

Personal Care Attendant Workforce Council

Draft MINUTES

January 14, 2020

Held at:

DDS Regional Office

35 Thorpe Avenue, 3rd Floor

Wallingford, CT

Members IN ATTENDANCE: David Guttchen (Chair), Kathy Bruni (via phone), Mary Caruso, Kathy Flaherty, Denise Paladino, Sheila Mulvey, and Tesha Tramantano-Kelly

Members absent: Sharon Denson, Katie Regan

Other Participants/Members of the Public: Steven Bender - 1199 Training & Upgrading Fund; Deborah Schwartz - SEIU 1199NE; Diedre Murch - SEIU 1199NE; Melissa Morton - Office of Policy and Management (OPM); and Megan Krementowski - OPM.

Called to Order

- Meeting called to order by David Guttchen at 9:40 A.M.

Introductions

- Introductions made by all attendees. David Guttchen introduced new member Tesha Tramantano-Kelly.

Approval of Minutes from October 8, 2019

- Motion made by Kathy Flaherty and seconded by Mary Caruso. No discussion. Minutes accepted and approved as final with one abstention from Tesha Tramantano-Kelly.

Membership Update

- Melissa Morton said that the Council is happy to have Tesha Tramantano-Kelly joining the Council.
- Melissa Morton reported that the Council is waiting on the appointment of Fran Mazzarella, Theresa Coyle, and Eileen Healy.
- Melissa Morton reported that the Council received two nominees to fill the positions of “a member of an organization representing the interests of elderly consumers.” The administrative staff for the OPM Secretary have been working diligently with staff at the legislature to get the appointments approved. Melissa Morton noted she has received questions regarding more

information about Fran Mazzarella and Eileen Healy, which is a sign that things are moving. The hope is that nominees can be appointed before session begins.

- David Guttchen added that this is not unique to the Council and there are over 200 legislative appointments for task forces and committees that have not been finalized yet.
- Sheila Mulvey asked if there are any more Governor's appointments pending. Melissa Morton answered that this is one of the appointments OPM is waiting on. David Guttchen added that because it's the Governor's first year, he has many appointments to make.

PCA Voluntary Trainings Update

- Steven Bender said that Melissa Morton asked him to give a brief report on staffing changes at the Training and Upgrading Fund and explained that Marie Hu left in October. TUF split Marie's position into two staff positions: 1) a full-time Administrative Coordinator to oversee orientation and training scheduling and office work.; and (2) a part-time Education Director who will take the lead on orientations and participate on the Orientation Subcommittee. Peter Stred has been hired for the Education Director position and is an experienced trainer. Steven Bender provided the following update on the new PCA Fundamental Skills Overview for PCAs training that was developed by and conducted at Capitol Community College in November and December 2019. Highlights of the discussion follow:
 - The training was devised by staff of the Healthcare Training Department and Continuing Education at Capitol Community College.
 - Steven Bender said they have run the program with good reviews. He explained that this is one of the voluntary, three-hour workshops. The workshop includes standard precautions, hand-washing techniques, fall prevention techniques, wheelchair safety, proper feeding techniques, and communication skills.
 - Steven Bender said attendance has been good and he is planning to meet next week with staff at Capitol Community College who have offered to reach out to other community colleges to discuss the possibility of offering Fundamental Skills Overview training at other community colleges in additional cities in 2020. Steven Bender reported that staff at Capitol Community College plan to create two new levels of the Fundamental Skills training that will build on each other. He has not seen what this curriculum would look like, but asked staff to get TUF more information and the outline of the curriculum by the end of January.
 - Steven Bender reported there have been four sessions of the fundamental Skills training course held at Capitol Community College - two in November and two in December. He said he did not bring the actual attendance figures, but there were between 10 and 15 attendees per session. He said the show-rate has been about 50% and apologized for not bringing those numbers to the meeting. He said they have been intentionally over-enrolling.
 - Kathy Bruni said she has the numbers of how many people enrolled in each session: 23 and 27 on December 10th and December 12th.
 - Kathy Bruni asked Steven Bender to please include attendance numbers when he sends her the invoices. Steven Bender said he hasn't been asked to do that up until now, but he will in the future. Kathy Bruni indicated she thinks it will be helpful. Melissa Morton said it would also be helpful to the Council.

