

West Region Advisory Council

Minutes

Via teleconference

4:00 p.m.

January 21, 2021

Participants:

Sue Bastien, Chuck Bergamo, Marina Derman, Lori Chiappenello, Fritz Gorst, Gil Kellersman, Karen Simon

1. CALL TO ORDER –

A roll call was made by Chairperson Bergamo. After verification of a quorum, the meeting was called to order at 4:09 pm

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETINGS MINUTES –

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the Minutes of May 14, 2020.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S –

Mr. Bergamo is also a member of the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities (CCDD). This is a federally funded council. Grants are awarded by the CCDD. This Council includes all other disabilities, but is housed in the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Mr. Bergamo stated that this is the ending of the 5 Year Plan. The focus of the 5 Year Plan was to close STS. The closure did not happen. At this point, the CCDD is looking for input on new focus areas for the upcoming 5 Year Plan. Mr. Bergamo invited anyone on the WR RAC to propose new topic areas if they are interested in doing so. There has been suggestions from others to focus on technology assistance for individuals with developmental disabilities. Given the new way of doing business via technology, it is felt that improvement in this area would be beneficial.

4. REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S UPDATE –

Fritz gave an update on COVID-19 data (i.e. deaths, hospitalizations, etc.) This information is found on the website: <https://portal.ct.gov/DDS/General/COVID19/DDS-COVID-19-Figures>.

He shared that many individuals are still very hesitant to return day programs because of the current COVID numbers. At present, some day programs are running at 50% capacity. The day programs are running like some school systems.

There was a question about whether the DDS is requiring individuals to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Fritz stated that the Department is encouraging staff to take the vaccine; however, at this point it is not being mandated. He also stated that a video has been shared with staff and providers. Individuals that were not considering taking the vaccine have had a change of heart. After viewing the video, there is a higher percentage of staff who may now take the vaccine.

The Department has begun giving vaccines to DDS staff who have direct contact with consumers.

There was a question about how DDS will be moving forward with permanent changes as a result of the pandemic (i.e. usage of technology). Fritz indicated that there will most likely be changes to our operation; however, nothing official has been decided. We are presently trying to keep afloat during this pandemic and doing the best we can at this point.

A question was presented about EVV and paying individuals. Individuals should present timesheets as well as use the EVV system until all of the glitches have been worked out.

5. NEW BUSINESS

No new official business was presented.

6. OLD BUSINESS

It was stated that at the begin of the pandemic there was an issue with families accompanying their loved ones to the hospital. Fritz shared that the situation has improved and as a department we have not received complaints from families experiencing issues in this area. It was stated, however, that hospitals make their own policies and DDS cannot require a hospital to lift any bans that they may have in place.

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

No one from the public participated in the meeting; therefore, no public comment.

8. NEXT MEETING –

March 18, 2021 at 4pm via teleconference; invitations will be sent out via Outlook.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council adjourned the meeting at 4:38 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Eunice B. Rivera
Executive Secretary, DDS West Region