



State of Connecticut
Independent Office of the Ombudsperson for Developmental Services
460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06017

February 2022 Monthly Report to the Council on Developmental Services

Assistance to Individuals and Families

In relation to my duties as Ombudsperson I communicated with individuals, families, advocates, DDS and outside agencies on numerous issues including:

1. Family members who are not guardians having access to information obtaining information and visitation for family members who are not guardians. (2)
2. Getting increased in home supports and home modifications to increase accessibility for an individual who broker his foot. (1)
3. Working with a private school to understand DDS eligibility criteria and to connect with advocacy organizations for training and support. (1)
4. Coordinating an overview of Greater Hartford Transit District transportation options for DDS Case Management Supervisors.
5. Resolving issues between providers and individuals & families regarding health concerns, boundaries, communication, respecting individual rights, visitation, program flexibility, individualized supports. (6)
6. Problem solving with family and support broker around self-directing supports. (1)
7. Providing information on funding options including Community First Choice. (3)
8. Providing information and connecting with resources on ADA, traumatic brain injuries, supports for seniors, and community housing supports. (12)
9. Ensuring public access to Autism Advisory Council meetings. (1)
10. Medical transportation. (1)
11. Communicating with law enforcement and DMHAS about the victimization of individual related to credit card fraud. (1)

To address these concerns, I connected families with resources and information inside and outside of DDS, and maintained regular contact with the following people and entities within DDS:

- Commissioner Scheff,
- Deputy Commissioner Mason,
- Regional Directors & Assistant Regional Directors,
- Case Manager Supervisors & Case Managers
- Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- West Region Director of Individual and Family Supports

Interaction with DDS, other state agencies and community organizations

- Toured DDS public group homes, transition program, Hartford Regional Center and Harkness Park.
- Attended State Employee Leadership Network (SELN) Strategic Planning Steering Committee and co-chaired the SELN Interagency Collaboration Subcommittee.
- Met with representatives from the State Department of Education and the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services to get a better understanding of interagency collaboration and the current path to employment for people with I/DD.
- Attended regular state-wide and regional meetings including incident command calls, forensic meetings, waiver team meetings, provider leadership meetings and others.

- Met with representatives from the Greater Hartford Transit District to discuss transportation options for people with I/DD.
- Connected the CT Women's Education & Legal Fund with resources to train members on guardianship and Supported Decision making.
- Attended a South Region Regional Advisory Council meeting.
- Met with several private providers to discuss types supports offered.
- Met with the DMHAS Office of the Commissioner Client Rights and Grievance Specialist.

Areas of Concern

- Impact of staffing crisis on ability to access supports, person centered planning, advocacy, provider flexibility and morale.
- Impact of loss of staff and experience, particularly at STS and Regional Centers due state employee retirements.
- Maintaining active family involvement, advocacy and support for individuals who receive supports outside of the family home.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Shannon Jacovino
Ombudsperson
February 17, 2022**