



Council on Developmental Services



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Approved Minutes of April 12, 2012

Location: NEAT Marketplace, 33 Coventry Street, Hartford, CT 06112

In Attendance: Jack Frost; James Heffernan, Chairman; Thomas Kalal; Jamie Lazaroff; Sheila Mulvey; Dr. Terrence Macy, Ex-Officio

Absent: Jennifer Carroll; David Hadden; Dr. John Pelegano, Secretary; Lou Richards; Patti Silva; Patrick Vingo, Vice Chairman

Guests: Patrick Johnson, Executive Director, CIB Oak Hill; Bruce Stovall, Vice President, Oak Hill Centers Public
Participants: Pat Tyler, Parent; Stuart and Jane Brown, Parents

Staff: Christine Cooney, Director, Legislative and Executive Affairs; Joseph Drexler, Deputy Commissioner; Sgt. Shane Hassett, Director of Investigations; Maureen Prewitt, Executive Secretary

Chairman James Heffernan opened the meeting at 6:04 P.M.

Mr. Heffernan thanked hosts, Patrick Johnson and Bruce Stovall for giving the Council the opportunity to meet at the NEAT Marketplace.

Public Comment:

Pat Tyler, whose 28 year old daughter receives services from DDS, discussed the need for the Department to look at individuals served by the Department as contributors rather than consumers. The Department needs to keep families well informed so that they can participate. She explained that as a very involved parent, she often doesn't find out about issues until it's too late. Ms. Tyler felt that the Five Year Plan should include a process like the Appreciative Inquiry Design Model where families have a seat at the table; assistance to families for making social connections; and make the DDS website disability friendly; improve notification to families and consumers especially involving policy changes.

Mr. Heffernan thanked Ms. Tyler for her comments.

Commissioner Macy addressed Ms. Tyler's concerns and provided information on the Department's Five Year Plan.

Stuart and Jane Brown, whose 20 year old son will soon transition to adult services, began looking three years ago at ways to create a living situation for him and two friends. The Browns came to the Council meeting to determine if their plan to work with Jewish Association for Community Living (JCL) to create a Continuous Residential Support (CRS) model for these three individuals is feasible.

Deputy Commissioner Drexler discussed how DDS' distribution of resources is based on an individual's level of need and that the region can facilitate placement when funding is in place. The Browns were encouraged to contact their legislators, as well as DDS regional staff. Mr. and Mrs. Brown were also invited to discuss the issue further with Deputy Commissioner Drexler.

Tour of NEAT Marketplace:

Patrick Johnson gave a brief history of the facility and the services they provide. Bruce Stovall conducted a tour of the facility for Council members.

Approval of March Minutes:

Due to the lack of a quorum, the March Minutes will be reviewed at the Council's May meeting.

Ombudsman's Report:

The Ombudsman's Report was distributed. Ed Mambruno was not in attendance due to a family commitment. Questions on the report were deferred until the May meeting.

Legislative Update:

Rod O'Connor's most recent Legislative Update Report will be distributed via email to members on 4/13/12.

Christine Cooney reviewed the status of various agency bills. Mr. Heffernan requested that Council members receive a copy of the bill regarding sexual assault of individuals when it comes out. The Council discussed the bill on medication disposal and the ramifications it would have to DDS's current policy, which allows unused medications to be flushed, and the costs associated with possible alternative methods (i.e. disposal sites at local police stations). Autism Awareness Day was recently held and was well attended. Speakers included Governor Malloy, Rep. Cathy Abercrombie and Jeff Calhoun, son of UCONN Coach Jim Calhoun.

The Personal Care Attendant bill has not yet resurfaced as an amendment. Mr. Heffernan will send out a reminder letter to House and Senate leadership to reiterate the Council's concerns with this legislation.

Commissioner's Update:

Commissioner Macy stated that over the past month the Department has been working on revisions to the Autism Waiver. It has been approved by the Office of Policy and Management and should be forwarded to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) upon final review by the Department of Social Services (DSS) by the end of the month. It is expected to be operational by August 1st. The Commissioner explained that the approval of the waiver doesn't change much in terms of eligibility for services, but has more to do with funding for current services that are already being provided.

The Commissioner met with the Departments of Children and Families (DCF) and Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) to discuss better ways to support people with autism who transition through all three departments. This issue was brought to the Governor's attention and the Governor agreed with the three agencies forming a task group to discuss and explore the issue further.

The Commissioner indicated that discussions on Dual Eligibility are taking place. This involves individuals who have both Medicaid and Medicare and the difficulty they have in obtaining medical services as many health care providers will not accept these insurances, or there are restrictions are placed on the services. DDS, DSS, DCF and DMHAS are involved in this massive project, and if approved by the federal government, will last for 3 years. It is hoped that this project will allow the DDS population to get better access to medical treatment, especially dental and psychological services.

Transition work at Southbury Training School continues. The Department is following the progress of individuals who have transitioned into the community to ensure they are receiving adequate services and to determine if our transition plans are working.

Commissioner Macy attended a Self Advocate Coordinator (SAC) meeting this week. The group is focusing on healthy relationships and increasing the number of self advocates in private provider agencies. They are in the process of developing a presentation on healthy relationships and will present this to each provider agency.

Monthly meetings with Jennifer Carroll of the Connecticut Family Support Network (FSN) continue. FSN has made remarkable progress making contacts with families to help guide them with issues.

All Regional Directors are now in place. There are currently three Assistant Regional Director vacancies. There have been more leadership changes in the past six months than the Department has had in many years. The Department's ability to function so well with so many vacancies is a testament that employees have stepped up to the challenge.

Division of Investigations Report:

Sgt. Shane Hassett and Commissioner Macy reported that the Hartford Regional Center's recent survey indicated no deficiencies and the Center is now meeting the Department of Public Health's standards. The Division of Investigations' team oriented approach to get investigations done quickly was a contributing factor to this success.

New Business:

Jack Frost mentioned that the South Region will be holding a Family Forum on "It's All About Housing" regarding creative housing solutions.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.