



Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

South Region

DDS

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

Thomas A. Dailey
South Region Director

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
South Region (SR) Regional Advisory and Planning Council (RAC)
Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2022 - 6:00 p.m.
(via Teams Teleconference)

Members Present:

Lynne Arezzini, Vice-Chair; Leslie Bridges-Parent, Chair; Carol Cooney, Secretary; Dawn DeMatteo; Heidi Earle; Thomas A. Dailey, (Ex-Officio Member) Regional Director

Public Participation:

Betsy Danforth, Curt Danforth, Adriana Ramirez, Twila Skelly

Discussion:

Member Arezzini updated the Committee on her legislative testimony which focused on nonprofits receiving much needed funding and support, due to staffing shortages, using surplus, rainy day funds, and government resources. Comments from other members in agreement.

Director Dailey commented Deputy Commissioner, Peter Mason, will retire in April and return to DDS to manage the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) reinvestment plan. Elisa Velardo, Assistant Regional Director in the North Region (NR), has been named Deputy Commissioner. Stacie Silva-Gordan, Assistant Regional Director in the NR will become the NR Regional Director.

Member DeMatteo gave a public comment from the Connecticut General Assembly Public Health Committee public hearing in which Connecticut Probate Judge, Lisa Wexler, gave testimony on behalf of parents with regards to probate and guardianships advocating the difficulty of the process.

Director Dailey commenting on the Probate Court using a new electronic system for processing guardianships, due to Covid-19, which has been challenging for families and agencies to manage from the previous paper system.

Director Dailey mentioned the SR Employee/Family Recognition ceremony will be held remotely this year with letters being sent to all the individuals. An awards exhibit is being created and will be displayed at the DDS Wallingford office for everyone to view.

Director Dailey gave a housing update starting with Oakhill's Transitional Housing Program. On the Meriden Regional Center Campus Continuum of Care will be opening a new four bed Community Living Arrangement (CLA) on the Meriden Campus to serve people with 24-hour registered nursing needs from institutions and or nursing homes. The Corporation for Public Management (CPM) will be opening a new emergency transitional

housing program in Wilton, possibly in May, for people coming out of emergency rooms looking for permanent homes.

Director Dailey gave an update on the expansion of the community resource clinical team operated by Oakhill and a West Region agency to provide intense clinical supports to providers who are having challenges with individuals. There is an addition of a bi-lingual Spanish speaking clinician and an occupational therapist.

DDS is meeting with providers concerning the rates for healthcare and nursing care coordination. There has been difficulty in attracting nursing staff to come and work in a complex system. Also speaking with providers concerning the rates for individualized home supports (IHS). Director Dailey explained the rates, benefits, and the breakdown of details of how providers need to be competitive to provide quality services. Director Dailey stated he would ask Peter Mason if Committee members could be part of a board to give input and advocacy for provider funding.

Question on apartments in Orange and Westville being completed for occupancy. Director Dailey responding the MidState Arc will be the provider in Orange for the 12-to-14 accessible units with 15-year rental certificates. The Westville 12-to-14-unit accessible complex has not been finalized. Mary Pat DeCarlo, of the Kennedy Center, will be the provider partnered with Giordano Management Company offering immediate occupancy and hopefully, giving opportunities for people.

Committee members commented on complaints made via Facebook about the DDS secure email system. Director Dailey stating the Department of Administrative Services manages the state secure email system and DDS does not have any control of the system. Some simple solutions have been effective in sending messages if attachments and links are not included in the emails. The system protects confidential information. Director Dailey said he would relay the message to the DDS Central Office.

Public question from Ms. Twila Skelly concerning the continued welfare of her daughter. Director Dailey responding Kathleen Calo, SR Assistant Regional Director in the Private Division, will contact Ms. Skelly.

Public comment from the Danforth's wishing Director Dailey well in his retirement and continued support of finding a residence for their son.

Public comment concerning a parent in the West Region (WR) having difficulty with her child who is under the local education school system in New Canaan. Director Dailey asked to have the parent contact him, and he will provide the information for the WR. Director Dailey spoke about the expansion of the Behavioral Service Program (BSP) with the opening of two behavioral service program respite centers and possibly a behavioral service step-down unit.

Next meeting May 18 at 6:00 p.m. at the Guilford Free Library, 67 Park Street.