



State of Connecticut Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of April 3, 2023 - ARPA Individual and Family Engagement Transformational Committee

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Greg McMahon, Shannon Jacovino, Adrianna Ramirez, Jessica Sundell, Dr. Cheryl Ellis, Kevin Arce, Geri Kogut, Joanne Malise, Denise Paladino

Absent: Pat Tyler, Maricruz Ortiz, Lena Esposito

Guests: Kimberly Butts, Maura Fitzgerald (McDowell), Rebecca Brockway (McDowell), Betsy Bella (Deloitte), Julia Oak (Deloitte), Lauren Gray (DDS), Owen Shome (Deloitte)

1. Call to Order by Greg McMahon. Public Meeting Requirements were reviewed.
2. Minutes from previous meeting were approved.
3. Introduction of Lauren Gray, DDS Communications and Legislative Program Manager. Lauren will be working on internal communications and external marketing.
4. Deloitte Update:
 - 5 provider plans have been submitted.
 - Plans are spread across regions, and support types.
 - Betsy Bella reviewed details of the individual plans.
 - By the middle of April Deloitte will be releasing a new template for providers transformations based on what we've learned thus far.
 - All plans must and do spell out how providers are sharing information and engaging individuals and families.
 - All plans moving forward will be reviewed by the Regions and Central Office.
 - No plans have been formally approved just yet, but they are moving forward.
 - All plans are very thoughtful and creative.
 - Deloitte provides technical assistance to any provider who wants/needs it on Fridays.
 - Question: How are people being identified, is this spelled out in the providers plans?
Answer: Yes, all the plans spell out how information is being shared, how individuals and families are being engaged throughout the process. Providers have said that many of the individuals involved were already interested in greater independence, or saw what others were planning and became interested.
 - Comment: It's great to see how many plans include socialization. One plan includes a drop-in Center. This is so important because self-advocates and families have expressed a fear of isolation as being an obstacle to change.

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- Comment: Please to see the plans are so individualized. Providers are not just picking the settings. People can try something then go back to another setting with that being a learning experience, instead of a failure. Also, great to see plans tapping into varied service modalities.

5. McDowell Update

- See attached presentation.
- McDowell is looking for ideas for success stories. They plan to create videos where individuals talk about some of their life that has improved because of supports.
- The next STEP newsletter will come out in the beginning of May and will focus on videos, supports, and upcoming forums and activities.
- Discussion about how to reach less engaged individuals and families.
 - Make better use of marketing tools on social media to target audiences, boost posts and reach more people.
 - It's important to understand why people aren't engaged. Has DDS learned what disengagement looks like and why people drop off?
 - We need to also recognize that not everyone uses technology and have a plan for reaching people who don't use computers.
 - Many people do not trust the system, but they do trust churches, social organizations, and community groups. It is important to figure out who those trusted sources are in disengaged and disenfranchised communities and start to do outreach.
 - We can also tap into existing community resources like libraries.
 - McDowell said according to individuals and families 56% get their information from the mail, 52% from case managers and less than 10% get DDS information from social media. The point was made that more people might get information from social media if DDS was using it more effectively.
 - YouTube – DDS has a lot of great information on YouTube, but it is not organized in a way that makes it easy for families to find what they are looking for. It would be better to organize videos by topic using YouTube playlists. It was also pointed out that while YouTube offers google translate, direct translation is best. Google translate doesn't get everything right, it just helps people get the gist.
 - For those who have Case Managers, they are a great resource. But many people do not have Case Managers.
 - A suggestion was made to use texting technology to communicate. Many agreed.
 - We need look at how we are getting information out to those who are hard to reach, rather than solely focusing on how to make it easier for those who seek information.
 - Organizing information on all platforms is critical. We can have the best information available, but people need to be able to find it. Example: No one knows where to find videos that are currently on website.
 - McDowell noted that they are working with DSS on a texting pilot, and it not something that can be set up quickly.
 - Discussion about the need to have a short term and a long-term strategy for communication. Beefing up use of technology is important because more and more people will be communicating that way.
 - There is a lot of confusion around ARPA and Movin' On. A committee member expressed concern that STEP will add to the confusion and the hope that it will be explained to families, individuals, and staff. It's important to educate from within because Case Managers are a primary source of information.
 - McDowell explained that DDS is fully transitioning to STEP. STEP is a part of ARPA. ARPA has many facets, but ARPA had an end date when the funding expires. STEP will continue long after the ARPA funding ends.

6. Review of Community Companion Home (CCH) service description.
 - There was discussion about whether to include as a challenge the fact that in CCH a move can be abrupt because you are living in someone's home. There was not agreement on this as some pointed out that change is pervasive across supports.
 - One challenge that is difficult to articulate in the description is that some families don't understand how someone else could support their loved one if they are struggling to do it.
 - It was suggested that a benefit could be that CCH allows a parent to be a parent instead of a caregiver.

7. Updates and topics for future meetings.
 - A notice of opportunity has been submitted that would allow supported housing in existing developments. Putting together a supported housing in a new development can take several years. This will be much quicker.
 - There was a request that we continue to revisit and discuss outreach to marginalized groups.
 - There was a request for information on what kind of information people should expect from DDS when they use the sign-up link on the webpage.

8. Announcement of next meeting- Monday, April 17, 2023 10:00 am

6. Adjournment