chair until January. Nominations for a new chairperson are needed. Rick has agreed to continue until a replacement is named. Chairperson, Vice Chair; and Secretary positions need to be filled. Members were asked to submit nominations so an election can be held.
  
- Motion to adjourn was made by Annette Scully; seconded by Tammy Selinger. Meeting was adjourned at 6:05 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
***Claudia Neumann***  
Executive Secretary