



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of November 21, 2023, ARPA Advisory Committee Meeting

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Keith Lavalette, Tracey Walker, Cheryl Ellis, Shannon Jacovino, Greg McMahon, Win Evarts, Michael Beloff, Barry Simon, Katie Banzhaf, Kate Haaland, Peter Mason, Gunnar Abrahamsson, Mary Pat DeCarlo, Sarah Ullom-Minnich, Juan Wang

Deloitte attendance- Betsy Bella

McDowell- Rebecca Brockway

Absent: Paige Librandi, Lauren Gray, Brian Smith, Kathleen Stauffer

Gunnar Abrahamsson, Chair, called the meeting to order.

Keith Lavalette read the Public Meeting Requirements

Minutes of the 10/17/2023 Advisory Committee meeting were approved on a motion by Walker/Jacovino

Data Update – Sarah Ullom-Minnich provided an overview of the Data collection in regard to the ARPA incentives including performance measures and outcome evaluation. They have been working with the project leads across the various initiatives to see how we are performing to date. Broadly, this effort looks at ARPA before all the initiatives begin to where we are hoping to be after all the initiatives are wrapped up. The presentation included the tracking system chart that shows all the initiatives and ways they are being tracked and monitored.

Gunnar Abrahamson discussed the transformational plans that have been submitted to the department and the approved and pending plans. The initial target is to have 200 individuals move out of day programs to more community-based settings and to move 100 individuals out of residential congregate settings to more independent settings. Currently there are 13 approved plans and six more plans that are pending approval. All the plans if approved will place the department at 86% of the day transitions and 55% of the residential transitions. The money allocated for these transitions would put us at 70% of the target funded for these transition of approximately 17 million. of the 24.3 million allocated for this project. We expect the 19 current plans to grow as we continue to work with Deloitte to assist providers to continue to submit plans.

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

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Self Direction. They have been posted on the DDS website and social media platforms. The employment video has been shot and final edits are being made now and will be released in the next few weeks. The assistive technology video will be shot in January. The final video on remote supports will go to production once an individual is identified to be in the video.

McDowell has completed two op-eds, one that talks about STEP and DDS's work overall from Commissioner Scheff and the other is from the individual in the CCH video explaining why she works with individuals in her home and the benefits of it. It was run in the Hartford Courant this past Sunday. They are currently working on an op-ed from a mother featured in the self-direction video that will go out to the paper sometime soon. The October/ November newsletter went out through emails only and the same will occur with the December newsletter. Surveys will again go out to individuals and families in December. They went out last year and a follow-up survey will be completed this year. A DDS employee survey will also be sent out again in January. McDowell is also working on additional one-pagers of supports and services that DDS would like to highlight and will be found on the website.

Deloitte Presentation- Betsy Bella gave the report for Deloitte. Deloitte continues to work with DDS on the STEP initiatives, they have developed a document summarizing submitted approved plans and will coordinate with DDS to get them posted soon. Deloitte presented the document to the ARCS and has gathered feedback and will be holding similar conversations with the Alliance providers next week. TA sessions have continued but have been more sparsely attended. They are considering decreasing office hours in 2024 and just focusing on technical assistance. They continue to coordinate with DDS to make sure there is consistent guidance, and the FAQs are being updated.

DDS staff continue to work on STEP action steps. Progress continues to be made not just in supporting providers and distributing incentives but also in a lot of other pieces that are in place to push STEP as a whole forward. DDS is creating momentum and working to create an overarching environment where emphasis on independence and choice is seen across the board. Deloitte is working on a final report for DDS and will also develop a public version that is aimed at individuals and families. Deloitte met with the Self-Advocate Coordinators to get input and feedback on what type of format they would like to see and what content interests them.

The efforts began in early October on shared living. The idea is to understand the current state of Shared Living in Connecticut and then look nationally at how other states structure their programs. DDS has developed a Shared Living Working Committee chaired by Mary Pat DeCarlo.

DDS Update: Gunnar 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.

DDS has developed a number of action steps that focus on opening up channels of communication with the private providers and individuals receiving services through the department. DDS has developed a quick guide that gives a brief description and the incentive amount a provider would receive. DDS is also focused on the staff training on assistive technology and staff training on employment. We continue to develop a assistive technology evaluation and assessment RFP. The Operations Center continues to work on the contract for that RFP. The targeted completion date is January 1st. 100 DDS staff are working toward completing an assistive technology course through California State University State Northridge. In addition, there are two NOO's currently out for assistive technology equipment. The AT and Me program focuses on pairing pieces of at

equipment with individuals and training them on its use and applicability in various situations. The number of individuals has climbed from 27 to 49 people. The Rewarding Work Employment Network is up and running. This is a portal that focuses on individuals who are looking to hire staff. DDS has hired a Project Manager and a number of Business Analysts who are going to focus on the DDS case management system as well as the universal assessment and how the system will fit within all those health and human service state agencies.

Discussion occurred on the future advisory committee direction. DDS believes that the advisory committee will help to guide and advise the department as the ARPA period starts to wind down. There was discussion on a future meeting to discuss diversity in terms of future meetings or presentations. Some of the work that is happening now and trying to shape it into a transformation continuum of care and whether this committee would grapple with this type of stuff or will remain a report out committee was also discussed. It was suggested to look at some actuarial data on how many people are in the system and how many are coming into the system, how many are potentially leaving the system, the kinds of service in a continuum that DDS would be wanting to manage then deciding how many slots in each level of care does the system want. DDS would need to discuss this with the data people to see how this could be accomplished. There was further discussion around making it a policy decision on how much the state wants to fund and how much the state is willing to accept on a wait list and the different parameters that we then can operate in.

Motion to adjourn by Simon/Walker

The next meeting is scheduled for December 19, 2023, at 1:30pm.