

**DDS West Region  
Advisory Council  
Minutes– January 16, 2025  
4:00 p.m.**

**Participants:**

Susan Bastien, Lori Chiappiniello, Marina Derman, Mickey Herbst, Gil Kellersman, Shannon O'Brien

**Call to order and approval of the Agenda**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm and the agenda was approved

**Review and Approval of Minutes**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Minutes of October 17, 2024 were approved.

**Chairs Report**

None

**Directors Report**

Self-Advocate Coordinators (SAC) Annual Report: The SAC report was distributed via email prior to the meeting. Shannon gave an overview of the groups presentation. The West Region has four SACs (2 that are bilingual). They have been doing a lot of work with the Connecticut Family Support Network (CTFSN). This group does community outreach and is a resource for families. They offer trainings also.

The group discussed statewide SAC Advocacy groups and how the membership numbers have fluctuated. In 2023, the participation was high and then the number dropped. Shannon agreed to research this to inquire if there was a known reason for the fluctuation being so drastic.

Shannon stated that she is very proud of the Self Advocates. She also shared that each SAC is assigned to a division which has worked out quite well.

Shannon indicated that she would like the SAC to join the meeting to provide feedback on their roles. She will be discussing this an agenda item with Mr. Bergamo (Chairperson).

A question arose concerning language used to refer to the individuals that the department serves. It was mentioned that they would like to be called by their name. However, the question centered around referring to a larger group. In the past different language was used to refer to a larger set of individuals (i.e. individuals, consumers, participants). They have expressed that they do not want to be called this. This is a topic that will be brought up when the SACs join the WR RAC Meeting.

## **GTI**

DDS continues to meet with GTI weekly to discuss issues and strategies for resolution. Deloitte has also been involved in trying to resolve continuing issues.

Feedback from a RAC member was that her issue was resolved when she involved Joseph Carvalho (DDS staff). His role as the liaison was instrumental in helping her fix the issues that she was dealing with.

Joe has requested to join a future RAC meeting again to get feedback from the group. Shannon will coordinate a date when Joe can return.

## **DDS Legislative Proposals**

An email was sent to the RAC for review. The group did not have time prior to the meeting to review the document; hence, they were unable to discuss any of the proposals that are pending.

## **WR Emergency List**

The West Region has 24 people on the emergency list. It continues to be a struggle to place people due to staffing shortages.

## **CT Hospital Association**

DDS Executives, along with other key staff at DCF and DMHAS met with hospital executives to discuss their concern with people being left in their hospitals even after they are ready for discharge. This continues to be a challenging area for state departments. This group is trying to be as vigilant as possible with avoiding unnecessary extended hospital stays. They will continue to collaborate with each other to keep stays as short as possible.

## **Supported Housing**

Shannon reported that there are two developments that are already opening. One in Cheshire and one in Naugatuck. The one in Naugatuck has 12 units and another one is being planned for another 12 units. A third possible location is going through Department of Public Health for approval on High St., in Fairfield.

## **Governor's Budget**

We are waiting for the Governor's final budget.

## **STS**

A question concerning STS came up regarding how many individuals still live there. The answer was 99. Some individuals were recently placed at the Linkfield Road location.

Another question arose regarding how many individuals have trachea tube or ventilators. Shannon was unsure about the exact numbers. The concern here is that there should be

placements in the community that can serve individuals with this need. The feeling was that those people do not need to stay at STS and they should be in the community.

Shannon shared that the Deputy Commissioner is working diligently on this subject to have providers serve more individuals with trach needs.

**New Business**

None

**Old Business**

None

**Opportunity for Public Participation**

None

**Adjournment**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded the meeting concluded at 4:57 pm

Respectfully Submitted by:

Eunice Rivera

Executive Secretary

DDS West Region