

**DDS-South Region
Regional Advisory and Planning Council
Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2011**

Members Present: Chair Diane Martin, Jean Brookman, Carol Cooney, April Dipollina, Lori Richardson, Danielle Shepard, Mary McKay, DDS Interim Deputy Commissioner /Ex-Officio Member, and Scott Wolfe, Acting Regional Director/Director of Public Programs.

Members Absent: Michael Del Sole

Member Resignation: Due to personal reasons, Mr. Steve Fusti has resigned from the Council.

Guests: Jack Frost, Gloria Hannans and family, Wanda Morton, Gail Roundtree, and Allison Silva.

I. Chairperson's Report

- **Call to Order** –Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.
- **Citizen Comment** – During introductions, Mrs. Hannans shared that her son, a resident of the Ellsworth Avenue CLA, had moved there from the Wintergreen CLA just two years ago and that she did not want him to have to move again. Next, Ms. Roundtree stated that she was there to speak on behalf of her sister, a resident of the Ellsworth Avenue CLA, regarding the closure of the home. Ellsworth has been her home for many years and she does not want her to move. Ms. Roundtree shared concerns over how the closure plans were communicated to families, the short-notice given to families, not receiving appropriate forms, and miscommunication about the families' rights to a PAR. Ms. Roundtree felt that the case manager's approach to the issue was insensitive and she felt bullied when she was told that if a home was not decided on, the residents would be moved to the Meriden Campus. She raised concern over the lack of response to her initial concerns back in August. Ms. Roundtree stated that DDS should have set monies aside for home repairs or sought creative financing options to cover the costs.

Ms. McKay said that she received the Objection to Transfer Forms from both families only recently, along with other emails and letters of concern. She explained that the Ellsworth CLA is an older two-story home in need of many repairs and modifications. DDS has already had to create two first floor bedrooms and more changes would be necessary to accommodate the needs of the residents. At this point, the upkeep and maintenance of the home is cost prohibitive. Although, there has been ongoing discussions about the closure of

Ellsworth over the last year or so, and DDS still intends to close the home, the department has decided to slow the pace of planning and work with families through this fiscal year to look for an alternate residential setting for their loved ones (letters disseminated). Options such as identifying a home in the New Haven area or moving some of the residents as a group to a new home, can all be explored with the department.

- **Review of Minutes** - A review of the June 22, 2011, 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 June 22, 2011, meeting as presented.**

II. RD's Report

- **Administrative Update** – Deputy Commissioner duPree retired at the end of August. Since that time, Mary has served as the Interim Deputy Commissioner. A rotating schedule of coverage is in place for the Regional Director's office in the South. Included in the rotation are ARD's Marie Bennett, Thomas Dailey, and Scott Wolfe. Scott is here tonight as this week's Acting Regional Director. Following, Mary announced that she had originally planned to retire in the spring of 2012; however, a recent opportunity to retire sooner arose. She is hopeful that she will be allowed to return to work in a 120-day temporary retiree worker position through the end of the calendar year following her official retirement.

DDS is in a great period of transition. The department is down 500 positions statewide from our authorized position count including additional employees opting to retire by 10/1. The department hopes to be able to fill up to 100 positions. All agencies have been instructed to submit refill requests by 10/5. DDS is seeking approval to fill a shortlist of vacancies and a few key 120-day positions. DDS' infrastructure is very lean at this time, but Ms. McKay stressed that core services related to individuals' health and safety are being maintained by both the public and private sectors. It is hoped that authorization to refill key positions will be forthcoming.

- **Council on Developmental Services – Update on 9/8/11 DDS Five-Year Plan** – RAC members joined the statewide council at their last meeting for a brainstorming session on the next DDS Five-Year Plan. Commissioner Macy will do a webcast soon to share the information he received during this session and his recent round of listening tours. Public hearings on the proposed plan are scheduled for November 1 at the LOB and November 2 at DDS-SR James Street Office in New Haven. Jolie will send the group an email to confirm the time of each hearing and to let them know if the hearings will air on CT-N.

