
DDS Executive Briefs

An Update on CT DDS Initiatives

September 13, 2017

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week is September 10-16, 2017!

Across Connecticut, DDS and the Private Provider community join together this week to recognize the dedication and accomplishments of so many outstanding Direct Support Professionals. This is a great opportunity for individuals, families, organizations, and communities to reach out and express appreciation to our direct support workforce for the important difference they make each day in the lives of so many citizens with disabilities.

Whether through a simple, heartfelt “thank you” for exemplary support provided on a daily basis, an acknowledgement of someone who has gone above and beyond to have a positive impact on the life of another, or a more formal staff appreciation event, make it a priority to recognize the important contributions that Direct Support Professionals have in the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Advocates’ Corner

We know there are amazing stories about individuals finding the jobs they want and living their own life in a home that is right for them. The DDS Self Advocate Coordinators (SACs) have been collecting and sharing stories such as “Living Life” and “Got a Job!” on their Advocates’ Corner website:

<http://www.dds.ct.gov/advocatescorner/cwp/view.asp?a=3909&Q=491916>

If you know someone who would like to share a story about his or her home or job, please let the appropriate regional SAC know. An updated listing of SACs by region is below:

North Region

Yana Razumnaya – East Hartford area 860-263-2457
Yana.razumnaya@ct.gov

Kevin Arce – East Hartford area 860-263-2457
Kevin.arce@ct.gov

Varian Salters – Willimantic area 860-456-6345
varian.salters@ct.gov

South Region:

Carol Grabbe – Wallingford area 203-294-5119
carol.grabbe@ct.gov

Genna Lewis - New Haven area 203-974-4232
genna.lewis@ct.gov

Kellie Hartigan - Norwich area 860-859-5512
kellie.hartigan@ct.gov

West Region

Jamie Louchen – Torrington area 860-496-3067
james.louchen@ct.gov

Jossie Torres – Waterbury/Danbury area 203-805-7431
jossie.torres@ct.gov

Anthony Bingham – Waterbury area 203-805-7464
Anthony.bingham@ct.gov

Angel Racine 203-805-7467
Angelika.racine@ct.gov

Camp Harkness continues to be the place to be!

The last few months have proven to be very busy for Camp Harkness! As we all know, this park is a jewel that is treasured by all who have the opportunity to enjoy it. As with any “jewel,” there needs to be upkeep to maintain its shine!

On Thursday, May 18th, we were fortunate to once again be part of the United Way’s “Live United” Day. Shortly after 7:00AM, more than eighty employees from the Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun casinos arrived at camp, ready to give us a full day of work! Tasks that were completed included cleaning up of the **many** gardens on the property, leaf-blowing, touch up painting on the brown cabins, installation of a fence at the beach, installation of the rollers on the play-scape slide, power-washing of the cabins and many other tasks. The casinos provided breakfast, lunch and water for everyone throughout the day. We cannot put a value on the work that these individuals do. Thanks to the United Way, Foxwoods and Mohegan Sun for continuing this partnership with us!

As summer progressed, the camps got underway. An annual event at Camp is “Summerfest.” On Saturday, July 29th, more than 500 people joined us at the camp for live music, an arts & crafts fair, food, train rides through the park, a bouncy house, face painting and the selling of Camp Harkness merchandise by the Camp Harkness Fund. The weather cooperated and a wonderful time was had by all in attendance.

Our last big event before the summer ended was our annual visit by The First Company Governor’s Horse Guards. They are the nation’s oldest continuously active mounted cavalry unit. Their visit was on Wednesday, August 9th. They have been visiting the camp for over thirty years. Individuals had the

opportunity to ride a horse and to have pictures taken with the horses. The campers look forward to this visit every year.

Our next DDS event at Camp Harkness is the 38th Annual Motorcycle Gift Run on Sunday, November 5th. For details on this event, please check the DDS website. Thank you to all of our supporters - we look forward to seeing you in 2018!

