

## LONG TERM CARE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

September 9, 2025  
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Melissa Morton, Chair, Office of Policy & Management (OPM); Barbara Cass, Department of Public Health (DPH); Margy Gerundo-Murkette, Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS); Erin Leavitt-Smith, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS); Jessica Rival, Office of Health Strategy (OHS); Michael Santoro, Department of Housing (DOH); Laura Watson, DOH; and Christine Weston, Department of Social Services (DSS)

Absent: Krista Ostaszewski, Department of Developmental Services (DDS); Kelley Kendall, DDS; Commissioner Amy Porter, (ADS); Lisa Rivers, Department of Transportation (DOT); and William Seals, Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Others Present: Michael Werner, CWCSEO, on behalf of LTC Advisory Council; Mag Morelli; Mairead Painter, Long-Term Care Ombudsman (LTCOP); Karyl Lee Hall; Matthew Barrett, Connecticut Association of Health Care Facilities; Michelle Duprey; Deborah Migneault; Nora Duncan, CT AARP; State Representative Mitch Bolinsky; State Representative Jane Garibay; Julie Robison, University of Connecticut Health Center; and Cody Clark, OPM

Called to order by Melissa Morton at 10:03 AM

#### 1. **Welcome and Attendance**

Ms. Morton shared an overview of the agenda, shared a review of the Committee's statutory charge and called roll.

#### 2. **Review Goals for Meeting**

Ms. Morton reviewed the goals for the meeting, reminded LTC Planning Committee members of topics discussed at the June quarterly meeting, and stated that today's objective is to reaffirm the committee's commitment to their statutory charge by renewing and refreshing the vision and goals of the committee to move Connecticut's long-term services and supports (LTSS) system forward.

#### 3. **LTC Planning Committee Statutory Charge Review and Reset**

Ms. Morton shared the presentation prepared for the meeting and reviewed the Committee's statutory charge and required components of the LTSS Plan. The full presentation can be found on the [LTC Planning Committee Website](#).

#### 4. **Member Discussion & Vote – LTSS Plan Vision and Mission Statement for LTSS System**

Ms. Morton reviewed the vision and mission statements for the Long-Term Care Planning committee. She requested members' input on the current vision and mission statements and whether they should be revised or amended for the 2028 Long-Term Care Plan.

Current LTSS Plan Vision Statement for Connecticut's LTSS System:

*"Connecticut Residents have access to a full range of high-quality long-term services and supports that maximize autonomy, choice and dignity. "*

Current LTSS Plan Mission Statement for Connecticut's LTSS System:

*"To provide guidance for the development of a comprehensive system of community-based and institutional LTSS options. Such a system should promote access to affordable, high-quality, cost-effective services and supports that are delivered in the most integrated, life-enhancing setting."*

Member Discussion on LTSS Plan Vision Statement for Connecticut's LTSS System:

Ms. Morton asked members of the LTC Planning committee for their opinion on whether any revision to the LTSS Plan vision statement is needed. Erin Leavitt-Smith said she approves of the current vision statement as written. Margy Gerundo-Murkette spoke in support of reaffirming the current vision statement without further changes. She added that the current vision statement still applies to what the LTC Planning Committee is charged with working on now and into the future. Ms. Morton asked if there was any objection from members of the committee to reaffirm the current vision statement without revision. There was no objection.

Member Discussion on LTSS Plan Mission Statement for Connecticut's LTSS Plan:

Ms. Morton asked members of the LTC Planning committee for their opinion of whether any amendments should be made to the LTSS Plan mission statement. Christine Weston commented that the current mission statement is not representative of the full continuum of care and stated that there is wide array of LTSS options, and the continuum of care is not confined to only home and community-based services or institutional care.

Ms. Morton thanked Ms. Weston for her comments and asked for feedback from other members of the committee. She suggested amending the statement to highlight person-centeredness. Barbara Cass thanked Ms. Weston for her comments pertaining to meeting people where they are and expressed support for revising the existing mission statement to be more reflective of the current continuum of care. Erin Leavitt-Smith noted any revisions made should preserve clarity and conciseness. Ms. Morton proposed a revision to the mission statement that would address this feedback.

Ms. Morton proposed the following revision in bold to the vision statement: *"To provide guidance for the development of a comprehensive system of community-based and institutional LTSS options. **Such system should be person-centered**, promote access to affordable, high-quality, cost-effective services and supports that are delivered in the most integrated, life-enhancing setting."*

Ms. Morton asked for a motion to approve the vision statement and the amended mission statement.

