

**DDS South Region
Regional Advisory and Planning Council
Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2021
6:00 PM
(Teleconference)**

Members Participating: Chair Leslie Bridges-Parent, Lynn Arezzini, Robin Brewer, Carol Cooney, Barbara Deindorfer, Heidi Earle, Kate Haaland, and Thomas Dailey, DDS South Regional Director

Scribe: Jolie Crescimano-Goss, DDS Executive Secretary

Chairperson's Report:

- **Call to Order** – Chair Bridges-Parent called the meeting to order at 6:03PM.
- **Citizen Comments** – Comments and discussion centered on vaccination prioritization. Concerns raised over why DDS individuals living in family homes or independently have not been prioritized to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in Phase 1b (People 16-65 with co-morbidity issues).

Discussion ensued on who is advocating for this segment of the DDS community. Director Dailey confirmed that Commissioner Scheff and staff have been advocating for the DDS population. DDS Chief of Staff Katie Rock-Burns and DDS Health Services Director Val Bagby-Young hold integral roles. The Department of Public Health is leading the state's vaccination response efforts driven by CDC Guidelines.

Mr. Dailey reported that some residential providers are moving forward with vaccinating staff and individuals.

Suggestion made to move to vaccinating individuals before staff and amend prioritization phase 1b to include all people with IDD or at least those with higher LONs. It was noted that the states of CA and NY have included people with IDD under their co-morbidity classification.

Suggestion made to reach out to your day/vocational provider for the vaccine, as some adults living at home have received the vaccine through their day provider agency.

Director Dailey will convey these concerns to DDS Administrators and update the RAC on the outcome of his follow-up before the next meeting. He pointed out that CT is doing quite well in managing many aspects of the pandemic in comparison to other states and given the lack of vaccine supply. He shared his understanding of how the duration of the pandemic has left everyone feeling restricted and fatigued.

Review of Meeting Minutes: Following review, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2021, meeting as presented.

Regional Director's Updates: Director Dailey updated the Council on recent happenings at DDS.

- The DDS Step-down Unit in Newington is full. The program has successfully helped more than 16 people since inception.
- The EHP operated by RMS in Meriden has achieved success as well.
- The DDS Transitional Unit in Meriden is full.
- Consideration is being given to opening a transitional program in the New Haven area.
- DDS Respite Centers remain closed due to the pandemic.
- DDS IFS Support Teams are operational. Teams are focused on emergency situations.
- The DDS Norwich Dental Clinic is open and fully operational. Staff are busy catching up on cancellations.
- There are several vacant or soon to be vacant positions in the Region's Wallingford office due to retirements. The region is working with HR on getting the positions approved for refill and approval of TWR positions for some to hold us over while the hiring process plays out.
- Diabetes research at DDS is ramping up. Julia Walsh of the DDS Business Analytics Unit is working with our populations' data to identify trends and inform next steps.
- DDS is exploring increasing the rate for Healthcare Coordination rates, so it is more in line with expected compensation.
- DDS is increasing its focus on providers that use nurse consulting agencies to address health care coordination and oversight.
- Providers continue to struggle with staffing levels, callouts, and testing and vaccine challenges just like families. The duration of the pandemic is tiresome and wearisome to all.
- DDS is applying for a 6-month extension of Appendix K (moratorium on certain federal waiver requirements).

Director Dailey will invite a guest speaker to the RAC's March meeting to further discuss Appendix K.

Open Council Discussion: Member Arezzini shared good news about her son's living arrangements.

New Business: Chair Bridges-Parent requested to use video conferencing for RAC meetings for the time being going forward. Jolie will follow-up and get back to all with an answer before the next meeting.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jolie Crescimano-Goss

Jolie Crescimano-Goss

Executive Secretary

DDS South Region

Next Meeting: March 17, 2021 / 6:00 PM / MS Teams