

DRAFT

Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Services Minutes, February 11, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jennifer Carroll, Maggie Casciato, Judy Dowd, Mary Franco, Jan Galloway, Chera Gerstein, Ann Gionet, David Daniel Klipper, Sara Louire, Sara Reed, Lois Rosenwald, Jonathan Ross, Stan Soby, Jennifer Ureta, Tricia Winter, Larry Wood and Robin Wood

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cathy Adamczyk, Ruth Eren, Elaine Flynn, Roger Frant, Jacqueline Kelleher, Kevin Lembo, James Loomis, Nikki Richer, Jane Thierfeld-Brown and Laura Digalbo

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: Kathy Reddington, Lori Conchado

The meeting was called to order and an opportunity for public comment was given. Ms. Janet Sclare, a resident from Fairfield County, spoke briefly on the importance of expanding the program to her area to provide services.

Judy Dowd, of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) was available to explain what OPM does, how it relates to agencies and how agencies go about getting funds.

The process begins with OPM staff work directly with the Governor's Office beginning in the summer months, looking at the budget. In September, they are looking at the current services budget and by November the Governor releases numbers and projections for the next fiscal year. Each agency is then asked to look at their budgets and cut 10%. In February, the appropriations process begins and by April the Appropriations Committee makes their recommendations and a decision is made.

Although 1 Billion in cuts are being made to state agencies, the Autism Pilot Program will maintain its budget from last year. The Governor is interested in an Autism Waiver, which would allow the state to claim a 50% reimbursement for services from the federal government, creating revenue. Connecticut is one of only a few states that must spend \$1.00 to receive a reimbursement of 50 cents, as the reimbursement goes into the general fund, not to the private providers. Simply stated, this means that Connecticut must spend money to receive money.

An Autism Waiver is being discussed between Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services (DMHAS) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) as participating agencies. Some individuals in DMHAS' Young Adult Services (YAS) program and DCF's Voluntary Services Program (VSP) may be eligible to apply for services under the waiver. The waiver would also cover some individuals in the ASD Pilot Program, but will not expand, due to budget constraints. The waiver will probably have three levels of service to include, high, medium and low levels of need, mirrored after what DDS currently has. There is still a lot of work to be done and a written report is expected to be ready in September 2009 for

Fiscal Year 2011. It is currently unclear whether there will be a separate children's waiver.

Reports from Committees:

Private Provider Committee – Larry Wood presented a draft overview of their recommendations in three major areas:

- **Credentialing** – The committee would like to expand on the current DDS system for approving providers. Some important attributes for our provider are those interested in developing structured training specific to our population; demonstrate a commitment to our consumers and families; show willingness and ability to deal with complex situations and utilize a flexible person-centered model
- **Quality Monitoring** – Beyond quality assurances needed for the waiver, the committee would like to see development of a Quality of Care system that makes providers accountable for providing effective supports; should be quantitative, rather than based on numbers and measure written goals with time frames.
- **Recruitment** – The committee would like to establish In-service training leading to credentials; Internships for higher education students and using part-time staff to address the issues of low wages and large turnover of staff.

Housing Committee – Chera Gerstein provided an overview of notes from their meetings to gather information available on housing available for our consumers.

One option would be to acquire Rental Assistance Program Certificates (RAP's), for our consumers, which allow participants to use 30% of their income for rent, while the state pays the remainder. The certificates are budget and approved by DSS, are difficult to acquire and once issued stay with the consumer throughout their lives.

A second option could be to create supportive housing where consumers live in congregate housing developed by the state. The state has developed supportive housing in the last few years, which is currently utilized by DCF and DMHAS. The question was posed as to how many people are currently in supportive housing. Judy Dowd was unsure of the number but will share these figures at the next council meeting.

It was suggested that our program needs a "Housing Person" to possibly work on researching various options and acquiring RAP's for our consumers. Judy Dowd mentioned that this would be a difficult time to acquire RAP's as housing funds have been cut.

Creative Community is working on a questionnaire regarding housing needs for those on spectrum and would like state agencies to encourage consumers to participate. Because of the limited time frame involved, it was decided that the Advisory Council would not have time to endorse this initiative. It was suggested that the Council consider a questionnaire in the future to determine needs.

Other:

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- The Housing Committee is looking for additional members to join/support their committee
- The committee chairs will look at attendance for the past year and ask members with low attendance to step down and allow new individuals to join
- Jennifer Carrol suggested that we create a “Community Outreach” group to include people interested in our issues. This will be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.
- David Daniel Klipper would like to see work products (i.e.,
- Kathy Reddington suggested scheduling Provider Forums where agencies and staff can meet and share information
- Maggie Casiciato would like to re-address the development of a letter of our Mission Statement. This will be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Kathy Reddington will present the draft results from the Feasibility Study at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 11:55.