Vote to approve Vision Statement for Connecticut's LTSS System: Michael Santoro made a motion to re-adopt the current Vision Statement for Connecticut's LTSS System that was seconded by Erin Leavitt-Smith. No additional discussion. All in favor. Motion passed.

Vote to approve Mission Statement for Connecticut's LTSS System: Christine Weston made a motion adopt the amended LTSS Plan Mission Statement for Connecticut's LTSS Plan that was

seconded by Barbara Cass. No additional discussion. All in favor. Motion passed.

**5. Member Discussion & Vote: Principles Governing the System of LTSS**

Ms. Morton introduced the 10 previously established principles for governing the LTSS system. These principles were created to outline the expectations for governing the LTSS system and to move toward the ultimate vision and mission.

Ms. Morton reviewed the ten existing principles which are:

- Provide equal access to home and community-based care and institutional care
- Assure that people have control and choice with respect to their own lives
- Be adequately financed and structured to assure that decision-making and service delivery are based on the needs of the individuals and families served and on the needs of employees who provide care and services
- Deliver services in a culturally competent manner to meet the needs of a diverse population
- Assure that individuals have meaningful rights and protections
- Include an information component to educate individuals about available services and financing options
- Assure mechanisms for integration with related services and systems including acute medical care, housing and transportation services
- Include a prevention component to educate individuals regarding actions that can be taken to reduce the chances of needing LTSS
- Include a strong independent advocacy component for those in need
- Include meaningful consumer input at all levels of system planning and implementation

The principles were raised by Ms. Morton for further discussion and potential revision by the committee to ensure alignment with the adopted vision and mission.

Member Discussion:

Ms. Weston raised questions about the meaning of “equal access,” asking whether it referred to access across care settings or across populations regardless of payer source. Ms. Morton clarified that the intent is to ensure all Connecticut residents, regardless of financial resources or payer source, have access to the full continuum of LTSS options. Ms. Cass then recommended explicitly stating “regardless of payer source” to clarify the principle. Ms. Morton agreed and noted the addition would strengthen the language.

Ms. Cass made additional suggestions to replace the word “assure” with “ensure” throughout the principles to reflect a more action-oriented commitment. Ms. Morton agreed to revise the language accordingly without any objection.

Ms. Gerundo-Murkette proposed to explicitly reference the “No Wrong Door” initiative in the principle pertaining to information and education. The committee agreed, and the modifications were made to the corresponding principle. Ms. Weston then recommended expanding the principle on consumer input to include “evaluation,” emphasizing the importance of ongoing feedback once programs are implemented. Ms. Morton concurred and noted the addition would support accountability and continuous improvement.

Ms. Cass shared a broader concern about communication and public awareness, asking how Connecticut residents are informed about available LTSS services and systems such as No Wrong Door. Ms. Morton acknowledged the issue and noted that communication strategies would be addressed in the subcommittee's recommendations for the LTSS plan.

Ms. Morton tabled this agenda item for further discussion. The committee agreed to continue the refinement of the LTSS governing principles and incorporate LTC Planning Committee member feedback.

## **6. Member Discussion & Vote: Roles and Responsibilities of Subcommittees**

Ms. Morton initiated the discussion by revisiting the purpose and structure of the subcommittees formed to support the development and implementation of the LTSS plan. She emphasized the importance of aligning subcommittee work with the overarching mission, vision, and governing principles established by the LTC Planning Committee. The two subcommittees proposed and voted on in the June LTC Planning Committee were:

LTSS Plan Development Subcommittee - Responsible for developing overarching goals and short- and long-term recommendations for inclusion in the three-year LTSS plan.

LTSS Plan Implementation and Progress Tracking Subcommittee - Charged with monitoring progress and ensuring effective implementation of the plan.

Ms. Morton reviewed the proposed roles and responsibilities for the two subcommittees, which include:

- Obtaining public feedback through focus groups, surveys, and outreach to stakeholders including users, families, providers, and advocates
- Charting progress on meeting Plan goals and implementing recommendations
- Conducting research on best practices and innovative ideas
- Providing quarterly progress updates to the Planning Committee

Comments received during the summer review period were acknowledged, including suggestions for establishing a timeline and clarifying membership composition. Ms. Morton clarified that the subcommittee would set its own timeline and that membership would include representatives from both the Planning Committee and the Advisory Council, as well as individuals with lived experience.

### Member Discussion:

The committee discussed the proposed roles and responsibilities and opened the floor for feedback. Members expressed general support for the structure and purpose of the subcommittees.

