

**DDS-South Region  
Regional Advisory and Planning Council  
Meeting Minutes  
May 16, 2012**

**Members Present:** Chair Diane Martin, Jean Brookman, Michael Del Sole, Jeff DePina, April Dipollina, Susan Gardner, Lauralyn Lewis, Lori Richardson, and Thomas Dailey, Regional Director, DDS South Region.

**Members Absent:** Carol Cooney and Danielle Sheppard.

**Guests:** Jim Crawford, Joe and Pam Theis, Kathy and Stan Peters

**Chairperson's Report**

- **Call to Order** – Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- **Introductions** – All made Introductions.
- **Public Comment** – None presented.
- **New Member Welcome** – Jeff DePina was welcomed as the newest member of the council.
- **Review of Minutes** - A review ensued of the March 21, 2012 meeting minutes. In the presence of a quorum and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2012 meeting, as presented.
- **Creative Housing Forum Update** – The forums have proven to be a successful collaboration between DDS and this Council. Approximately 14 people attended the forum in Norwich and over 40 attended the New Haven forum. In response to Chair's request for feedback, Mr. Peters stated that although he felt that the information presented was important and useful, it didn't mean much to families with no funding. Chair Martin stated that the forums were meant to be a starting point – a way to get the conversation started – and serve as a foundation for next steps. Member Dipollina stated that we, as parents, are now responsible for driving the advocacy on the issues raised. She hopes that the forums launch parent led workgroups that will move forward on the issues.
- **Newsweek Article** – Member Lewis referenced a cover story on autism that appeared in a recent issue of Newsweek. She pointed out that while the number of individuals diagnosed with autism keeps climbing, federal and state resources to support this population is decreasing.

Mr. Dailey pointed out that CT is the second most expensive developmental services service system in the US. DDS is a very well resourced agency. The challenge is that most of the department's funding is tied up in legacy systems that are extremely costly. With no new funding on the horizon, DDS will need to take those legacy system dollars and invest them in community support options, which are much less expensive.

- **Regional Director Welcome** - On behalf of the Council, Chair Martin welcomed Thomas Dailey to his first Council meeting, as the new Regional Director for the South Region of DDS. The Council looks forward to working with him.

### **Regional Director's Report**

- Mr. Dailey discussed his tenure with DDS and said that he was happy to back in the SR in his new role. His first initiative as Regional Director was to hold staff meetings throughout the Region to hear staff feedback on their hopes for the new administration. Commonalities included consistency, communication, transparency, and increased sharing of information as to allow staff insight into why certain decisions are made. Next, Mr. Dailey requested feedback from the Council, which included:
  - Where does Council feedback go; does it make its way to CO?
  - Stronger focus on promoting People First Language in all DDS documents.
  - Update DDS documents to reflect DDS vs. DMR
  - Promote parent to parent collaboration
  - Improve relations between DDS and the State Department of Education
  - Create a database for facilitating residential matches allowing family access
  - Promote cross-collaboration among state agencies for the purposes of information sharing through the stages of an individual's life
  - Solicit families email addresses through a post card mailing in order to create a DDS list serve for the purposes of information sharing
  - Promote family to family communication via the DDS website
  - Ramp-up outreach to families at a younger age through the DDS website
  - Support the creation of family-to-family workgroups to take on grassroots initiatives.
  - Increase outreach to hospitals and pediatricians to facilitate spreading the word about DDS

It is important to note that the school systems and DDS operate under very different confidentiality laws. Mr. Dailey acknowledged that there is a lot of work to be done in the area of communication but that DDS is close to launching a web based system. A way of opening up the system to families is yet to be determined. New tools are coming that will allow families, providers, and staff to access data.

DDS' current capacity does not lend itself to person-centered planning in the way it once did. Since discontinuing case management services to people who are not on T19 due to budgetary and staff retirements a few years back, even less outreach is happening. Although families can access the system as early as birth to three, once they exit the Birth to Three program the child falls under the purview of the local school district. Often times, DDS does not really resurface until transition planning begins in high school.

Representative Crawford added that he was surprised to learn how uncoordinated the systems are. He believes the State needs to get a handle on SPED funding, as too many inequities exist among districts. To that end, he intends to introduce something that will address SPED funding in CT next year. In closing, he shared that a new law was passed in the last legislative session that requires districts to hold a pre-PPT meeting.