Developing Shared Living Strategies

A new workgroup is being formed to develop strategies for streamlining and promoting the use of CT DDS shared living housing supports. Family members who are interested in joining this workgroup should be asked to contact Robin Wood at robin.wood@ct.gov, or 860-418-6035.

Charting the LifeCourse – Getting the Word Out!

The Charting the LifeCourse Framework was created *by families* to help individuals and families of all abilities and ages develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or cultivate supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live. This universal, easy-to-use, person-centered planning process may be used by any person or family making a life plan, regardless of life circumstances.

Information about how Charting the Life Framework is being used in Connecticut can be found at <http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2042&q=591452>, or you can contact Dianne Gill, Dianne.Gill@ct.gov to find out how a Charting the LifeCourse information session can be scheduled in your geographic area.

Family to Family Updates

Connecting with other families can be an important source of support and information for families who have a relative or loved one who has a disability. The CT DDS Family Connections webpage has been updated to help families discover the family group that will best meet their needs:

<http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2042&q=391160>

Family members who are seeking opportunities to become involved in a Family Leadership role can contact Tesha Tramontano-Kelly at ttramontano-kelly@ctfsn.org, or call 203-710-3041 to learn about the new Family Leadership Advocacy Group (FLAG). FLAG is an alliance of family advocacy groups working together to better meet the needs of families in Connecticut who have a loved one who has a disability. The DDS Regional Advisory and Planning Councils (RACs) are also seeking new members. Information about the RACs can be found here: [RAC - Family Connections Flyer](#), [RAC - Family Connections Flyer Spanish](#).

DDS Prepares to Launch New e-Licensing Portal

DDS is excited to announce the upcoming launch of our new e-Licensing portal, slated to roll-out in late 2017 or early 2018. The new portal will support Community Living Arrangement (CLA) and Community Companion Home (CCH) licensing, Evacuation Score tracking, and Medication Administration Certification. The web-based application's many benefits include accessibility from any internet connection, allowing role-based access for DDS personnel and private providers, automated workflows and notifications, document management and electronic signature capability. The e-Licensing application will support streamlined processes, reducing waiting times, paper handling and duplicative document submission, and increasing efficiency and timeliness in licensing and other supported functions.

The e-Licensing journey began two years ago when DDS was invited to participate in a statewide Lean process with multiple agencies to identify requirements for an electronic licensing application. The Lean project resulted in shared requirements across agencies to allow for an Enterprise solution – one modular and configurable software product that could be used by many agencies. Funding for the initial implementation was requested by the Department of Administrative Services Bureau of Enterprise Systems & Technology (DAS/BEST) on behalf of participating agencies, and was awarded through the IT Capitol Investment Program at the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). Currently six state agencies utilize the e-Licensing portal, including the Departments of Consumer Protection, Public Health, and Agriculture, the Office of Early Childhood, and the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) Department of Entomology.

DDS is confident that the technological advancements, in conjunction with improved processes and streamlined business rules, will result in reduced administrative burdens for our provider community and DDS staff. We are committed to ensuring that the rollout is done thoughtfully and intend to announce training opportunities for users later in the fall. As we transition from the old paper process to the new automated electronic process we will be looking for feedback on how the new process is working so we can make adjustments as needed.

DDS Does Data

DDS has invested both business and IT resources into our Business Intelligence and Data Analytics program over the past year. DDS focused first on providing staff with data needed to help in daily work. In the fall of 2017, DDS will be rolling out the Case Manager Utility dashboards to provide Case Managers and Supervisors with information for individuals on their caseloads in one place. Visual cues show due dates for Individual Plans and Level of Need assessments, Medicaid enrollment status, and other valuable information. Self-service training tools are being developed to assist in the use of these tools.

The Medicaid Waiver Management dashboard, highlighted at the 2017 Lean CT Showcase, replaced over 20 Microsoft Access queries requiring manual running, analysis and interpretation. The dashboard provides visual cues showing issues requiring action, saving staff time and eliminating manual processing. More importantly, it highlights conditions to be fixed that, if left unattended would result in loss of federal revenue and Medicaid coverage for the individuals supported by DDS.

