

DRAFT - Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Services  
Notes April 18, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nancy Bagatell, Carol Barans, Alison Fisher, Ruth Eren, Chera Gerstein, David Daniel Klipper, Sara Lourie, Kathy Marchione, Nikki Richer, Lois Rosenwald, Jonathan Ross, Barbara Salop, Stan Soby, Tricia Winter, Larry Wood

MEMBERS ABSENT: Catherine Abercrombie, Judy Dowd, Ann Gionet, Tesha Imperiati, Jay Kearns, Jacqueline Kelleher, James Loomis, Yana Razumnaya, Sara Reed, Joel Rudikoff, Jennifer Ureta

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: Commissioner Terrence Macy, Maureen Prewitt

GUESTS: Michael Blaszkowski, DDS; Maria Synoid-SDE; Carly Duffy, BRS

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:09 A.M.

No Public Comment

Presentation by Carly Duffy, Employment Consultant, Bureau of Rehabilitative Services (BRS):

Ms. Duffy was in attendance to provide information on the Job Expansion Tax Credit (JET) and the Step Up Program.

JET:

- Beginning January 1, 2012 businesses that create full time positions could start applying for a tax credit.
- A tax credit of \$500 per month for each new full-time job created is available. If the new employee is receiving vocational rehabilitative services from the BRS, receiving unemployment benefits or is a veteran, then the tax credit is increased to \$900 per month.
- The position created must be a brand new full time position with a minimum of 37 hours per week.
- These credits will be available for each new employee hired between January 1, 2012 and prior to January 1, 2014 for period of three years.
- Employers must apply for the credit before hiring the person.
- The contact person for questions on the application process is Lindy Lee Gold.
- Currently 489 participants have been enrolled since January.
- Information on this tax credit has been advertised through the various state departments, as well as information sessions for employers. Chamber of Commerce events can be an informational opportunity for providers and employers.
- The large number of participants does indicate that word is getting out to employers.

Council recommended that a newspaper article be written to promote the \$900 credit in an effort to have it published by area newspapers. Barbara Salop will draft the article with assistance from Chera Gersten.

#### Step Up Program

- The Step Up Program, through the Connecticut Department of Labor, was established to provide employers funding for two types of hiring incentives for unemployed workers:
  1. Employers funding for six months of training for new employees
  2. Employers get a scaled, six-month wage subsidy

#### Additions to Agenda

Lois Rosenwald indicated that there was an impressive turnout the April 4 Autism Day at the Legislative Office Building. An informational forum on autism will be held on May 22, 2012 at the Legislative Office Building at 10:30 A.M. Representative Catherine Abercrombie will be the facilitator. Council members are encouraged to attend. Commissioner Macy will be the main speaker. Large turnouts at these events help to keep things moving and keep an interest. Siobhan Morgan will be asked to put this information on the website.

#### Approval of April 18, 2012 Minutes

Addition to minutes - Carol Barans should be included as a Guest. Motion was made by Barbara Salop and second by Chera Gerstein to accept minutes. Motion was passed unanimously.

#### Prospective New Member Introductions

Maria Synoid was introduced to the Council. Maria will join the Council as the Department of Education's representative.

#### Discussion and Approval of Recommendations from Nominations and Membership Committee

Carol Barans was introduced at the February meeting to join the Council as a parent member. A motion was made by Chera Gerstein and second by Lois Rosenwald to accept her application. Motion was passed unanimously.

The Membership Committee also received an application for Brita Darany von Regensburb, who attended the February Council meeting.

Larry Wood brought up the concern of new nominees being proposed. He stated that 51%/49% representation (as per Article IV-Membership) must be upheld. The Council discussed the process for reviewing membership applications, as well as keeping the membership diverse, with the size and composition to more productively move forward. It was decided that before any applications are brought before the Council, the Nominations and Membership Committee and the Executive Committee will develop a list of specific qualifications for its members.

The nomination of new members is on hold until a new application process is developed. Carol Barans appointment will stand as she was voted in before the decision to hold appointments.

The Nominations Committee will also review the various categories used to determine other options for Council memberships (i.e. Advocacy, Legislative, Other).

Stan Soby reminded members that as Council meetings are public meetings, when sending emails to a group of members, if the group is a quorum, it could constitute an illegal meeting.

#### Discussion and Possible Action on Burden of Proof Issue

Topic was postponed until next meeting. Maria Synodi will update the Council at that meeting.

#### Update on Medicaid Waiver and Program Director Position

Commissioner Macy indicated that DAS had been contacted to determine the status of the position as it has been in process for a year. 55 applications have been received, however, a number of employees have been disqualified for unknown reasons.

The waiver has been sent to OPM and is now with DSS. There is a 90 day review process and the waiver is expected to be implemented in August.

Recently the Commissioners of DDS, DCF and DMHAS met to discuss brining their resources together to better address the needs of our population. The Governor has agreed that a task force be developed to work on this.

Autism Day had an outstanding turnout which brings to reality the scope of need and what we are able to offer. Parents are encouraged to talk to their legislators and the Governor about their needs. At this point in time there are not enough providers who are trained even if money was made available.

#### Update on Autism Program

In Siobhan's absence Mike Blaszkowski reported that three Case Managers started on 2/24/2012. Case managers have begun visiting families. DDS met with DCF and will begin transferring cases in anticipation for the waiver. There is a defined process that DCF and DDS follow for this transition.

DDS now has two employees from DSS who will work problem solving related to Medicaid issues. This should make it easier for individuals applying for Medicaid.

### Provider Assessment and Qualification

Larry Wood indicated that provider group was to meet regularly to share info, however, there was a lack of interest from providers and very few meetings occurred. Document has been sent to Siobhan. A provider group should meet regularly to update practices. It is a possibility that the Autism Director may have an opportunity to look at this. The expectation is to encourage and make it grow. Non-traditional ways of training need to be looked at to make it interesting and compelling.

Lois Rosenwald stated that staff working with individuals on the Spectrum are not properly educated enough. After a lengthy discussion on Best Practices, it was decided that Jim Loomis would be contacted to see if he would be interested in doing a training session on best practices, as well as an overview of clinical changes taking place. There is a possibility of having the training on video. Tricia Winter agreed to head the group which consists of Lois Rosenwald, Nancy Gagatell, David Daniel Klipper, and Nancy Bagatell.

### June Agenda Items

Nomination of New Members

Burden of Proof

Volunteering Services

Feasibility Study Update

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 A.M.