- Budget/Legislative Update** – The FY12 Budget positions DDS well to continue services to consumers. Most SR grads started in their programs, in spite the 12/1 delay in appropriations funding. The Governor has recently requested a total of \$135M in rescissions from state agencies. DDS’ portion is \$9.6M from personal services, which may affect some position refills. Operating expenses and workers comp accounts are being managed. FY13 grads remain in the budget, with a delayed start date. DDS anticipates handling FY13 grad start dates, as done in the past, to meet the priority needs of families who require continuity of services after high school. Mid-term budget adjustments are due and each agency needs to propose savings for FY13. DDS is achieving needed savings through attrition in public sector services. Recently the Department closed admissions to Early Connections, the state operated Birth To Three program. The state run program is costly running about \$20,000 per child vs. \$8,400 per child for the same services through the private sector. Early Connections is the last public program to close admissions. The department continues to shift resources to family supports and private supports whenever possible. It is important to note that the current budget directs the closure of five CLA’s statewide. Three of the five homes have closed to date. The remaining two homes must be closed by the end of the FY. There may be more closures outside of the five, as some public CLA’s have only two or three clients living in them.
- Ideas for Legislation** – Ideas for new legislation are due to Christine Pollio, the DDS Director of Legislative Affairs, in October. Past grassroots ideas that have lead to new legislation include the Respectful Language Bill and changes to the Guardianship statute allowing families to apply prior to their child’s 18th birthday. Ideas may be emailed to Jolie or Christine.
- LPRIC** – The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (LPRIC) is currently conducting a study entitled *Provision of Selected Services for Clients with ID*. A briefing for this topic will held on 9/27/11 at 12pm in Rm. 2D at LOB. Staff will present descriptive background information pertinent to the study and respond to questions raised by committee members. An informational public hearing will be held later that same day beginning at 2pm. Commissioner Macy has been invited to attend in order to answer any questions that come up. The hearing will air on the web via CTN. The focus of the study is to compare the cost of providing public and private services to clients of DDS who receive 24-hour care in community or institutional settings to determine the most cost-effective means to deliver those services. Information on the scope of the study was disseminated at the meeting.
- STS** – Mary gave an update on the implementation of the STS Settlement Agreement. To date, 28 people have expressed an interest in moving off campus. Two groupings have been identified and RFPs have gone out. It was noted that the LON of STS consumers is similar to that of the rest of DDS’

population. Starting in November the process of “professional judgment” will be used to determine the most integrated living situation recommended for each individual.

- **Hurricane Irene Update** – Debriefing on Hurricane Irene ensued. There were a large number of evacuations, power outages, and phone outages. Some evacuations came after the storm due to prolonged power outages. A Mystic CLA was directed to evacuate by the town. Camp Harkness was closed for a few days. Overall, things went smoothly. The DDS Emergency Command Center was up and running. Regular reports were provided to the Governor's office. One of our providers, Brian House, lost a home located in Deep River due to a generator fire.

III. New Business

- **Council Vacancies** – A review ensued of the Council’s governing statute. With Mr. Fusti’s recent resignation, the Council now has three vacancies. Current members agreed to continue to engage in outreach and bring possible recruits to the November meeting. The need for diversity among the membership was raised. A recommendation was made to post a members wanted add on the DDS website. Jolie will prepare an announcement for the web.

IV. Old Business

- **2011 Council Priorities – Next Steps**

Transition Planning/Outreach–targeting 16-21 year-old population:

Over the last couple of months, the Council has seen an increase in the number of transition workshops throughout the state. It appears that the subject is experiencing a period of heightened awareness among schools, family organizations, advocacy organizations and the State Department of Education. Mary announced that DDS has received permission from the state of NJ to modify the “Great Expectations” manual for CT. This is being funded through a Connectivity grant. The CT version is close to coming out. IFS ARD Marie Bennett is leading the effort. Jolie will get an update on the status of the publication from Marie and report back. A plan for distribution was discussed. Since outreach on this issue appears to be on the rise, the Council decided to focus its efforts on promoting the concept of creative housing options among DDS families.

Creative Housing Options: Discussion focused on next steps. A suggestion to bring DDS parents together for a parent-to-parent discussion was made. The Council would like to identify DDS families that have been successful in creative housing endeavors to see if they would be willing to share their

experiences in a workshop-type setting. DDS staff with expertise in the area could be asked to come to the table too. Mary suggested exploring technology as it relates to independent/creative living arrangements as well. Mary recommended DDS staff Greg McMahon, Self Determination Director, and Marie Bennett, IFS Assistant Regional Director, for the project. The Council feels a substantial period of planning time will be needed in order for the event to be a success. It anticipates holding the event in the spring of 2012. Target mailing will be required. Discussion ensued on how best to address resource/funding limitations that families will ultimately face. Mary noted that the five-year plan would likely include a goal related to this topic.

Creative housing options discussed at tonight's meeting included:

- The Live-in Companion
- CCH Model
- University Co-ops
- CRS

V. Fall Family Forum

Flyer disseminated. DDS South Region is collaborating with NEAT and Lighthouse for a Fall Family Forum on October 11. An all day Assistive Technology Conference sponsored by Lighthouse Voc-Ed Center and NEAT will be held at the Mystic Marriott followed by a ribbon cutting for the NEAT Center satellite location in Mystic. The day's activities will conclude with the DDS South Region Family Forum on technology. Mary noted that DDS plans to pilot a remote monitoring product in the future. Product research is ongoing. Several states have added remote monitoring as a waiver-funded service option.

VI. Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DDS South Region Advisory and Planning Council will be held on November 16, 2011, at 6:00 p.m., at the Henry Carter Hull Library in Clinton.

The Council invited Mary to attend the November meeting if her job is extended, to which she agreed. Thomas Dailey, ARD for Private Services, will attend as that week's Acting Regional Director.

VII. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by:

Jolie Crescimano-Goss

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Executive Secretary, DDS South Region