Coming Soon! Changes to the DDS Management Information Report (MIR)

The Management Information Report (MIR) is a quarterly report, available on the DDS website. Its purpose is to provide DDS stakeholders with information and data about things such as eligibility, supports and services, support needs, waiver enrollment and revenue and personnel management. DDS is in the process of automating the MIR. The goals of automation include: increased timeliness of data, streamlining the report preparation process, and improving the accuracy and reliability of the data. Although much of the same information will be presented in the automated MIR, there will be some minor changes in the presentation. The changes will be applied to the September 2017 MIR.

Of specific interest to many will be changes in the way the “Waiting List” data is collected, organized and presented. As the result of a Residential Waiting List Project that was undertaken last year, DDS has changed the way we organize and present Residential Waiting List data to more accurately reflect the needs of individuals in a way that is easier for families and other stakeholders to understand.

Beginning in March 2017, Case Managers began working with individuals and families through the annual individual planning (IP) process to collect information through a Support Survey and Residential Request Assessment. The Support Survey identifies whether an individual has unmet residential or day service needs. If the individual is determined to have unmet residential needs, the Residential Request Assessment identifies what category of need the individual has (Emergency, Urgent or Future Needs). This information will be collected for all individuals with an IP over the course of a year. The new format in future MIRs will be easier to understand and provide state policy makers with important information they have been requesting.

Money Follows the Person

The Money Follows the Person (MFP) Rebalancing Demonstration Grant helps states rebalance their Medicaid long-term care systems. Connecticut’s goal is to transition 5,200 people from multiple institutions back into the community through MFP. MFP is available to all CT citizens who qualify for Medicaid. Connecticut is one of 43 states and the District of Columbia participating in the demonstration. States offering MFP receive an enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) on demonstration services for individuals who have transitioned from qualified institutions to qualified residences. In addition to this enhanced match, MFP also offers states the flexibility to provide Supplemental Services that would not ordinarily be covered by the Medicaid program.

Federal MFP Program goals include:

- 1) Increasing the use of home and community-based services (HCBS) and reduce the use of institutionally-based services,
- 2) Eliminating barriers in state law, state Medicaid plans, and state budgets that restrict the use of Medicaid funds to let people get long-term care in the settings of their choice,
- 3) Strengthening the ability of Medicaid programs to provide HCBS to people who choose to transition out of institutions, and
- 4) Putting procedures in place to provide quality assurance and improvement of HCBS.

