



CONNECTICUT FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2016

- Location:** Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
Hartford, Connecticut
- In attendance:** Annika Burney, Laurie Cantwell, Sylvia Gafford-Alexander, Sara
Lourie, Linda Mizzi, Lisa Sheppard, Mona Tremblay, Robin Wood
- On Phone:** Isabelina Rodriguez
- Absent:** April Dipollina, Ann Gionet, Mark Greenstein, Steven Hernandez,
Allison Quirion, Jody Santoro, Renee Toper
- Guests:** Valerie Wyzykowski, Office of the Health Care Advocate
Colleen McGill, Our Families Can't Wait (SEIU)
- Call to Order:** 11:17 am by Lisa Sheppard

There was not a quorum until 10:45 am but the meeting started with a presentation by Valerie Wyzykowski, a Nurse Case Manager with the Office of the HealthCare Advocate (OHA). Val described changes at OHA with the current Healthcare Advocate Victoria Veltri leaving the position which will be covered by Demian Fontanella as the Acting Healthcare Advocate.

Val gave some history of how OHA began in 1999 with 2 and now have 20 employees with a focus on being the “watchdog” to increase what commercial insurers are covering, collecting data, documenting trends; they will work with individuals and families but also in a broader context around education and legislative advocacy.

Val described their special project with DCF’s Voluntary Services program as a way of assuring that Medicaid and/or other state agencies are the “payer of the resort” and services that should be, are covered by private insurance. She also talked about different types of insurance policies and how there still a number of plans offered by employers in the state which operate under federal vs. state regulation and, as a consequence, do not cover certain services (e.g. ABA).

Val took questions from the Council, handed out contact information and encouraged Council members to utilize the advocacy available through OHA. Annika Burney who

works for OHA, will forward the release of information; this is needed for OHA to follow-up on individual circumstances. Mona Tremblay raised a specific family situation which illustrated many of the frustrating system issues that arise in the state.

Approval of May minutes – Robin Wood made a motion to accept minutes as written; Mona Tremblay seconded the motion and it was approved by Council members present with an abstention from Sylvia Gafford-Alexander.

Old Business:

Membership/Nominations Committee – Wayne Camarro has withdrawn his application to the Council due to competing commitments; however, there was strong sentiment that he would be a great asset to the Council even with limited availability - so that would be suggested to him if still interested. Linda Mizzi identified a contact person at the Legislature regarding reappointments; she is available to follow-up if Council members let her know what is needed. Evidently they batch approvals all at the same time so they are quite behind. Linda is working on the slate for Co-chairs and Secretary. After some discussion, Laurie Cantwell has agreed to be nominated for Co-chair (thank you Laurie); someone is still needed for Secretary (from among the state agency representatives). In the meantime, Robin Wood has offered one of her staff to come to the meetings and prepare the minutes. There was discussion about how to address those individuals who are on the Council but have not been attending the meetings. Follow-up by the Co-chairs is indicated in the Bylaws.

Family Networking Committee – The importance of increased family voice was identified as a continuing issue.

Update on 2020 Campaign – Lisa Sheppard discussed a recent meeting that she attended and recent press regarding budget cuts and concerns over costs associated with congregate/institutional settings under DDS. The Campaign is looking to convene a conference with Legislators to provide more information to them regarding these issues. The CTFSC Annual Report, having a lot of information about the 2020 campaign, is part of what will be provided to legislators. Lisa also announced that Molly Cole is retiring this fall which will be a huge loss to the developmental disability and advocacy community.

New Business:

Updated Contact List – Sara Lourie circulated a Council member information list via email for updates. It was agreed that this will not be circulated or used outside – it is for Council member use only.

Announcements

It turns out that this is the last meeting to be attended by Sylvia Gafford-Alexander as she is retiring at the end of June. The Council thanked her for long-standing commitment to children and unwavering support of the goals of the Council.

Linda Mizzi gave an update on changes with OPA; there is a transition team reviewing relevant state statute and at this point it appears that large changes will not be made until July of 2017.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 pm

Minutes submitted by Sara Lourie, Secretary