



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

**February 2023 Monthly Report to the Council on Developmental Services**

**Assistance to Individuals and Families**

In relation to my duties as Ombudsperson, between 2/16/2023-3/15/2023, I assisted approximately 17 individuals, families, advocates, guardians, DDS staff, legislators, state agencies, providers, and members of the community on numerous issues including:

1. Individual rights.
2. Legal representative rights and responsibilities.
3. Eligibility.
4. Issues/complaints about private providers.
5. Issues/problems related to staffing crisis.
6. Abuse & neglect.
7. Health & safety.
8. Understanding & navigating DDS system.
9. Communication.
10. Day supports.
11. Residential supports.
12. Behavioral Services Program
13. Information/research/referral community resources.

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,
- Regional Directors & Assistant Regional Directors,
- Case Manager Supervisors & Case Managers
- Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Self Determination Directors
- Health Management Director
- DDS Legal Department
- Director of Case Management
- Self Determination Directors
- DDS Abuse & Investigation Division.
- DMHAS, DCF, DAS.

**Interaction with DDS, other state agencies and community organizations**

- Member of DDS Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee and DEI Strategic Planning Committee.
- Member of State Employee Leadership Network (SELN) Leadership Subcommittee.
- Member of Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- Co-chair of ARPA Individual & Family Engagement Committee.
- Member of ARPA Advisory Committee.
- Attended DDS state-wide and regional meetings including incident command calls, forensic meetings, waiver team meetings, provider leadership meetings and others.

- Monthly meeting with Deputy Commissioner Velardo.
- Monthly meeting with DDS Health Management Administrator.
- Bimonthly meeting with DDS Director of Case Management.
- Regular meeting and collaboration with DDS Director of Diversity Equity & Inclusion.
- Meetings and consultation with advocacy organizations including The Arc Connecticut, the CT Family Support Network, and Disability Rights CT.
- Consultation with ARPA consultants Deloitte & the McDowell Communications.
- Consultation with Council on Developmental Services subcommittee on DDS Abuse & Neglect process.
- Attended DD Council Bridging the Gap between Aging and Disability Services presentations.
- Member of BRS CT Competitive Integrative Employment Grant Individualized Supports Subgroup
- Met with The Arc Connecticut, Keep the Promise Coalition.
- Attended public hearing on HB 5001, AN ACT CONCERNING RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY.
- Attended Council on Developmental Disabilities Legislative Committee meeting.
- Meetings with CT DDS Director of Specialized Service Development, Health Management Director and Abuse and Investigation Division Directors to better understand DDS supports, policies and practices.

#### **Areas of Concern**

- Impact of staffing crisis on access supports, person centered planning, advocacy, provider flexibility and quality of supports.
- Supporting, protecting, and encouraging individual and family advocacy.
- Provider accountability.
- The lack of support options for individuals with developmental disabilities who are not eligible for DDS funding.
- Disproportionate guardianship statistics in CT as compared to other states, and the lack of information on alternatives to guardianship.

**Respectfully Submitted,  
Shannon Jacovino  
Ombudsperson  
March 15, 2023**