

*DDS North Region
Regional Advisory & Planning Council*

Meeting Minutes of September 15, 2010

Attendance: Carlos Colon, Sara Glad, Deb Godsell, John Houchin, Kathleen Perrier

Absent: Nancy Bilyak, Florence Guite, Susan Miller, Patti Silva, Lorraine
& John Mullooly

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm.

Members enjoyed an annual pot luck supper prior to the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS:

The meeting minutes from February 17th were not available so they were tabled until the next meeting.

Chairperson, Kathleen Perrier began the meeting by sharing her experience at the March 11th Council on Developmental Services meeting that she attended and indicated that it was a very interesting meeting. Kathleen gave a brief report to Council members regarding some of the initiatives that the North Region Advisory & Planning Council has done including the Legislative Breakfast. The Self Advocates also attended this meeting and Kathleen thought they did a very nice job with their presentation.

Legislative Breakfast – There was a brief discussion regarding the annual Legislative Breakfast, held at the LOB on March 11th. Everyone thought that this year's breakfast went very well. John indicated that he received positive feedback from legislators after the meeting. Everyone agreed that the format and focus was well received by legislators and that taking a positive approach rather than a negative one works best. The Legislative Breakfast is an important opportunity for Advisory Council members and those families who presented, to share their stories with legislators so that they hear firsthand and understand better how the DDS money is being spent which provides valuable services to consumers. Carlos Colon said that he wrote letters to legislators and they wrote back that they would keep us (DDS) in mind. John complimented the Advisory Council members for a job well done and said they were good advocates. For next year's Legislative Breakfast we will need to figure out how to be creative with a 3.8 billion dollar deficit in what message we want to deliver and what the focus will be. Some ideas suggested were: through this effort this is what has happened, or keep this so that people can continue to get these services, etc.

NEW BUSINESS:

Budget Update: There is a 3.8 billion dollar deficit this year and there is no new money this year for residential placements. The Placement Resource Allocation Team (PRAT) deals with emergencies and they have to make decisions. PRAT's priority is to address emergencies and people who are under-funded on the Waiver. The Region will have to

stretch the money to serve more people as well as scrutinize agencies more carefully. The question was raised if there are any parents or consumers who are part of the PRAT besides DDS staff? John responded that there are none because PRAT is dealing with state funds (money) so we have to oversee it. There is money for School Grads and Age Outs for this fiscal year who graduates 2010. There are 10 people from last year that have not decided what day program they are going into. We need to maintain that money for them. John explained hard and soft money. The Waiting List money is gone, which was part of the 5 year Plan. All our emergencies are used for opportune vacancies, which forces everybody to be more creative. One example of that would be; under the Individual & Family Resource (IFS) Team, there is a Behaviorist who can work with a family to show them how to better work with their child. They can also do life skill assessments to see what the family's needs are. They can apply for a family grant instead of pursuing placement. For many families this option allows them to have the individual stay at home with them.

When there is a crisis we are relying on Community Training Homes (CTH) while we try to find a placement for individuals. There are 90 CTH's who serve 140 people. There are more agencies opening up CTH's which need to be licensed. A lot of times when an individual is placed in a CTH due to an emergency, they end of staying there because they like it. We are trying to be more pro-active in finding appropriate placements for people.

Cuts this year will have to occur in both Public and Private. Private agencies have not taken a cut. As of July 1st we went to an attendance based system with agencies, whereby if an individual doesn't attend a program the agency won't get the money. We went from a 76% attendance rate to 90% rate.

John also talked about the option of portability. Some families are making the decision to pull away from one agency to go to another to get more for their money. Case Managers need to be more creative and inform parents about the different agencies and what services they offer so that they can make an informed decision. Another option available to families is Self Hire. If you go into Self Hire you will need a Broker and a Fiscal Intermediary (FI) who does all the billing. It is the most cost effective way to go. For example, if you have a \$50,000 budget the FI gets paid separately it doesn't come out of the \$50,000. As a parent or guardian you have total control but with a private provider you don't. When a person gets hired by the family the FI does a registry check as well as a police background check. They will let the family know if there are any concerns. It is more difficult process but it is more satisfying. The Direct Hire works best when a guardian or parent is involved. When a consumer does it directly with a Direct Hire it is much harder. They are in a supervisory type of category and they are responsible for overseeing staff and assisting the family. It is like any employee/employer relationship.

Council members agreed that parents need to be educated while their child is still in high school so that they are better prepared when their child graduates. Some families feel they are at the mercy of what everybody tells them and after the dust settles and they have an opportunity to talk to people, then they find out about other options. John

reminded everyone that the community offers a lot of resources as an option for families that people need to tap into.

The Region receives approximately 30 Programmatic Administrative Reviews (PARs) requests annually. This allows families who don't agree with PRAT's decision, to request a meeting with the Regional Director. John added that a good percentage of the time he agrees with PRAT's decision. John explained that when he meets with a family they discuss creative ways or options to resolve issues. During these meetings John encourages families to have a Person Centered Plan (PCP) done for the individual to determine what skills they can build on.

Family Night – Discussed and finalized plans for the upcoming Family Night, which is being held on October 20th from 4:00 – 8:00 pm. This timeframe allows families to attend between those hours as there will be no formal presentations. A mailing (postcard) was sent to nearly 5,000 families making them aware of this event. Tables will be set up identifying each specialty area. The Advisory & Planning Council will have their own table set up for families to stop by and learn more about what the committee does. It will also be a good opportunity to recruit new members. Other tables will include the Bureau of Rehabilitative Services, the Department of Labor, and several tables set up for DDS general information that will include, PRAT, Transition Coordinators, Helpline staff, and DDS Self Advocates.

With the employment rate at 9%, it was suggested that Robin Wood, DDS Self Determination Director, be invited to attend our next meeting scheduled for November 17th to talk about employment.

Deb Godsell made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Sara Glad second the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda A. Angelica
Executive Secretary