

DRAFT Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Services
Minutes, May 19, 2010

Members Present: Nancy Bagatell, Judy Dowd, Ruth Eren, Chera Gerstein, Jan Galloway, Ann Gionet, Jacqueline Kelleher, Co-Chair David Daniel Klipper, Sara Lourie, James Loomis, Kathy Marcione, Sara Reed, Co-Chair Lois Rosenwald, Jonathan Ross, Stan Soby, Tricia Winter, Larry Wood and Jennifer Ureta.

Members Absent: Catherine Abercrombie, Jennifer Carroll, Maggie Casciato, Mary Franco, Angela Klonski, Nikki Richer and Joseph Stobierski,

Ex Officio Members: Kathy Reddington, Lori Conchado

Members of the Public: Darlene Borrie of the All Seasons Academy joined the group to discuss housing needs. All Seasons Academy is a group of educators and parents of whose children are on the spectrum. You may visit their website at: <http://allseasonsacademy.org/>

Discussion of Changes in Membership (Resignations/New Members) David Daniel and Lois have reviewed attendance and spoken to some members about this. Mary Franco has tendered her resignation. They are also interested in suggestions of new members.

Role of the Council – Discussion: The group discussed the role of the Council from its inception as a Steering Committee to its role now as an Advisory Council to the Autism Division and how the Committee can be doing more in this capacity. It was clarified that as an Advisory Council, members have the authority to make recommendations to the Commissioner, Governor and Legislature.

Outcome: The Council needs to work as a group, using our “voice” to lobby and educate Legislators and the public on our issues. We need to become more “Pro-active”, scheduling meetings with the DDS Commissioner and Legislature to make recommendations and advocate for services, including housing options. We need to focus on a couple of important issues for each Legislative Session and prepare ahead of time.

Information Sharing– Discussion: It was noted that although we have resources within the group to keep ourselves informed and educated on issues, we fail to share important information. We need to set-up an “Effective Process” for sharing important information.

Outcome: Co-chairs David Daniel and Lois will become a “Clearing House” for information. This information can then be shared with the Executive Committee, through e-mails to the group and added as Standing Agenda Items for meetings.

We need a small group of people who can track legislation on a regular basis and work with DDS Legislative Liaisons on issues. This info would then be shared with the Council and acted on if appropriate.

Private Provider Committee (Members include Larry Wood, Stan Soby, Sara Lourie and Ann Gionet)

Discussion: The Committee has worked on Development, Training and Services and made recommendations to Division and Council. Committee members and Kathy Reddington met with providers to share this information and found the group was not interested in future meetings.

Outcome: Kathy will meet with Jim Loomis and Co-chairs to further discuss. In the interim, the Committee will remain inactive.

Data Committee (Members include Ruth, Jan, Joseph, Angela, Nancy Jacqui and Jim) The Committee will be on stand-by awaiting input from the Housing Committee.

Housing – (Members include Chera, Lois, Trish, Jan, Cathy, Judy and Jonathan. David Daniel and Larry volunteered to join the group) *Discussion:* There was a lengthy discussion on what has been done and what needs to be done to move forward. This group needs more members who have the time and ability to contribute to its work. Creating a needs assessment survey has proven to be difficult. Lois and David Daniel shared a document they compiled on the Housing Task Force. (Attached)

Outcome: Compile a report using the info we have from other states to show there is a need for housing and how low cost housing initiatives are an alternative to more expensive options. The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) prepared a justification and received Rental Assistance Program certificates (RAP's) for their consumers. We should obtain a copy of their justification as a reference to request 20 RAP's for our consumers. Kathy offered to work with Jim to prepare case studies of 5 Pilot Program participants who would show cost savings in the future by obtaining RAP's and we would need to include other case studies as well. Once the report is prepared, it can be distributed to DDS and the Legislature with our recommendations. This initiative should be worked on over the summer if we expect to present this during the Fall Legislative Session. The Committee will meet and work on an outline of the report. Chera will schedule a conference call and invite everyone on the Council who wishes to participate.

Public Affairs/ Communications (Members include Ann Gionet, Sara Reed, Maggie Casciato and Jen Carroll) – *Discussion:* The role of the Committee was discussed. Possibilities include preparing letters on a regular basis to be sent to newspapers making the public aware of issues, working on position papers to be posted on websites and focusing on specific initiatives at coffee forums.

Outcome: Sara will meet with the Co-Chairs to discuss further.

Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) – Ann Gionet of DPH handed out an attachment and reviewed a Federal Grant the department is applying for. If received, the \$300,000 will provide improved access to comprehensive, coordinated health care and related services for children and youth with ASD's and developmental disabilities. Ann asked that the Council submit a Letter of Support. A motion to do so was made by Jan and seconded by members and then subsequently passed unanimously. Individuals are also encouraged to provide letters of intent no later than June 11th. (Attachment) Ann will be added as an Agenda Item for a meeting to discuss the Medical Home Program and Care Coordinators.

House Bill No. 477 – “An Act Concerning a Tax Credit for Making Jobs Accessible to Employees with Autism Spectrum Disorders”. Lois shared news that this bill will provide a \$2,500 tax credit to employers who hire those on the spectrum. (Bill Attached)

Attachments: Housing Task Force Notes; HRSA Application; House Bill 477

Next Meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2010