- Steven Bender provided updates on additional Training Fund activity. The following discussion ensued:
 - Steven Bender stated that he met with Denise Paladino in the fall and she gave him training suggestions that he has not yet followed up on. He said that Peter Stred will be following up on her suggestions about trainings for PCAs who work with individuals on the autism spectrum as well as topics on assistive technology. He noted that Denise Paladino provided contact information for potential training resources. Steven Bender said TUF hopes to work with organizations that can pilot new courses this spring.
 - Steven Bender reported that 15 PCAs graduated from CNA training at Capitol Community College this fall. A CNA training is beginning in West Haven next week and can accept 12 students. Steven Bender expects 12 people to enroll. TUF plans to hold another 12 person CNA class in West Haven in March, 2020. TUF is planning additional courses in either Bridgeport or Waterbury later in the spring 2020. He is uncertain if TUF will have funding to hold both. David Guttchen said the Council appreciates TUF inviting Council members to the CNA graduation. Steven Bender said that the West Haven CNA graduation will be sometime in March and he will make sure that is circulated among Council members.
 - David Guttchen asked Steven Bender if he has any figures on how many PCAs have gone to the other voluntary trainings. Steven Bender said he does but he did not bring them. He can share that after the meeting. Kathy Bruni said she has the spreadsheet for CPR enrollment during the month of December, 2019: there were four classes and the enrollments were 17, 15, 8, and 9.
 - Steven Bender added that in December, 2019 TUF didn't conduct all the courses. Mary Caruso asked if those numbers reflect people enrolled or present, and both Kathy Bruni and Steven Bender responded the figures reflect the number enrolled.
 - Melissa Morton requested that Steven Bender send Council members an update on voluntary trainings specifying the number of PCAs enrolled and in attendance. Mary Caruso asked Steven Bender if TUF is still doing Red Cross CPR training to which he responded that they are. Discussion followed:
 - Steven Bender explained that CPR training is done both through the American Red Cross and the American Heart Association. He said they have been using the American Red Cross training because two of TUF's training staff are Red Cross certified.
 - Steven Bender said two of their other trainers who work on the nursing home side became certified with the American Heart Association to do CPR and they have been offering that to their nursing home members. He said they have the capability to do both and said Mary Caruso has mentioned that people who are in nursing school or college need the American Heart Association training in particular so, in the future, if there is a group that needs American Heart Association he thinks the other TUF staff will be able to provide the necessary resources.
 - Mary Caruso noted that unless TUF advertises that the training is American Heart Association she does not know that people will request it. She suggested that TUF offer this specific training and see how that affects attendance. Steven Bender said that TUF staff will discuss the suggestion internally.

Orientation Subcommittee Update

- Megan Krementowski shared the following update regarding the Orientation Subcommittee:
 - Reminded the Council that about a year ago, OPM solicited comments and feedback from the Council and State entities regarding the PCA New-Hire Orientation. These comments were applied to the Orientation curriculum in the fall and an updated curriculum was emailed to all Council members in October.
 - OPM realizes that there is a desire among Council members to change the Orientation model and have it be led by a PCA/consumer-employer team rather than a professional trainer. However, such a change will take a great deal of planning and a pilot test period. This desire has been shared and discussed with TUF and 1199, but an important first step is that TUF, 1199 and the Council work together to revise the orientation curriculum so there is a solid curriculum being delivered in a tone supportive of the PCA and consumer-employer relationship being delivered in the interim.
 - The Orientation curriculum that the subcommittee is currently revising is a first step toward creating a curriculum that has a positive tone and fosters better communication between PCAs and consumer-employers.
 - Orientation updates were presented at the Fund Committee's October 30th meeting. There was agreement in the group about most of the revisions but some content areas were determined to need further discussion. Because of this, members decided to create a subcommittee that will focus on discussing and implementing these changes.
 - The subcommittee is made up of three members from the PCA Workforce Council—Mary Caruso, Sheila Mulvey, and Kathy Flaherty and three Union members. It is facilitated by TUF staff Steve Bender and Peter Stred.
 - The first Orientation Subcommittee meeting took place at 1199 on December 4, 2019. There were many areas of immediate agreement among members but there were also areas where agreement could not immediately be reached and additional research and in-depth dialogue is required. An entire meeting will be dedicated to each of the following topics: (a) job descriptions/scope of work and the relationship between authorized representatives and consumer-employers and how that affects PCAs; (b) fraud and abuse; and (c) payroll issue resolution process.
 - Megan Krementowski told the Council that the next Orientation Subcommittee meeting to be held on Tuesday, January 21st will focus on PCAs' scope of work/provision of job descriptions and the relationship between authorized representatives and consumer-employers and how that affects PCAs.
 - Megan Krementowski reminded DSS and DDS staff to respond to requests for information on these topics. Melissa Morton said that the subcommittee is relying on the information from DDS and DSS to make the next subcommittee meeting productive. Kathy Flaherty reminded Melissa Morton that she won't be able to attend the next Orientation Subcommittee meeting.

