

DDS North Region
Regional Advisory Council

April 20, 2016
Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Collette Bement, Nancy Bilyak, Donna Clauson, Joe Duffy, Richard Rothstein, Tammy Selinger, Elisa Velardo, Claudia Neumann

Guests: Lorraine DeFreitas, Ronald Langner, Ferne McAllister, Mary Lou O'Connor, Sue Prihar, Amy Blazawski

Elisa Velardo, Regional Director, began the meeting with introductions.

- Budget Updates – Elisa stated that we are still waiting to hear what happens with the budget. There hasn't been any new information regarding what impact there will be.

Public Conversion Homes – There have been two Public homes that have been awarded to private providers. The homes are located in Newington and Farmington and the conversions are scheduled to take place in the beginning of May.

- Amy Blazawski, Self Determination Director, was asked to attend tonight's meeting. She shared a presentation about a new networking tool for families and individuals to be able to connect online called Community Tyze. It is a network somewhat like Facebook, however, it is a confidential, "closed" network just with people you invite to share information with. We have our own Connecticut network, so it is not nationwide. The feeling is that it can be a very useful tool to share information with a team of people, i.e. friends, family, medical professionals, all in one place so everyone has the same information. Another example is to look for transportation or other resources within the community. To sign up to participate, registration is through the Regional Self Determination Directors. The contact for the North Region would be Amy Blazawski who can be contacted with any additional questions. Amy provided a sign-up list for anyone attending tonight that may be interested in participating.

Amy also shared information about Community First Choice (CFC) which is a new program offered by DSS to people already enrolled in Medicaid. The program allows people to receive services in their own home. It is a self-determination program which would be working with people that you would hire and fire, not with an agency. Amy explained that the process is just beginning. Case managers can assist with the application process. If a case manager is not yet aware of the process or has not yet been trained, case management supervisors may be contacted, who have all been trained. Elisa also asked that if anyone hears of people using the services, to please share their experience and how it has been working for them. It was also stated that you can apply and see what you would be eligible for and still have the option to decline.

- There was further discussion regarding the budget. Richard Rothstein reported that that there was a little bit of good news in that when the Governor presented his budget, he did not cut DDS any more. It has been communicated that grad funding is one of the most important needs for families. It is one of the highest priorities. DDS still does not know if funding will be available. DDS is continuing to plan as though there will be funding but we do not know either way at this point.

SB17 was discussed briefly. It was shared that the following is included in this bill:

- 1) provides for a one-time mailing of the LON score for everyone that currently has a LON score, along with what it means and what the budget is
- 2) there would be a review of the current Waitlist to review its accuracy; also everyone should be provided their IP and made aware of the priority status
- 3) would ensure that everyone is made aware that there are groups that meet such as the RAC and advocacy groups
- 4) would ensure that if anyone is going to lose funding, they should be notified within 90 days

Should find out on Monday about where it goes next.

Elisa stated that by the time we meet in May, we may have more information, however, there is some feeling that it may go through the summer.

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 18th at 5:00 pm**. Please contact Claudia Neumann if there are any items to be added to the agenda.

Respectfully submitted,
Claudia Neumann
Executive Secretary