

**DDS-South Region
Regional Advisory and Planning Council
Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2014**

Members Present

Chair Jean Brookman, Carol Cooney, Jeffery DePina, Susan Gardner, Lauralyn Lewis, Diane Martin, and Thomas Dailey, DDS South Region Regional Director.

Guests

Marilyn and Brian Nelson, Dawn Chabot, Mandi Drago, Anthony Zumbo, Twyla Skelly, Kathy Peters, Sara Hungerford, SESCT, Deb Ruotolo, Sarah Tuxis, Kathleen Stauffer, Arc-New London County, and Robin Wood, DDS Director of Family Support Strategies & Advocacy.

Call to Order

Chair Brookman called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

Introductions

All made introductions.

Citizen Comment

- Mr. Zumbo inquired about the status of portability for individuals living in Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF). Mr. Dailey reported that there has been no change - ICF funds are not portable at this time unfortunately. The concerns of individuals and families about this matter have been brought to the attention of the Commissioner's office.

Approval of Minutes

Review ensued of the November 20, 2013, meeting minutes.

In the presence of a quorum, and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the November meeting, with the correction noted during the meeting.

Chairperson's Report

Chair Brookman and council members discussed the following:

- **South Region Winter Family Fairs** - The first winter fair was well-received. It was a great opportunity for families to learn about vendors, providers, DDS, and advocacy. The second family fair is scheduled for 2/6/14 from 4-7:30 PM at North Branford Intermediate School. Transportation to and from the site will be available from the DDS office in New Haven.

- **Creative Housing Workgroup** - Continues to meet monthly at the Acton library in Old Saybrook the second Thursday of each month. In response to an inquiry, Mr. Dailey stated that the biggest hurdle to many of the ideas being generated through this workgroup is DDS not having the funding to help those who only need a small amount of funding move forward. Waiver requirements can also be a barrier in some instances. In response to an inquiry, Mr. Dailey noted that Mary-Beth Santarsiero, DDS-South Region PRAT/Waiver Manager, can serve as a resource for answering questions raised by the workgroup. Ms. Santarsiero can be reached by phone at #203-294-5048 or by email at marybeth.santarsiero@ct.gov
- **Family Hearing Day** - Will be held at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) on January 22, 2014, from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM in the Hartford Room (Update: rescheduled to February 7 due to inclement weather). The purpose of the hearing is to educate legislators and the public the needs of people with intellectual disabilities in CT. The Arc-New London County is renting a bus and families are welcome to ride on the bus for free. Contact Denisse Tift at the Arc, if you plan on riding. Ms. Martin spoke to the importance of sharing district specific numbers with representatives.

Regional Director's Report

Thomas Dailey reported on the following topics:

- DDS 2014 Legislative Initiatives.
- DDS Budget - DDS is projecting stability through the end of the fiscal year.
- Channel 8 News story, **High Tech Home**. The Arc of Meriden-Wallingford has opened its first high tech home. The state of the art home, designed for independent living, is a collaboration between the DDS South Region, the Arc and Assisted Living Technologies of Meriden. The story, which will feature the consumer who lives in the home, is scheduled to air toward the end of the month.
- The Wallingford office has moved to its new location, 35 Thorpe Avenue. An Open House is being planned.
- LEA Outreach - A Regional Directors' initiative. Purpose is to educate school districts and families about DDS Services through a series of presentations led by the Regional Director.
- Staffing.
- Round two of the DDS Programmatic Review Committee (PRC) Pilot Project is underway. It is an effort to decrease polypharmacy use among people with ID.
- Provider Mentoring Project - This project calls for participating providers to develop, through a mentorship with top professionals in the field, a platform for transitioning their

operations to allow for a more cost effective way of doing business while maintaining a person-centered, family supported system. From a pool of applicants, the following eight providers were selected to participate in the project:

1. Oak Hill
2. Arc-Meriden/Wallingford
3. Arc-New London County
4. Marrakech
5. VINFEN
6. Education Connections
7. Horizons Programs
8. Journey Found

- Myths related to the DDS Community Living Arrangement System, Wait List and Planning List. Discussion ensued on the differences in licensed vs. unlicensed setting. Unlicensed settings serve three people or less. Settings with more than three people must be licensed. The development of a licensed setting is a lengthy and complicated process.
- Governor Malloy has appointed Jonathan Slifka to a newly-created, cabinet-level position within his administration to advocate on behalf of the state's disability community. As the Governor's Liaison to the disability community, Mr. Slifka will be responsible for increasing outreach on behalf of the Governor and other Executive Branch agencies to people with disabilities in order to provide policy and practical recommendations for advocacy, employment, programs and services. Mr. Slifka will also serve as an ombudsperson. Ms. Wood stated that advocacy groups are already reaching out to Mr. Slifka to share their agendas. The Council can view the Governor's January 8 press conference on CT-N.
- DDS will be expanding operations with High Hopes to offer therapeutic riding at Camp Harkness. Plans for site improvements are underway.

Council members asked to be added to the DDS Legislative Affairs' Email Updates List Serve. The Regional Director's Office will follow-up.

The 2014 legislative session begins February 5 and runs until May 7.

New Business

Robin Wood, DDS Director of Family Support Strategies & Advocacy, provided the Council with the following updates:

- **DDS Community of Practice Presentation** (Handouts Distributed) - DDS was one of five states to receive a grant to participate in a five year Community of Practice Study. This initiative will serve as a platform for DDS to transition to a service system whose fundamental purpose is to support individuals and families in the community. The purpose of the grant is to identify and implement policies and practices that will serve as a national framework for states to use to support individuals and families most efficiently and effectively across the lifespan. DDS will strive to create a more flexible, fairer, and creative system through this initiative. It will be the springboard for a shift in culture at

the most fundamental level. With input from a cross section of volunteers, ten focus areas were identified. They include:

- Information Dissemination
- Family Mentoring & Leadership
- Training & Education
- Self-Directed Services & In-home Supports
- Social Supports & Respite
- Positive Behavior Supports
- Person-Centered Housing
- Employment
- Healthy Living
- Technology

Focus area sub-committees have formed and are meeting regularly. Council members are encouraged to reach out to sub-committee contacts if they are interested in joining one.

- **DDS Family Website** - Ms. Wood reported that DDS is about to launch the Family Website. Designed for individuals and families associated with DDS, the site serves as a gateway for a plethora of information on services and supports that span a lifetime. Questions on the site may be directed to Ms. Wood at robin.wood@ct.gov .
- **Safety Through Technology** - Ms. Wood directed the Council to the Consumer Corner portion of the DDS Website for information on how technology is being used to promote health and safety.
- **Technology Grant** - DDS received a \$100,000 grant for an iPad pilot. NEAT will oversee the pilot.
- **Siblings' Event** - On February 10, DDS will host its first ever siblings' event at the Culinary Arts Institute in Hartford.

Old Business

- **Membership Recruitment** - The Council has two vacancies. Response to the Council's recruitment flyer was good, as evidenced by the number of guests attending this evening's meeting. Anyone interested in joining the Council should contact the Regional Director's office at #203-294-5053. Per statute, one of the vacancies must be filled by an individual designated by, or affiliated with, a local chapter of the CT Arc. Ms. Stauffer, Executive Director of the Arc of New London County, expressed interest. The Regional Director's office will follow-up with CO to discuss any limitations to her appointment and report back.

Adjournment - With no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:
Jolie Crescimano-Goss
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Executive Secretary
DDS-South Region