



Claudio Gualtieri
Chair

PCA Workforce Council meeting January 24, 2023

Council Members in Attendance: Kathy Flaherty, CT Legal Rights Project (CLRP); Eileen Healy, Independence Northwest; Dawn Lambert, Department of Social Services (DSS); Denise Paladino, Department of Developmental Services (DDS); Adam Prizio, Office of the Health Care Advocate (OHA); Margaret Shugrue-Szymanski, Parent and Fran Sinish, Parent.

Others in Attendance: Heidi Henaire, Department of Aging and Disability Services; Melissa Morton, Acting Chair, Office of Policy and Management (OPM); and Heather Ferguson-Hull, OPM (Council staff).

Call to order by Melissa Morton at 9:36 AM

1. Welcome and Introductions

Ms. Morton welcomed Council members and guests and noted that she would be facilitating the meeting in Chair, Claudio Gualtieri's stead. Members and guests provided brief introductions.

2. Training Fund Committee Report

Dawn Lambert shared that the committee is working on implementing trainings previously approved by the Council. Additionally, a specific training for individuals to become Support and Planning Coaches is under development and will be offered to PCAs who may wish to also serve in this role. The Committee had looked into utilizing CADER person-centered planning training programs out of Boston University, but the learning objectives were not aligned, so the process has been delayed. The next meeting of the Training Fund Committee is scheduled for this afternoon, January 24, 2023.

3. CBA Implementation Update

Ms. Morton noted that the process of implementing the new Collective Bargaining Agreement is ongoing. Wage increases have been implemented on schedule. The Training Fund received increased funding for skills enhancement, and some carry-over funds have been used for PCAs' tuition reimbursement.

Denise Paladino added that the Medicaid State Plan Amendment required to implement three of the new contract provisions was approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on December 16, 2022. (1) The Lump Sum payment, which was a one-time bonus equal to 6% of wages earned by PCAs during the April 1, 2021-March 31, 2022, was paid to PCAs on January 9, 2023. (2) The Premium Assistance benefit: PCAs who have applied for and been denied coverage through HUSKY or CoveredCT are eligible to apply annually for semi-annual payments equaling 6% of wages earned, up to a maximum of \$5,000 per year, per Consumer-Employer. DDS, DSS and the Fiscal Intermediaries have been working to implement the new health care premium assistance benefit as outlined in the CBA. The Council has been working with AccessHealth CT (AHCT) to create a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for PCAs. Ms. Morton noted



that the details are being worked out, including the length of the SEP, and that AHCT will be providing a dedicated phone line for PCAs. PCAs will be able to receive assistance in applying for HUSKY and CoveredCT, and AHCT staff will also assist PCAs in identifying the best health insurance plan for them on the exchange. Ms. Morton highlighted that AHCT has been an excellent partner in these efforts. She said that agencies will do outreach to Consumer-Employers with this information once it is finalized, and it will be shared with the Union so they can do outreach to their members as well.

4. Fiscal Intermediary (FI) Transition Update

Ms. Paladino shared that both DSS and DDS had previously issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a new FI. The contract is in the process of being finalized and reviewed. She said she expects the transition to the new FI to begin around April 1, 2023. As the DDS self-directed programs are approximately 1/3 the size of those at DSS, she expects that DDS Consumer-Employers will transition to the new FI first. She added that DSS is considering the best methodology for the transition as well. Ms. Lambert concurred with Ms. Paladino's summary. Ms. Paladino shared her excitement about the new FI and noted their advanced technology, staffing and resources.

5. PCA Registry Update

Ms. Lambert said that the RFP is being finalized. The RFP development team has received some additional input from the Community First Choice Advisory Council and a Consumer-Employer forum, and feedback is being incorporated. Ms. Morton noted that although a Nondisclosure Agreement was signed, the RFP has not been shared with Workforce Council staff. Ms. Lambert reiterated that the RFP is confidential, and that the input from groups was based on data from focus groups held a few years ago.

6. Consumer-Employer Engagement Strategies

Ms. Morton shared that there is some funding that can be used this State Fiscal Year for outreach to Consumer-Employers. Kathy Flaherty stated that she would not be comfortable with a large in-person forum. Ms. Morton noted that while bargaining proposals cannot be shared publicly, Consumer-Employers could be polled about what is important to them. She also stated that only the FIs have Consumer-Employer contact information, and Ms. Paladino replied that the FIs have significant tasks at hand and would be unable to undertake such communications. Ms. Lambert suggested that outreach could be done through the Area Agencies on Aging. Ms. Morton highlighted that the Consumer-Employer voice is important, and she asked Council members to send their ideas about pertinent questions and strategies for outreach to Ms. Ferguson-Hull. Ms. Morton said that she and Ms. Ferguson-Hull will work with Ms. Paladino and Ms. Lambert, and perhaps develop a brief Survey Monkey questionnaire of 2-3 questions.

7. Other Business

Ms. Morton asked members if they had other agenda items, and no additional topics were raised.

8. Public Comment

None offered



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9. Executive Session

Vote to Enter Executive Session: Kathy Flaherty made a motion to enter executive session to discuss preparations for the upcoming Collective Bargaining process. Eileen Healy seconded. All in favor. Executive Session entered at 10:12 AM.

10. Adjournment

Vote to Adjourn: Denise Paladino made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kathy Flaherty seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:07 AM.

Full meeting recording can be accessed here:

<https://youtu.be/AZwf8GNR0eU>

Recording of vote to adjourn can be accessed here:

https://youtu.be/b_vxTua-Q1I