Ms. Morton then addressed questions regarding the selection and composition of subcommittee members. Ms. Gerundo-Murkette expressed appreciation for Ms. Morton's clarification around subcommittee roles. She emphasized the importance of shared responsibility and coordination, noting that OPM support would ensure the subcommittee was not left to manage tasks alone.

Ms. Morton elaborated on the role of community members with lived experience, explaining that their involvement would focus on identifying relevant groups, suggesting formats for engagement, and helping guide outreach and feedback efforts.

For the LTSS Plan Development subcommittee, Ms. Morton proposed a structure of 12 members: six from state agencies, four from the Long-Term Care Advisory Council and two members with lived experience in the LTSS system. Of the six Advisory Council members, at least two must be users of the LTSS system or their family members. She acknowledged feedback suggesting broader inclusion and recommended allowing Planning Committee and Advisory Council members, as well as others, to self-select for participation.

For the LTSS Plan Implementation and progress tracking subcommittee, a composition of no more than 8 members was proposed consisting of: three representatives from the Long-Term Care Advisory Council, three individuals with lived experience utilizing the LTSS system, one agency representative from the Office of Health Strategy and one agency representative from the Department of Transportation.

The committee then discussed which state agencies should be represented on the LTSS Plan Development Committee. Ms. Leavitt-Smith suggested including the Department of Social Services, the Department of Aging and Disability Services, the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Department of Public Health and the Department of Housing.

Ms. Weston expressed concern about having only one representative from DSS, given the department's broad scope and suggested the possibility of having additional membership representing the agency. Ms. Morton acknowledged the concern and proposed that each agency designate a point person responsible for coordinating feedback and circulating draft recommendations internally.

The committee agreed to revisit agency representation if needed and confirmed general support for the proposed composition for the subcommittees.

Vote to approve roles, responsibilities and composition of two subcommittees established by the LTC Planning Committee: Michael Santoro made a motion to approve the roles, responsibilities and composition of two established subcommittees (1) LTSS Plan Development Subcommittee and (2) the LTSS Plan Implementation and Progress Tracking Subcommittee. Barbara Cass seconded. No additional discussion. All in favor. Motion passed.

## **7. Member Discussion – Next Steps**

### Member Discussion:

Ms. Morton began the discussion on outlining the immediate actions and timeline required to move forward with the creation of the two subcommittees. She proposed the LTC Planning Committee and LTC Advisory Council invite interested parties to formally express their interest in being appointed to the subcommittees by submitting a brief statement of interest and description of their relevant experience.

The committee agreed that the subcommittees should convene their first meeting in November to begin outlining their respective goals and developing their organizational strategies. State Agencies and LTC Advisory Council Chair will submit their representatives for the subcommittees and recommendations for those with lived experience to Melissa Morton at [melissa.morton@ct.gov](mailto:melissa.morton@ct.gov) by September 29<sup>th</sup>.

## **8. Long-Term Care Advisory Council Comments**

Matthew Barrett raised points regarding the statutory authority of the Planning Committee and Advisory Council to form subcommittees. He emphasized that while the Planning Committee has flexibility to appoint additional members, the Advisory Council is composed of statutorily named individuals, and any expansion of its membership must be legally supported. He recommended reviewing the underlying statutes to ensure compliance, particularly regarding the authority of the chairperson to appoint subcommittee members.

Ms. Morton acknowledged the concern and confirmed that the committee had previously reviewed statutory language during the June meeting and committed to obtaining a written legal opinion to ensure confidence.

Michael Werner reaffirmed the Advisory Council's commitment to inclusive planning and highlighted the importance of family caregiving and thanked Ms. Weston for her advocacy. He also addressed recent media coverage regarding the statewide Senior Center Coordinator position, advocating for its permanent reinstatement based on recommendations from the Advisory Council's working group.

## **9. Public Comments**

Representative Jane Garibay commended the Committee's dedication and expressed optimism about the future of the LTC Planning Committee. Representative Mitch Bolinsky echoed her sentiments and expressed his support for the statewide Senior Center Coordinator position.

Ms. Morton thanked both representatives for their support and participation.

## **10. Other Business**

No additional items were raised by committee members.

## **11. Vote to Adjourn**

Motion made by Michael Santoro and seconded by Margy Gerundo-Murkette. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 P.M.

**Full meeting recording can be accessed here:**

<https://youtu.be/fmOFGmH8ScU>

Next Meeting: Tues., Dec. 9th -- 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM -- Microsoft Teams