Subcommittee Membership

- Melissa Morton said there is a member vacancy on the Labor Management Committee and Tesha Tramontano-Kelly volunteered to fill that position. The Council agreed. Melissa Morton said she will be in touch with Tesha Tramontano-Kelly to brief her on the role of the Committee.

- Melissa Morton explained the other committees are the standing Training Fund and the Orientation Subcommittee that is durational and, at some point, will disband.
- Melissa Morton raised for Council discussion the concept of forming a bylaws subcommittee. She noted that the Council lacks bylaws. She added that she believes the lack of bylaws have greatly affected things such as subcommittee participation and regular meeting attendance. She said that Megan Krementowski is currently researching bylaws of other state committees as well as Massachusetts' PCA Workforce Council. Melissa Morton asked the group if they are all in agreement that the Council should be developing bylaws, and all Council members agreed.
 - Kathy Flaherty volunteered to serve on a bylaws subcommittee and suggested including Sharon Denson. Melissa Morton said she is going to also reach out to Katie Regan to serve on this subcommittee and will reach out Sharon as well.
 - David Guttchen added that the subcommittee should be very focused and time limited and there should be many models to use as resources.
 - Melissa Morton said looking at the Money Follows the Person Steering Committee and Massachusetts' PCA Workforce Council bylaws is a great starting place. She added that these committees have similar compositions as the Council.

Transition to Weekly Payroll

- David Guttchen requested a weekly payroll update from Kathy Bruni saying that this week the first group was going to be submitting weekly timesheets. Melissa Morton clarified that the group doing this is the Allied odd cycle.
- Kathy Bruni said she does not have much of an update and said it is challenging that this is happening at the same time as EVV implementation. She also noted that in the long run weekly payroll will be better because problems will be caught sooner.
- Denise Paladino said that Sunset Shores sent out new, revised timesheets and communication via insert so that all PCAs, self-hire staff and employers are aware of weekly payroll and the transition schedule. She added that, previously, Sunset Shores also included information in a monthly communication flyer and Allied included this in its newsletter. She said all stakeholders should be aware of this transition. Denise Paladino noted that for DDS timing with EVV is beneficial.
- David Guttchen said that, per the EVV agreement between the Council and the Union, the Council must notify the Union 60 days prior to the start of DDS' implementation of EVV. Then a Labor Management Committee meeting must be held within 20 days of the Council's notice to the Union to discuss DSS' EVV implementation plan.
- Denise Paladino explained that there was a change in administration and a new employee will be taking on the task of implementing EVV rollout.

Other Business

- None

Public Comment

- None

Executive Session

- Motion to go into Executive Session made by Tesha Tramontano-Kelly and seconded by Kathy Flaherty. All voted in favor at 10:11 AM.
- Executive session adjourned at 11:22 A.M.

Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn made by David Guttchen and seconded by Denise Paladino. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:22 A.M.

Next Meeting will be April 14, 2020 – 9:30 – 11:30 - - at Department of Social Services, 55 Farmington Ave., Hartford. Room TBD.