

DDS North Region
Regional Advisory Council

April 20, 2022

Meeting Minutes – Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams (meeting was recorded)

Members Present: Kathleen Hayes, Chair; Annette Scully, Vice Chair; Donna Clauson; Donna Cohen; Kim Little; Ellyn Little; Rick Rothstein; Lori Sandora; Tammy Selinger; Stacie Silva-Gordon, DDS North Regional Director (ex-Officio member)

Guests: Susan Prihar; Adrianna Ramirez; Melissa C.

Meeting called to order at 5:03pm.

Meeting began with introductions.

- Approval of March Meeting Minutes – Annette Scully made a motion to approve the minutes; seconded by Kim Little; minutes were approved.
- Legislative Updates:
 - Rick Rothstein provided an update regarding the status of the budget. There is agreement on the budget, however, the Governor hasn't weighed in yet. There seems to be reasonably good news for DDS.
 - The providers would like to see a cost of living adjustment annually put into statute.
 - The insurance bill had been mentioned last month (HB5042) which could cause some issues for family members because the legislature is taking up a proposal from the governor to increase spending on primary care from 5% to 10% and to reduce the spending on specialist care. It is a concern since many of our individuals need more specialist care. This would require agreements with Medicaid and Medicare and negotiating will all the insurance companies since it does not apply only to state expenditures. The thought is that if more money was spent on primary care, there would be less Emergency Room visits and chronic disease. There is also SB15, which is a separate bill, that is a road map as to how to get there.
 - It was again stated that the report that used to come from Central Office regarding bills that would have any relevance to DDS was very helpful and is missed. Kevin Bronson said it would be resuming again, however, nothing has come out yet.
- Regional Director's Update – Stacie Silva-Gordon
 - Stacie shared information on a memo that was sent out to all private providers yesterday regarding ARPA funding. ARPA is the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 that enables the State to earn an extra 10% back in federal reimbursement on Medicaid waiver services. It was shared with providers that this money is primarily going to be used to enhance, expand, and strengthen the service system.
 - DDS would like providers to use the money towards their workforce, to help stabilize the workforce and assist with recruitment and retention of staff which is a dire need right now.
 - We would also like to expand services by utilizing Assistive Technology to promote more independence in our congregate settings while maintaining quality and oversight for health and safety.
 - Another area is service delivery and housing models and being able to collaborate with more of our sister agencies to provide transitional housing or supportive housing.
 - Providers are also being asked to look at their current vacancies and possibly consolidate to save some money that could be used for individuals currently on the residential waiting list. Also, considering moving people that may be able to be in a more independent setting, as well as being cognizant of more independent competitive employment and less group supported employment.

- Future Meeting Topics/Presentations
 - Kathleen stated that she has offered to do a presentation on Supported Decision Making and would be happy to do that for the next meeting. Elisa Velardo had previously asked that when this presentation was scheduled, that it also be open to the other regions' RAC's. It was agreed that the information will be shared so the other RACs can join the meeting virtually. It will also be shared on the website since this is a public meeting.
 - Susan Prihar asked if it would be possible to have a roundtable discussion on how to troubleshoot when things aren't going well which would be helpful to know who the correct contact person would be. Kathleen stated that since we will be doing the larger presentation at the next meeting, the roundtable discussion could be scheduled for September. In the meantime, any questions can be directed to the new DDS Ombudsperson, Shannon Jacovino, who would be able to direct issues to the appropriate contact person.
 - Annette also asked if Kathleen could also possibly discuss Special Needs Trusts. Kathleen stated that this would be a separate topic from the Supported Decision Making presentation, however, she could begin with some information regarding Special Needs Trusts.
 - There was discussion regarding parents who are pursuing purchasing residences for their young adults and the difficulty with using different funding sources. It was suggested that it would possibly be helpful to have someone from DSS, DDS, and possibly someone from Allied that works with the CFC budgets to come and present. Lori Sandora and Kim Little agreed to work on putting together a list of questions. Lori also has a contact that works with CFC that she will contact to possibly attend. With the presentation being held at the May meeting, we will look at scheduling with the liaisons for the Fall.
- Kathleen Hayes shared that she will be resigning as the Chair of the North Region RAC, due to happy family news, and the Council will need to seek nominations to fill the role. It was agreed that some time can be allocated at the next meeting, even with the presentation, to discuss nominations. It was asked that people consider this before the May meeting since it will be the last meeting before the break over the summer.
- Open Forum for Public Participation
 - No new topics raised.
- Motion to adjourn was made by Annette Scully; seconded by Rick Rothstein. Meeting was adjourned at 5:48 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 5:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Claudia Neumann
Executive Secretary