- **Allocations** – South Region allocations year to date include:
  - \$17M in recycled dollars allocated.
  - Served 19 Emergencies year to date with \$2M in recycled funding. Only 17 Emergencies left in the SR at this time.
  - 25 people exercised portability moving from state programs to the private sector. We do not fill staff vacancies at this point.
  - 23 children served in the Voluntary Services Program (VSP) at an average cost of \$50K per family for in-home staffing, respite, clinical services.
  - Federal Waiver participants – Receive reimbursement totaling \$515M each year from federal government in waiver reimbursement. As a participating state, CT is legally required to meet the needs of individuals who are on the waiver but underserved.
  - P1s, P2s, and P3s are not being serviced at this time.

Discussion focused on the Level of Need (LON) tool and the Planning and Resource Allocation (PRAT) Process.

- **Position Updates** - Carin Mancini has been selected to serve as the new Assistant Regional Director for Public Administration in the SR of DDS. In this role, Ms. Mancini will also serve as a liaison to the South's Planning and Resource Allocation Team (PRAT). Ms. Mancini is a highly skilled 30-year veteran of the department. She has served in numerous capacities including managing ICF facilities, Emergency Management Coordination, PRAT/Waiver Manager, and managing the closure of many public sector Community Living Arrangements (CLA).

The SR is currently in the process of closing two more homes. It is important to note that publicly run CLA's cost significantly more than those operated by the private sector.

- **Uniform Rates** - Uniform rates based on level of need and utilization are required by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMMS). DDS began the transition to uniformed rates for day services in January. Planning is underway for transition to uniformed rates for residential services, which will begin in January 2013. DDS is meeting with all providers. This is a major shift to our systems. Will end in 7.5 years. It will be an equitable service system. Some providers may decide to take clients w/o more funding. All rates are based on the Level of Need.
- **Grads** – The SR has placed 74 grads placed to date.

- **Day Services** – The region is doing well in this area in terms of funding and placements.

Discussion centered on the DDS Planning List (P1, P2, P3). Mr. Dailey shared that DDS is considering changing this rating system for clarity.

- **Position Updates** – Interviews for the position of Assistant Regional Director of Private Administration (formerly held by Thomas Dailey) are being scheduled. Resource Administrator Jeannine Pettinico is covering the duties in the interim in addition to her regular duties. The PRAT/Waiver Manager position is expected to be refilled; however, the department is restructuring the specifications to reflect the addition of responsibilities related to planning and developing new residential and day programs for individuals living in and out of the state, across regions, and in family homes.
- **Budget - Updates included:**
  - \$1.5M PS account rescissions
  - \$600K cut in OE
  - \$2M cut in PS account next year
  - Moved money internally to address cuts
  - \$1.3M deficit projected next year
- **Five year Plan** – The new Five Year Plan can be accessed on the home page of the DDS website. The Commissioner will next address the goal of consistency across Regions; specifically in the areas of PRAT and URR processes.
- **Legislative Session** - The 2012 legislative session has ended. Please refer to the handout distributed during the meeting for an update on DDS related bills and initiatives.
- **Summer Workers** - All summer worker positions are approved. This will allow for 7-day operation of the Region's three respite centers and a full compliment of Camp Harkness staff.

At the conclusion of his updates, Mr. Dailey took a moment to describe two of the most positive aspects of the CT DDS; 1) Our abuse and neglect investigation system is the only one in the country to be overseen by the state police department and DDS and its providers rigorously investigate allegations of abuse and neglect 2) Our Mortality Review Process helps us ensure that unexpected deaths are fully investigated and lead to quality improvements in our support system. . Both of these components make for a more robust investigation system than any other in the country. With approximately 16,000 private direct care workers and 3000 public workers, much oversight is required to ensure that the health and safety of individuals supported by DDS are protected.

## **New Business**

- **Executive Board Nominations** - Executive Board member nominations were made as follows:

1. Chair – Diane Martin
2. Vice Chair – Jean Brookman
3. Secretary – Susan Gardner

Formal elections will be held at the June meeting.

- **2012-2013 Council Priorities** - Council members were asked to come to the June meeting prepared to discuss and determine the Council's priorities for 2012-2013.
- **Next Meeting Date** - The next regularly scheduled meeting of the DDS South Region Advisory and Planning Council is June 20, 2012, at 6:00 p.m., at the Henry Carter Hull Library in Clinton.

## **Adjournment**

- Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Minutes Recorded by:  
Jolie Crescimano-Goss  
Executive Secretary, DDS-SR