

Department of Development Services
North Region

Regional Advisory & Planning Council

Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2009



Members In Attendance: Nancy Bilyak, Carlos Colon, Sara Glad, Deb Godsell, Florence Guite, John Houchin, Susan Miller, Kathleen Perrier, Patti Silva, Linda Angelica

Guests: Scott Wolfe, Dolores Henderson

Kathleen Perrier, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Meeting minutes of January 21, 2009 were reviewed and accepted.

Report from the Quality Council Committee - Scott Wolfe gave an update from his meeting held today, February 25th, with the Quality Council Committee. They had a discussion about the recent effects the economy has had on individuals and the supports and counseling that have been provided by the Self Advocates to those individuals who have or may lose their job. Carlos Colon, Self Advocate who is an active member of this committee, explained that he and his peers provide support and guidance to those who may need assistance at their Individual Planning meetings. Historically, Self Advocates attend New Employee Training to introduce themselves and educate staff regarding what their role is as an advocate and how they support individuals who live at home as well as out in the community. The word also gets out by Self Advocates attending conferences and committee meetings. It was clear from discussions that there is still a need for more education and further discussion with Case Managers and Case Management Supervisors regarding the great resource and support Self Advocates provide.

The committee also talked about QSR and how much exposure people have had with the QSR. It is a tool that is being used extensively throughout the system for licensing and assessing the quality of services at group homes, etc. Scott will share some data and outcomes at a future meeting.

Scott shared a copy of the NCI Core Indicators Adult Family Survey report. The data showed how Connecticut compares with twenty other states that participated in the survey. Some of the highlighted areas included, access to services and supports, how families feel about the staff, and overall satisfaction. Through discussion, it was suggested that perhaps the Advisory Council could focus on some of these areas to try and make an improvement. Scott will put together, at the next Quality Council Committee meeting, the two NCI surveys (Consumer Outcomes and Adult Family Survey) and identify areas of concern and make recommendations to the Advisory Council of what areas we should focus on to try and improve upon.

Legislative Breakfast – The Legislative Breakfast is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2009 from 8:00–10:00 AM at the Legislative Office Building, Executive Dining Room.

The theme of this year's Legislative Breakfast will be to thank legislators for their continued support of DDS and to support the Governor's proposed budget. This year's sponsors include both Republicans and Democrats: State Senator Paul Doyle, State Senator Anthony Guglielmo, State Representative Tony Guerera, and State Representative Russell Morin. Final preparations for the breakfast were discussed. Two or three speakers still need to be identified for the breakfast that will speak for approximately 5 minutes regarding their success story. Everyone was encouraged to bring another parent to support this event. It was suggested that it would be great to invite a family to speak who was on the waiting list and are now off or someone who receives enhanced services. Deb Godsell agreed to speak and tell her personal success story regarding respite and in-home services being provided to her family. Sue Miller volunteered to do introductions at the Legislative Breakfast. Sara Glad will contact a parent of a grad. Self Advocate, Carlos Colon plans to attend and is willing to speak if needed. The invitation to Legislators will be finalized and forward to Rod O'Connor, who has volunteered to hand deliver the invitations to the LOB so that the region won't incur any postal costs. In addition, council members agreed to make personal phone calls to as many legislators as possible, inviting them to attend the breakfast.

Regional Director's Updates – John Houchin, Sr.

The North Region recently held two Town Meetings with Commissioner, Peter H. O'Meara, Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, Kathryn duPree. The focus of the meeting with DDS staff was a power point presentation regarding the Governor's Budget FY 2010-FY 2011. A copy of the power point presentation was shared with council members, which is also on the DDS website. Highlights from the presentation included, Projected Deficit for FY10 of \$2.9 billion and FY11 of \$3.1 billion; Closing the FY09, FY10 and FY11 Budget Deficits; the Department's Operations expenses for Personal Services, Contracted Services, and Other Services; and what are the DDS Priorities.

Self Advocate Report - Carlos Colon

Carlos indicated that the response has been great as Self Advocates begin to reach out more and more to consumers and communities. They have expanded into high schools and colleges who have shown an interest in starting up new advocacy groups. The focus is on helping students who are transitioning from school to the work place. Self Advocates have been a great resource to students in helping them write resumes, prepare for an interview, how to dress appropriately for a job interview, and in teaching them how to keep a job. The goal is to better prepare consumers when they go out into the real world, and to make them aware of what to expect when going into a new environment. Carlos shared some of the many other projects he and other Self Advocates are presently involved with.

- All Self Advocates recently attended IP (Individual Plan) Buddy Training. They learned how to become a good IP Buddy to others with developmental disabilities and encouraged them to pass on what they have learned to others.

- Employment Idol – They are working on a second video. There are 7 or 8 consumers who participate in this video who have real jobs for real pay. The video conveys that people with disabilities can do a lot and should be paid accordingly.
- People First Conference is being held on Saturday, May 30, 2009 at the Bristol Clarion Hotel from 8:30–4:00. There will be guest speakers and special breakout sessions. More information can be found on the DDS website.
- Self Advocates have been working on getting consumers involved with voting and in teaching them how to use the voting machine.
- Self Advocates have become involved with the CT Association for Community Transportation (CACT) initiatives within the state. Advocates are attending meetings, sharing ideas and giving input on how to make transportation better for people with disabilities. CT Transit shared some exciting news about the new development of a bus-way station that will run through, Hartford, West Hartford, New Britain, and Newington.
- Currently Self Advocates are working on Internet Safety. Teaching people how to protect their personal information so that it won't be stolen.
- Working with consumers and the community in educating them on what their human rights are and what their role is in the community.
- Rod O'Connor attended a recent Self Advocacy meeting and explained how to get to know your town legislator. Also they plan a visit to the Capitol to meet and learn about how the legislation works.
- CTH Coordinators met with Self Advocates to have an open discussion regarding the CTH program and asked advocates for ideas about changing the name. A few name change recommendations were shared at the meeting.
- Anticipating 12 new consumers from STS to be trained to assist Self Advocate Coordinators in each region.
- A new advocacy youth group started in January, named Latinos Get Together. Student intern, Rebecca Negron, heads this group up. Self Advocates worked with Rebecca in teaching the students to learn why it is important to be an effective advocate and to hopefully take everything they learned to use it in their daily living experiences.

Open Forum for Public Participation – there was no public participation.

Patti Silva asked if the invitation being sent to legislators regarding the upcoming Legislative Breakfast could be emailed to all Advisory Council members.

With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda A. Angelica
Executive Secretary