



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont  
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo  
Deputy Commissioner

**Minutes of October 17, 2023, ARPA Advisory Committee Meeting**

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Keith Lavalette, Tracey Walker, Cheryl Ellis, Shannon Jacovino, Greg McMahon, Brian Smith, Win Evarts, Michael Beloff, Barry Simon, Kathleen Stauffer, Katie Banzhaf, Daniel Jacques  
Deloitte attendance- Betsy Bella, Julia Oak  
McDowell- Rebecca Brockway

Absent: Kate Haaland, Peter Mason, Gunnar Abrahamsson, Paige Librandi, Melissa Kremmel, Lauren Gray,

Keith Lavalette, Chair, called the meeting to order

Keith Lavalette read the Public Meeting Requirements

Minutes of the 9/19/2023 Advisory Committee meeting were approved on a motion by Evarts/Stauffer

**Rewarding Work Presentation-** Daniel Jacques was invited to present on Rewarding Work. Individuals who self-direct their services can find, interview, and hire their own staff. It also provides an opportunity for Individuals looking for employment to post their resumes. He also presented the Rewarding Work website and provided a brief overview.

**Communications Presentation-** Rebecca Brockway presented the communication report. Four of the videos featuring individuals and families currently using one or more of the supports highlighted by STEP have been released. The four are Supportive Housing, Individualized Home Supports, Community Companion Homes, and Self Direction. They have been posted on the DDS website and social media platforms. The employment video is currently being shot and Bonfire is currently working on reshoots of the Assistive Technology and Remote Supports video. McDowell has written two op-eds that talk about STEP and DDS's work overall. One is from the Commissioner and the other is from the family in the CCH video explaining why she works with individuals in her home and the benefits of it. Discussion occurred on the newsletter and that some people would be left out due to it just being sent out electronically.

**Deloitte Presentation-** Betsy Bella gave the report for Deloitte. Deloitte will be supporting DDS as they look to improve access for Shared Living supports. Shared Living is an available waiver support wherein somebody who receives supports lives in their own home and they have a roommate who also lives with them who provides supports. Deloitte will be supporting DDS through a process to develop a vision of what DDS wants to see from shared living.

Deloitte continues to work with DDS on the STEP initiatives. Providers continue to reach out to their regions or the TA sessions with Deloitte indicating an interest in exploring or actively developing plans. There are now 13 approved plans and Deloitte has developed a summary of all the approved plans to give people an insight into what is available in the plans. They continue to work with DDS to approve these plans and make them available to everyone

### **Update from Committee co-chairs**

**Individual and Family Committee** – Greg McMahon gave an update for this committee, and he mentioned at the last meeting how STEP can and does support individuals with higher needs and provide to families materials on how these individuals can be supported through STEP. Out of 110 people, 9 individuals with LONS of seven and 15 with LONS of 6 are included in the current approved STEP plans. 24 out of 110 are folks who would be considered high needs. The Individual and Families Committee will continue to meet for a different purpose and to keep discussions going as we move into the next year. These meetings of the new Committee will be co-chaired by Shannon Jacovino and Dr. Ellis

**DDS Engagement Committee-** The Committee met last week but Peter is unavailable for an update and the information will be provided at the next meeting.

**DDS Update:** Keith gave the DDS update. Thirteen (13) plans have been approved and DDS has heard from three more agencies that submitted plans. DDS anticipates more agencies submitting plans. Thirteen (13) individuals have transitioned to date. The DDS fellow is working on a lot of the outcomes and the data for these outcomes.

A list of activities has been generated by Deloitte and owners for tasks have been identified, meetings have been held and work has begun. DDS is looking at the list again to see if some of the activities can be consolidated.

The Assistive Technology RFP assigning agencies to assist with evaluations, purchasing the equipment and training went to STAR, CIB and Midstate. DDS hopes to get the contracts up and running by January 1, 2024.

100 DDS staff are completing an assistive technology certification course with the University of California. The goal is to get as many DDS staff aware and familiar with assistive technology as possible. DDS has also issued its third Notice of Opportunity for individuals and families for assisted technology equipment. This notice provides two opportunities one has been issued for individual and families and one for providers. DDS is looking to set up a lending library within DDS and set up lending lockers at the different regional offices so individuals can come and take out the AT equipment. An assistive technology remote supports consultant is coming on board sometime in October.

DDS has a contract with Rewarding Work and Dan Jacques presented to this committee earlier.

A critical incident system was established called Pulselight and it looks at Medicare claims and hospitalizations and looking at critical incidents and incident reports to see if they match. It will also look at attaching the claims to the individuals LON levels.

DDS is working with UCONN on doing the NCI (National Core Indicators) and this year DDS was able to meet its targets. DDS will be looking to add some additional analysis components to the UCONN contract for the upcoming survey.

DDS has hired a project manager and a couple of business analysts for the new DDS case management system that the department will be developing. They reviewed five to seven states that currently have case management systems to see if DDS can use one of them and have narrowed it down to two different states.

DDS and DSS have decided to work with a vendor to see how all state of CT agencies can be brought on board with the concept of universal assessments and to see how this system will fit within all the state agencies.

Discussion took place, with Peter and Greg leaving in December and Gunnar Abrahamson taking over for Peter. the Advisory Committee would like to discuss the purpose of the Committee as it is pretty much a report out committee now. The Committee feels it can be helpful to the Department on the direction it is going with openness of innovation and transformational services. Also, the Committee could look at where we are with the ARPA funds and incentives and then discuss ideas on how the monies can be spent instead of giving them back.

Motion to adjourn by Simon/Banzhaf

The next meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2023, at 1:30pm.