

DRAFT - Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Services
Notes February 15, 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT: Catherine Abercrombie, Nancy Bagatell, Judy Dowd, Alison Fisher, Ruth Eren, Chera Gerstein, Jacqueline Kelleher, David Daniel Klipper, Sara Lourie, James Loomis, Sara Reed, Barbara Salop, Larry Wood, Stan Soby

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ann Gionet, Jay Kearns, Kathy Marchione, Yana Razumnaya, Nikki Richer, Lois Rosenwald, Jonathan Ross, Tricia Winter

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS: Commissioner Terrence Macy, Siobhan Morgan, Maureen Prewitt

GUESTS: Marc Shok, Joel Rudikoff, Brita Darany Von Regensburg, Michael Blaszk

No Public Comment

Introductions:

All present introduced themselves and their affiliation.

Presentation by Marc Shok, Program Manager for the Department of Social Services, Eligibility Determination:

Mr. Shok presented an overview of the different types of benefits available for various populations.

- Husky – Health insurance for children up to age 19. No family income limits.
- Medicaid for the Aged, blind and Disabled – For individuals who are aged 65 or older, blind or have a disability. There are also financial requirements to qualify for Medicaid under this program.
- Med-Connect – Provides medical assistance to individuals with disabilities who are employed. Income from work and other benefits cannot exceed \$75,000/year.

The following areas/issues were discussed:

- Medicaid has recently been revamped so new providers may have been added to the program in January. This was a concern as many providers do not accept Medicaid.
- Families may find it very confusing when applying for benefits. Because of this, DSS case workers are well trained in reviewing criteria and providing information on the different types of benefits. The DSS website also has information on applying for services.
- It was suggested that benefits be reviewed with a family during the transitional planning for their high school student.
- 650,000 children and adults currently receive some type of Medicaid benefit. The state is reimbursed 50% by the federal government, and this is deposited into the states' General Fund.

- DDS case managers, as well as staff in other state agencies, proactively remind individuals and their families to seek benefits and follow up with redetermination applications.
- Currently DSS has a three month backlog on applications. Commissioner Bremby is working on computerizing processes and streamlining the amounts of paperwork. Document imaging is scheduled to begin at the end of the year, and by May/June 2013 online application and re-qualifications are scheduled to begin.

Additions to Agenda:

Autism Awareness Day

Catherine Abercrombie invited everyone to participate in Autism Awareness Day April 4, 2012 at the LOB in Hartford, speakers starting at 10am.

Autism Feasibility Study

The Autism Feasibility Study that DDS, DSS, DCF, SDE, OPM and DMHAS participated in has now been completed. When the report has been finalized, a meeting will be held with the Hospital for Special Care to determine where the gaps are and agree where the money will be spent. The Governor has recommended \$1 million as a placeholder.

DDS Appropriations Hearing

The Appropriations Hearing will be held next week. Public comments usually begin at 4:00 P.M.

Waiver Application DSD

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Waiver is due February 21, 2012. Public comment is due today. The waiver is expected to include items such as new monitoring, qualifying of IEP, and teacher evaluations.

Burden of Proof Legislation

Joel Rudikoff asked if Council members were aware of the debate concerning switching the burden of proof from local school systems to the parents of school age children; and if this was in the scope of the Council to get involved. After a discussion on this topic, David Daniel motioned that this group take a position on this issue. Seconded by Barbara Salop. Motion was passed. Sara Reed volunteered to publicize the Committee's position with assistance from Chera Gerstein.

Approval of November 2011 Minutes

No changes to the minutes were made Barbara Salop moved and Sara Lourie seconded a motion to accept the minutes of the November 9, 2011 meeting. Motion was passed unanimously

Prospective New Member Introductions

Carol Barnes was introduced to the Council. Carol, the parent of a son with Autism, has experience as a Special Education Teacher, worked on transitioning students, conducted parent

training workshops and support groups. Carol would join the Council as a parent member, which would fill the allotment for parent members. Nomination and vote will be coming out.

Discussion and Approval of Amended By-Laws

The changes that were discussed at a previous meeting were incorporated into a draft of the By-Laws. This document was distributed and included minor revisions on page 4. A motion was made by David Daniel Klipper and seconded by Nancy Bagatell. Motion was passed unanimously.

Presentation of Slate and Vote on Nominees

A copy of the proposed Advisory Council Terms/Affiliation was distributed. Stan Soby is to become the second Co-Chair. David Daniel proposed that the February 30th date be changed to February 28. Siobhan will be added to the list. Once determined, Joel will include his affiliation. No one has been hired to replace the representative from State Department of Education (SDE) The Commissioner of SDE will need to appoint someone. Motion was made by Ruth Eren and seconded by Jacqueline Kelleher that the Commissioner be asked to nominate someone to serve on the Council. Motion was passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Sara Lourie and seconded by Barbara Salop to accept the members and their terms. Motion to accept Slate of Members was passed unanimously.

Motion was made by David Daniel Klipper and seconded by Larry Wood to accept the officer slate. Motion to accept Slate of Officers was passed unanimously.

Update on Medicaid Waiver and Program Position

Commissioner Macy indicated that both the position and waiver are moving forward. The position has been reclassified and the exam has been posted. The department is waiting for the candidate list. The interview process will consist of a screening interview, then a more extensive interview by a stakeholders group who will provide their candidate recommendations to the Commissioner. If interested in being part of the stakeholders group inform Chera and she will coordinate a representative from the Council to be on part of the stakeholders group.

New parameters of the waiver are being worked out. The staff person writing it is leaving her position so there is a rush to get it completed. A change has been made in the original population. DMHAS will no longer be part of this waiver. They will develop their own waiver to provide residential services. The report to CMS is being re-submitted as we need to address issues they have identified.

Update on Autism Program Matters

Siobhan indicated most families have been willing to apply for Medicaid. There currently are no vacancies on the waiver. Someone must discharge themselves before someone from the waiting list can be put added. Currently vacancies will be filled based on the original waiting list. Once on the waiver, vacancies will be based on need. The division currently has 65 applicants waiting for services and 100 that are in process, this includes both children and adults. Requests from school systems have been received; however, the department is only accepting applications from the individual's family. Applications are from all sections of the state. The department currently has 21 providers. Calls for services have been received from families, DMHAS, and DCF for after-school programs, respite, and behavioral management. Families are finding it very frustrating that they cannot apply for both DDS and autism services.

In the past, a provider assessment was proposed but this did not materialize due to a lack of interest by the providers. Larry will send the assessment to the Commissioner.

Siobhan distributed a Table of Organization showing the addition of three case managers who will start on February 24th, and provided the following statistics:

- Currently 75 participants
- 21 Service Providers paid through Allied range \$2,500 to \$450,000
- Average Individual budget about \$27,000
- Average LON score for residential and day 2.5
- 4 contracts paid by DDS for training and clinical support
- Medicaid eligibility: 2 individuals have not been determined eligible
- Services used by majority participants include:
 - Life Skills – 71 participants
 - Social Skills – 50 participants
 - Community Mentor- 57 participants
 - Behavioral Consult- 36 participants
 - Job coach- 31

Proposed Revision to DSM Definition of Autism

Stan Soby indicated that upcoming changes to DMS's definition of Autism will have a significant impact on individuals. Dr. Loomis indicated that if this change occurs higher functioning individuals could be excluded under the new definition. This will lead to a discrepancy in how clinicians diagnose individuals.

April Agenda Items

Ongoing Monitoring of Provider Network

Speaker – BRS – Judy will discuss with Kathy Marchione