



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

November 2023 Monthly Reports to the Council on Developmental Services

Assistance to Individuals and Families

In relation to my duties as Ombudsperson, between 10/18/2023 – 11/15/2023, I assisted approximately 30 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/complaints about DDS.
6. Issue/complaints about a guardian/legal representative.
7. Issues/problems related to staffing crisis.
8. Complaints from family members who are not legal representatives.
9. Quality of supports.
10. Abuse & neglect.
11. Health & safety.
12. Understanding & navigating DDS system.
13. Understanding and navigating systems outside of DDS.
14. Communication.
15. Employment supports.
16. Day supports.
17. Residential supports.
18. Questions about benefits and funding.
19. ADA, HIPAA, and disability rights.
20. Information/research/referral.
21. Legislator constituent issues.
22. Issues for individuals in hospitals.
23. Collaboration with Long Term Care Ombudsman.
24. Questions/issues in ICF group home.
25. Questions/issues regarding Long Term Care facilities.
26. BSP & youth services.
27. Consultation with other state agencies.
28. Issues/complaints re: unmet needs for individuals with complex and intensive support needs.

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 Velardo
- Regional Directors & Assistant Regional Directors,
- Case Manager Supervisors & Case Managers
- Health Management Director
- DDS Legal Department
- Director of Case Management
- Self Determination Directors
- DDS Abuse & Investigation Division.
- DSS
- CT Long Term Care Ombudsperson
- Disability Rights Connecticut
- CT state legislators
- Hospital social workers

Interaction with DDS, other state agencies and community organizations

- Member of DDS Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee and DEI Strategic Planning Committee.
- Member of Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- Co-chair of ARPA Individual & Family Engagement Committee.
- Member of ARPA Advisory Committee.
- Member Supported Decision Making Coalition.
- Attended DDS state-wide and regional meetings.
- Monthly meeting with Commissioner Scheff.
- Monthly meeting with Deputy Commissioner Velardo.
- Monthly meeting with DDS Health Management Administrator.
- Bimonthly meeting with DDS Director of Case Management.
- 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, the Council on Developmental Disabilities and Disability Rights CT.
- Member of BRS CT Competitive Integrative Employment Grant (CT PIE) Individualized Supports Subgroup.
- Member CTPIE North Region Community of Practice.
- Reviewed and provided recommendations for DDS communications with individuals, families, and advocates.
- Attended meeting with DDS and Supported Decision-Making advocates.
- Attended meetings on updating the DDS website.
- Attended the Council on Developmental Disabilities Bridging the Gap Between Aging and Disabilities Services meetings.
- Attended Fall 2023 DDS Community Forums.
- Participated in DDS Shared Living workgroup meetings.

- Attended an ICF conversion meeting with DDS & DSS.
- Met with the DD Council and families with loved ones who have intensive support needs.
- Reviewed the rights of individuals supported by DDS incorporated into section 17a-238 of the Connecticut General Statutes with DDS, ADS, and the Council on Developmental Services in accordance Public Act 23-137.
- Attended the Supported Decision-Making summit.
- Attended DD Council Improving Healthcare Access for People with Developmental Disabilities Speaker Series.
- Attended CT DDS Employment Forum.

Areas of Concern

- Impact of staffing crisis on quality and access to supports, health and safety, and person-centeredness of supports, and individual and family advocacy with private providers.
- 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.
- Access to supports for individuals with diabetes.
- Institutional policies and practices in HCBS support settings.
- Accessing supports and lack of choice for individuals with complex and intensive support needs.

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