

Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Services  
Minutes, May 20, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT: Judy Dowd, Ruth Eren, Jan Galloway, Chera Gerstein, Ann Gionet, Jacqueline Kelleher, David Daniel Klipper, Sara Lourie, James Loomis, Sara Reed, Lois Rosenwald, Jonathan Ross, Angela Spino and Joseph Stobierski

MEMBERS ABSENT: , Jennifer Carroll, Maggie Casciato, Laura Digalbo, Mary Franco, Elaine Flynn, Nikki Richer, Stan Soby, Jennifer Ureta, Tricia Winter, Larry Wood and Robin Wood

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: Kathy Reddington, Lori Conchado

There were no members of the public present. Minutes for the March 18, 2009 meeting were approved.

A series of Op-Ed letters from members of the Advisory Council regarding suggested uses for stimulus funding appeared in the following publications: West Hartford News, Meriden Record Journal, Danbury News Times, Norwich Bulletin and the Norwalk Hour. A letter was sent to the Hartford Courant, but was not published. Upon second request, a letter to the Connecticut Post was published.

There was a discussion of whether there is a need for the establishment of a Public Affairs Committee and what its primary purpose would be. Two possible areas of focus were:

- 1.) Write approve and send information;
- 2.) Track legislation for council members and respond to issues in a timely manner.

Some members felt the council should focus on what our mission is and how effective we want to be before creating a new committee. This conversation lead into a lengthy discussion on the issue of housing and long term planning.

The Housing Committee has met with various sources to gather information and found the issue is complex and feels the state provides housing in a crisis situation rather than through long term planning. We are competing with other groups looking for state and federal stimulus money, such as those with mental illness, homeless and the prison population. Members agreed that we should conduct a "Needs Assessment" to initiate a discussion on funding needed for our population and to begin forging new paths. An assessment will determine what type of housing (individual or shared) are most desirable to those on the spectrum and provide the data to support the need for funding.

The group discussed whether the needs assessment should be done on a small scale, beginning with participants in the pilot and participants from DMHAS Young Adult Services on a larger scale. Ruth Eren mentioned that the Data Committee may be able to work with Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) to develop questions for the questionnaire, but suggested we may already have data, as it is collected in many ways. It was decided that the Housing and Data Committees will meet to look at data available

and make recommendations for discussion and follow-up. Angela Spino, of the Developmental Disabilities Council, has information on housing which she will share with the committees.

The Autism Division is hosting a Housing Forum for consumers in the program. The June 15<sup>h</sup> informational session will be facilitated by Dr. Loomis. Members of the housing committee are invited to attend.

David Daniel shared a handout from a previous meeting (handout is attached), which initiated a discussion of what should be done with the suggestions made by the Private Provider Committee. Kathy Reddington reported that in response to suggestions, the Autism Division has scheduled a Provider Forum in June to share the information with providers and seek their input.

LEND Grant – Mary Beth Bruder of UCONN presented an overview of the LEND Grant, which was awarded to UCONN in 2008. The grant is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services to provide training to professionals aimed at improving the health of infants, children and adolescents who have or are at risk of developing disabilities. UCONN students enrolled in several disciplines, (i.e., Psychology, Nursing, Social Work, Law) integrate class work and field work. The grant has a special emphasis on autism spectrum disorders. David Daniel suggested that our consumers work with the program.

New Assignments:

Joseph Stobierski offered to join the Data Committee.

Sara Lourie will join the Housing Committee.

The meeting adjourned promptly at noon.