

**DDS-South Region  
Regional Advisory and Planning Council  
Meeting Minutes  
March 24, 2010**

**Members Present:** Vice-Chair Nancy Kalal, Carol Cooney, April Dipollina, John (Jack) Frost, Steve Fusti, Danielle Shepard, and Mary McKay, DDS-SR Regional Director/Ex-Officio Member.

**Members Absent:** Marianne Burke, Michael Del Sole, Jill Hall, Claire White and Kim Wollschleager.

**Guests:** Marie Bennett, DDS-SR Assistant Regional Director, Individual & Family Support Division, Diane Martin, and Jean Brookman.

**I. Chairperson's Report**

**Call to Order** - Vice-Chair Kalal called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Introductions followed.

**Citizen Comment** - Ms. Dipollina updated the group on the Family Support Council's Legislative Meet and Greet in March. A large number of southeastern CT legislators attended. The event went well; however, Ms. Dipollina felt that in the future a unified approach in terms of focus topics would be more beneficial to the cause. Subsequently, the FSC decided that it would revisit its governing statute and engage in a self-assessment activity to solidify their understanding of the Council's mission; and thereby, setting a unified course for future initiatives.

Ms. Dipollina suggested that the RAC engage in a similar exercise to determine if its members hold varying opinions and interpretations of this Council's mission. The exercise will assist the Council in forwarding the charge of the statute. The Council agreed to move forward with this activity. Ms. Dipollina suggested that members review the statute and come to the May meeting prepared to share their thoughts on it. Ms. Dipollina offered to try to get a copy of the self-assessment tool used by the FSC for this council's use.

**In the presence of a quorum and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to engage in self-assessment activities, as presented to the meeting.**

**Review of Minutes** - A review of the January 27, 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 January 27, 2010, meeting as presented to the meeting.**

**Statewide Council on Developmental Services Update** – Ms. McKay prefaced the discussion with a budget update. Through internal activities, DDS’ has managed to reduce its FY10 deficit to \$3.5M. The deficit is in Birth to Three and will be covered by the transfer of personal service holdbacks. Predicated by the Governor’s \$3.6M rescission to day services accounts this year, DDS decided to enact an attendance-based billing system for day programs effective 2/1/10. Ms. McKay provided a detailed explanation of attendance based billing. It is anticipated that DDS’ FY11 budget will enable the Department to continue to provide basic services. The Governor’s proposed mid-term budget adjustments does not call for any new reductions to our budget.

Mr. Frost gave an update on the March meeting of the Statewide Council on Developmental Services. He provided this Council with information on the Commissioner’s testimony on the Governor’s proposed mid-term budget adjustments for FY 2011, an act concerning the administration of the DDS, and on DDS’ budget deficiency hearing. Following, DDS’ responses to questions posed at the Results Based Accountability for DDS’ VSP program and to the conversion of 17 group homes from public to private in FY 10, was distributed and reviewed. Ms. McKay elaborated on the savings to the Department because of the conversions. Next, DDS testimony on **Senate Bill No. 282 – An Act Concerning Implementation of an Attendance-Based Rate System by the Department of Developmental Services** and **House Bill No. 5245 – An Act establishing a task force to Study the Privatization of Group Homes**, was distributed and reviewed. Discussion ensued on the downsizing of publicly operated programs and group homes. Mr. Frost also shared information about possible tax credits to employers of individuals with autism spectrum disorders and DDS’ sexual assault bill. Lastly, changes to Medicare Part D Coverage (for pharmacy) were discussed. The change amounts to a cost shift of \$15 per month in pharmaceutical co-payments from the government to the consumer.

DDS Self Advocate Coordinators presented at the Council’s last meeting. They gave an update on their goals and activities and reviewed the principles of self-advocacy. Mr. Frost said the presentation was well done and that the Self-Advocate Coordinators are an asset to the Department and a valuable resource to consumers.

## **II. Regional Director’s Updates**

**Introduction of Ms. Marie Bennett and overview of IFS Division** - Ms. McKay introduced Ms. Marie Bennett to the Council. Ms. Bennett is the new South

Region IFS ARD. Ms. Bennett held the same position in the West Region for the last eight years. Ms. Bennett transferred to the SR to fill a vacancy left by Thomas Dailey's transfer to the position of ARD for the Private Division. His transfer was necessitated by the retirement of Christine Rich.

Ms. Bennett updated the Council on recent activities of the Individual & Family Support Division. Updates included:

- New SR Transition Coordinators (names to be forwarded to the group following the mtg.)
- New Educational Liaisons (names to be forwarded to the group following the mtgs.)
- Helpline stats (over 250 different inquiries fielded and responded to since inception)
- Helpline satisfaction survey coming up – results to be shared with the Council at a future meeting
- Non-waivered caseload ratios are 1:85
- Waivered caseload ratios are 1:40
- Intake/Eligibility is on going
- Case management discontinued for individuals on the Katie Becket Waiver effective 4/1/10
- New Family Grant Process. Annual grants have been discontinued. Now families must apply for a grant each year through the Helpline. Maximum award is \$5,000 per year, per family. Over \$1M in grant funding is currently available. Funding can be used for employment, camperships, home modifications, and bridge funding. It is important to note that grant dollars are not held to the same standards as waived funds. The grant account has to be exhausted by the end of the fiscal year. Please share the availability of these funds with your networks.

At Ms. Brookman's request, Ms. McKay reviewed the Department's process for requesting high school grad funding each year.

**Planning for Spring Family Forums** – The Helpline was the focus of the 2009 Fall Family Forums. Council members served on the planning committee and their efforts helped to make the forums quite successful. Discussion on topics for the spring forums ensued. Council recommendations included:

- Housing Issues
- T19 Issues
- Aging Issues
- Sibling Issues

Mr. Fusti recommended using Helpline data to cull topics. Ms. Dipollina said that there was a huge turnout at the FSN's T19 Workshop. The response was so great,

that a waitlist for a second session had to be developed. Understanding and applying for T19 is something many families struggle with.

### **III. New Business**

**Employment for All: A Day of Thinking Creatively About Jobs** - Mr. Fusti announced that on 4/29/10, the Henn family would be returning to CT to share their expertise and creativity in developing employment for their autistic daughter. Registration is free and space is limited. The registration flyer has been posted to the DDS website. Attendance is highly recommended.

**Council Membership** - A review of membership and terms of office ensued. After discussion, the Council determined that:

- Marianne Burke will be relieved of membership due to her inability to attend Council meetings.
- The Council will recommend to the Commissioner the appointment of Diane Martin to the Council. The Regional Director will forward the recommendation to the Commissioner on the Council's behalf.
- Michael Del Sole's first term of membership expired on 1/1/10. The Regional Director's office will contact him to determine if he is interested in serving a second term.
- Claire White's second term of general membership expires 4/1/10; however, she will continue in her role as Chair through the June 2010 meeting.
- The terms' of current officers expire on June 1, 2010; however, each will continue to serve in their respective roles through the June 2010 meeting.
- New officer nominations will be held at the May meeting.
- Voting will take place at the June meeting.

### **IV. Adjournment**

With no further business before the Council, Vice-Chair Kalal adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

V. **Next Meeting Date**

The next meeting of the DDS-South Region Advisory and Planning Council will be held on Wednesday, May 19, 2010, at 6:00 pm, at the Henry Carter Hull Library in Clinton.

Minutes Submitted By:

*Jolie Crescimano-Goss*

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Executive Secretary

DDS-South Region