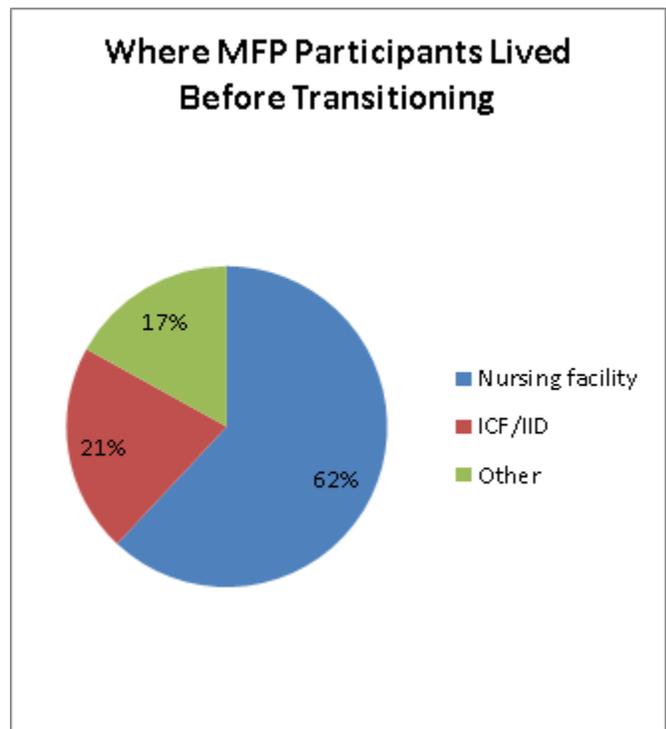
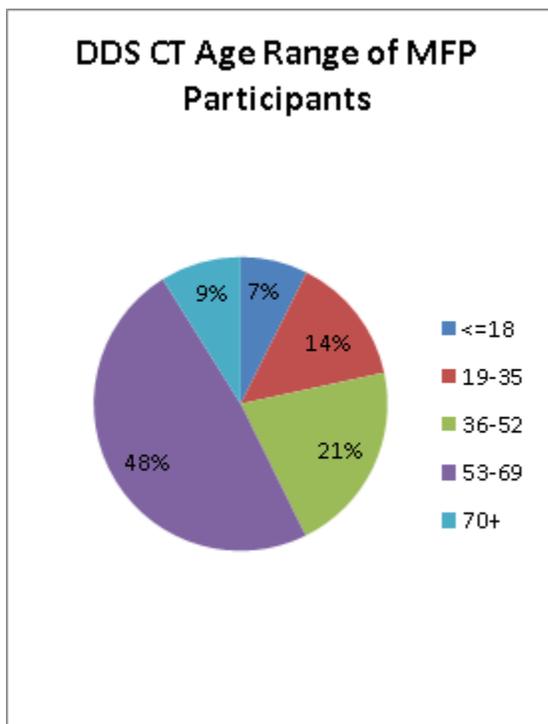
MFP is an option for individuals to move to an individualized setting and to receive the supports and services they need in a setting of their choice. The individual must meet the 90 day requirement for MFP and be eligible for one of the CT DDS Waivers. CT MFP Benchmarks are to:

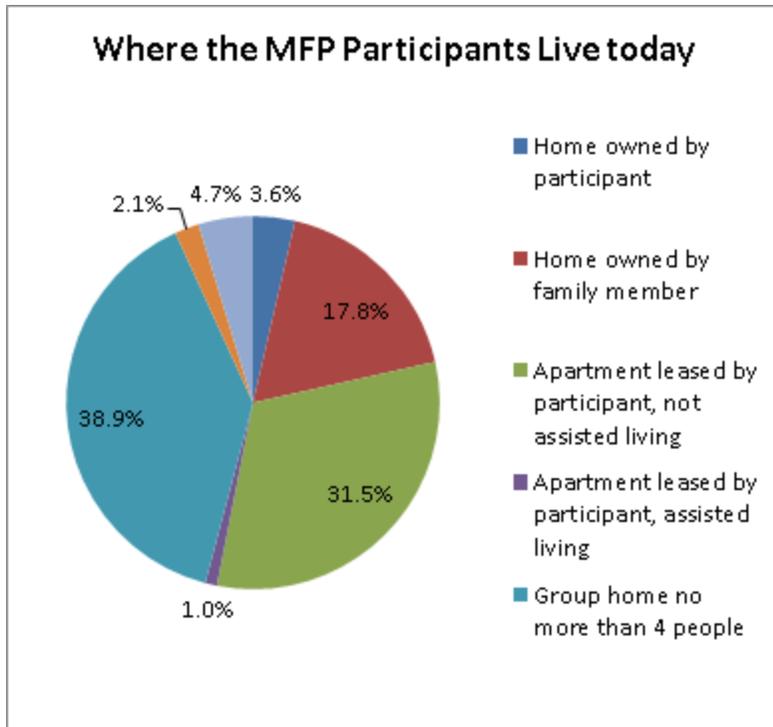
- 1) Transition 5,200 people from qualified institutions to the community,
- 2) Increase dollars to home and community based services,
- 3) Increase hospital discharges to the community rather than to institutions,
- 4) Increase probability of returning to the community during the six months following nursing home admission, and
- 5) Increase the percentage of long-term care participants living in the community compared to an institution.

