

**DDS-South Region
Regional Advisory and Planning Council
Meeting Minutes
June 23, 2010**

Members Present: Chair Claire White, April Dipollina, Nancy Kalal, Steve Fusti, Diane Martin, Danielle Shepard, and Mary McKay, DDS-SR Regional Director/Ex-Officio Member.

Members Absent: Carol Cooney, Michael Del Sole, Jack Frost, Jill Hall and Kim Wollschleager.

Guests: Jean Brookman and Lori Richardson.

I. Chairperson's Report

Call to Order – Incoming Chair Nancy Kalal called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Introductions followed.

Citizen Comment – Ms. Richardson serves on the Board of Directors for SARAH and became aware of the RAC through outgoing Chair Claire White. Ms. Richardson is a parent of a consumer and is interested in learning more about the Council and is considering becoming a member.

Ms. Brookman, whose appointment to this Council is effective August 1, 2010, is seeking information on transition services for a friend whose son attends High Rd. Academy. She is not sure if the young man is a DDS client. Because the family lives in the West Region catchment area, Ms. McKay recommended they start by calling the West Region Helpline. Ms. McKay also suggested they visit the DDS website for transition resources. Council Member April Dipollina reported on a transition workshop that is being held in Mystic in October and said that she would forward the registration flyer to the group following tonight's meeting. She then gave Ms. Brookman the DDS Helpline Brochure and the CTFSN Brochure to share with her friend.

Review of Minutes - A review of the May 19, 2010, meeting minutes ensued. **In the presence of a quorum, and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2010, meeting with the corrections noted at the meeting.**

Statewide Council on Developmental Services Update – The Statewide Council on Developmental Services held its June 10, 2010, meeting at Camp Harkness in Waterford. Ms. McKay thanked this Council for co-hosting the meeting. In spite of inclement weather, the evening went extremely well. The Statewide Council was impressed with the Camp and the amenities afforded to camp users. Camp

Harkness provides an invaluable resource for fun and relaxation for thousands of CT residents with disabilities and their families.

II. Regional Director's Updates

Family Forums – *Creative Support Options for Families* is the theme of the 2010 Fall Family Forums. South Region Forums will be held in Milford, Middletown and East Lyme. Particulars include a family panel and brief presentations on transitioning, T19/SSI, probate, and various aspects of the DDS service system. The Planning Committee is developing a timeline fact sheet that outlines the milestones in the DDS service system that anyone seeking or receiving services from the department need to be aware of. The Planning Committee's next meeting is 7/15/10.

Legislative & Budget Updates – DDS' base services are funded under current legislative appropriations for FY11. Funding is available for all identified high school grads and age-outs. Each region, through recycled funds, has an allocation of \$500K in day program funding to support individuals who do not have a day program or whose needs have increased. The legislature has appropriated \$500K as a transfer from DSS to increase the DSS Home Care Program. The funding will be split equally among the regions and will allow individuals who are not on the waiver access to home health care services that are authorized through the state Medicaid plan. The target group are those with a home health care authorization of greater than 14 hours per week that they cannot access due to lack of providers or geographical part of the state. This will be the second year with no new residential funding to support individuals on the DDS waiting list. The DDS VSP program remains unable to admit new children for services due to funding constraints and a VSP waitlist will be maintained going forward.

Next, Ms. McKay reviewed the process for requesting high school grad funding, residential funding challenges, the waitlist totaling 516 as of March 31, 2010 (Source=MIR Q3 FY10), and the status of the family support grant account. At the Council's request, a summary of FY10 family support grants will be shared at September's meeting.

The Community Training Home (CTH) provider payment system is changing. Effective July 1, the CTH payment structure will be modified to be commensurate with the consumer's level of need (LON). This change represents a long overdue increase for CTH providers and we are hopeful that the change will entice prospective providers.