DDS MFP staff, Regional Staff and DDS Private Providers have worked collaboratively with the Department of Social Services (DSS) and, as of June 2017, have transitioned 240 people from Nursing Homes, Hospitals, Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IIDs) such as Southbury Training School, DDS Regional Centers and private ICF/IIDs.

One of the unique factors about CT’s MFP program is the opportunity for individuals to receive a Rental Assistance Program (RAP) certificate, along with the assistance of housing coordinators to help identify housing options. Housing location and costs are two of the national barriers identified for returning to the community. This program allows individuals to access affordable housing and to choose where they live.

DDS-Specific MFP Data:





Myths about MFP:

- MFP is only for 365 days, then supports end – FALSE: The enhanced match is for 365 days, but the individual remains enrolled in the waiver he or she is eligible for from the first day of transition.
- An individual cannot apply for MFP until they have been institutionalized for 90 days- FALSE: If the family or team anticipates that the person is going to be institutionalized they can apply any time after the individual has been eligible for 90 days and Medicaid must be billed for the institutional stay.
- Only a legal guardian can apply for MFP- FALSE: Anyone can apply, but only the individual or a legal guardian or conservator can actually sign the informed consent for MFP. Anyone can help an individual apply for MFP.

Here is a link to CT’s MFP Evaluation Reports completed by UConn Health:

<https://health.uconn.edu/aging/research-reports/>

DDS has five case managers and one supervisor specifically assigned to MFP. To find out more about MFP please feel free to email Siobhan.Morgan@ct.gov.

ADA Training

The Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) requires “public entities,” including local governments and state agencies, to ensure effective communication with qualified individuals with disabilities. For individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, auxiliary aids include qualified sign language interpreters or

oral interpreters, use of relay services, computer-assisted real time transcription, and for simple communications, the exchange of written notes.

In January 2017, DDS entered into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice to ensure that DDS is in compliance with the ADA. The agreement includes provisions for DDS to do the following:

- Designate an ADA Coordinator whose duties include providing information to the public who may have questions regarding access for qualified individuals with disabilities to DDS's departments, programs, activities and services, coordinating DDS's effort to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under the ADA, including assisting individuals with DDS review and grievance policies regarding complaints alleging its noncompliance with Title II, and serving as a resource to DDS's staff in all departments regarding the ADA;
- Conduct a detailed audit of its services to make sure that individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are being provided with effective communication during all programs and services;
- Ensure that appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including qualified interpreters, are made available to all individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- Designate funding to ensure that auxiliary aids and services are provided to individuals in a timely manner;
- Ensure that its policies and practices are nondiscriminatory, and provide effective communication for people with communication disabilities;
- Provide a grievance procedure and policy to resolve claims of failure to comply with the ADA;
- Train DDS and private provider staff on the policies and the ADA by way of training approved by the Department of Justice;
- Provide an annual report to the Department of Justice for two years.

DDS Ombudsman, Ed Mambruno, has been appointed by Commissioner Scheff to serve as the ADA Coordinator for DDS. Mr. Mambruno has a strong background in advocating for individuals with disabilities. He developed and helped implement many progressive and proactive programs for persons with disabilities and has been instrumental in the development and passage of bills protecting, empowering and bettering the lives of persons with developmental disabilities in the State of Connecticut.

In order to train DDS staff and private providers, DDS has developed a power point presentation as well as a video which is available on DVD. The training should be completed by December 31, 2017. The PowerPoint presentation and the video will also be available to the public on the DDS website.

State Budget Update

The legislature has not yet passed a final budget for fiscal years 2018 and 2019. Governor Malloy has shared his Resource Allocation Plan, which he will continue to implement in the event that a final budget is not adopted by the legislature. There have been numerous proposals to date from the various legislative caucuses and no two versions are the same.

Reports currently indicate that the House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on a budget Thursday, September 14, 2017. Upon passage and approval of a final budget by all parties, DDS staff will quickly share as much information as possible about the impact on DDS stakeholders.