At the request of Chair White, Ms. McKay gave an update on the implementation of the Attendance-Based Reimbursement System for day services. The change was necessitated by a significant budget rescission in the day services account and was rolled-out in February, which was not optimum timing due to the shortened month and the number of holidays. Attendance was approximately 82% during

February on average but has been increasing since then. Providers are averaging just under 90% attendance at this point. DDS gave 1x awards to providers based on hardship requests to ease the transition to the new system. Federal CMS requires states participating in the waiver to have uniformed rates for service models and pay only for services rendered.

Special Olympics Update – DDS exhibited at the Special Olympics Summer Games at SCSU in June. DDS tables included Birth-To-Three, Self Advocacy and Family Support Network. Over 300 people visited our sites. SOAR, a new Special Olympics program that provides legal assistance, trust planning and financial planning to individuals with ID, and is being supported by DDS, was also on hand. Representatives appeared to be taking names for future contacts. The event was a success and the Region plans on exhibiting at future games. The games provide a highly efficient opportunity for outreach.

III. New Business

Council Self Assessment – Council Member April Dipollina said the self-assessment tool the Family Support Council used was not available but that she would continue to pursue it on the RAC’s behalf. She then reported on the FSC’s activities in this area. They included a review of their governing statute, a sharing of individual interpretations of the statute, and the development of committees to address areas important to each.

Discussion on the mission and purpose of this Council based on statutory mandate followed. The Council grappled with whether their role is purely advisory or action oriented. It appears that the statute speaks only to advising the Regional Director and not families. Ms. McKay noted that this Council has chosen to be more action-related than past council’s. Improving outreach to families has been the theme of this group and they’ve accomplished it.

A question was raised on whether the Council’s advice actually weaves its way into DDS Policy. Ms. McKay explained that while she informally shares with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner some of the Council’s ideas and suggestions, there is no formal mechanism for it to have an impact on DDS policy. The group contemplated the effectiveness of “advising” and a desire to be more involved on the front end of DDS decision making was expressed by some. Ms. McKay will raise the issue with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner and report back at the Council’s September meeting.

Council Agenda/Priorities for Next Year –A suggestion was made to think about what the words “consult” and “advise” mean to individual members in relation to determining Council priorities for next year. How will the Council move forward on consulting and advising the Regional Director on family needs? Will the Council continue to be action-oriented in addressing identified needs?

Over the summer the newly elected Chair will work with the Regional Director to craft a letter outlining the steps members need to take in order to be prepared for September's meeting. Council Priorities for next year will be determined at the September meeting. Preliminary suggestions for next year's priorities included:

- Increasing volunteer opportunities
- Increasing residential options
- Increasing recreational opportunities for consumers
- Developing and maintaining a DDS Family Blog

Election of Officers – Nancy Kalal, Steve Fusti, Danielle Shepard and Kim Wollschleager were nominated for the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair and Co-Secretary respectively. **In the presence of a quorum, and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council approved the election of Nancy Kalal, Steve Fusti, Danielle Shepard and Kim Wollschleager to the office of Chair, Vice-Chair and Co-Secretary respectively for a term of one year effective this day, June 23, 2010.**

IV. Old Business

Membership – A review of Council membership ensued.

- **Jill Hall** - The Council agreed to relieve Ms. Hall of membership due to lack of meeting attendance. The RD's office will send to Ms. Hall a letter notifying her of same on the Council's behalf.
- **Michael Del Sole, Esq.** - Decision on Attorney Del Sole's continued membership on the Council was deferred to the September meeting. Chair Kalal will follow-up with him about his attendance during the summer.
- **Lori Richardson** – At the conclusion of the meeting, Ms. Richardson expressed her desire to join the Council. At the request of the Chair, the Regional Director's office will recommend to Commissioner O'Meara her appointment to this Council.

V. Adjournment

With no further business before the Council, Chair White adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

VI. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the DDS-South Region Advisory and Planning Council will be held on Wednesday, September 22, 2010, at 6:00 p.m., at the Henry Carter Hull Library, Clinton.

Minutes Submitted By:

Jolie Crescimano-Goss

Jolie Crescimano-Goss
Executive Secretary, DDS-South Region