



State of Connecticut Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

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Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of January 19, 2023

ARPA Residential Transformational Committee Meeting

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Peter Mason, Pam Fields, Peter Engelbrecht, , Mary Pat DeCarlo , Heather LaTorra, Tammy Venenga, Lori Coughlin, Kathy Bobenski, Carly Bobenski & Kathy Calo

Guest : Julia Oak & Betsy Belia Deloitte; Rick Rothstien; Beth Suleski;

Absent: Jaymie Nedinsky, Brian Holmes

Introductions Peter Mason, called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm.

Peter reviewed the rules for public meetings

The minutes from January 5th were reviewed with the following changes: A motion was made by Mary Pat to accept the meeting minutes and a second was made by Lori Coughlin– motion carried.

1. Update by Betsy and Julia from Deloitte

- They gathered data from 6 states with an objective to gather information from Ct and other states and use the info to pressure test the things that were found/identified
- They conducted six sessions with stakeholders, they will review the residential focus session
 - Themes identified in the individual sessions
 - Challenges with the work for crisis/staffing
 - Staff Training
 - Importance of individualization and flexible structures
 - Themes identified in the provider sessions:
 - Supporting housing models and benefits
 - Remote supports -excited about what it brings including training and implementation
 - Statewide IT support person needed to trouble shoot challenges
 - Transportation
 - ? Lori questioned how the families preferences in the CLA's and CRS's are being addressed – it should be individualized and work together on a team basis. – Lori noted that the CRS environment does work for some people
 - ? Peter stated that DDS is not saying we are closing all CRS's but noting that CRS's do not have as many resources as CLA's
 - ? Heather stated that there was really nothing new noted from the sessions and the question about family preferences is why agencies are having trouble starting the transformation and noted there is no incentive to take difficult cases

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- Peter stated that although they are not closing CLA's the people being referred may/will disrupt the existing houses which may help the families decide to change...DDS is not forcing anyone; things are challenging and we never know the future of the DDS budget; DDS is working through a variety of plans and the issues of not wanting to leave will be handled individually. On a macro level people being referred are more behavioral and medical. The possibility of a house being disrupted already exists; there are lots of vacancies in homes, lots of capacity and expect consolidations. CRS was originally set up to accommodate unique circumstances when families and providers work together, however it became an easy way to open a group home. People in CRS's have higher LONS than in CLA's. We may see a # of CRS's close and move to CLA's and others go to I.H.S. There are lots of different reasons what happens to a home. There may be cases where the person does not want to leave but they are the last ones left and the provider needs to close the home
- Mary Pat stated providers will see this result soon – and Peter restated that DDS is not forcing anyone. The same issues existed when closing institutions, it is not easy but there will be ramifications in the system as people move around. Everyone will need to work through it. We do not have all the answers, DDS has only seen one plan; The bulk of DDS \$'s is in the CLA System and there are people on the waiting list. We all need to do it more equitable. The expectations of who moves into group homes will be significantly different.
- Peter spoke about the challenges with people moving out of Southbury as people moved the people remaining had to keep moving around in Southbury as cottages closed and some families then decided to just move out of Southbury all together so the person didn't keep moving around.
 - ? Mary Pat asked if Deloitte heard from families who were totally refusing. Julia stated they did not hear that from anyone participating – Mary Pat sees it with her day programs
 - ? Betsy stated that through their communication they have not heard any pushback but providers are seeing it
 - ? Mary Pat wondered if it will show up on the survey
 - ? Peter E asked when the surveys would be back.
- Julia responded they expect early Feb. it went out to individuals, staff and families; There will be surveys to providers shortly after.
 - ? Lori asked how many providers responded to the 1st phase
- Betsy responded that they are still getting interest as of today there are 25 providers interested in info and 12 confirmed to submit a plan. There will be many more and phase 2 with more direction and guidance; not sure how many will participate. DDS would like every provider to participate no matter how small but it is not mandatory
- Peter Mason stated that the majority of interest is in one or tow program with only one saying the whole agency. Providers can just downsize they do not need a complex plan.
- Tammy stated that DDS is incentivizing providers for increasing capacity in Med/Behaviors. Peter stated it's a little tricking on how it is done if a provider is going to restructure a group home to create the capacity for beh/medical. DDS will work with the agency on what they need to restructure including alternative/interim rates; as people

move out - DDS must provide supports and resources in order to help providers to transform to those more complex supports. However, for the ARPA incentives it is only for less congregate settings.

- Tammy stated that the message comes across more on closing than transforming. Right now there is no place for age outs, and people with medical and behavioral needs. We need to market not just transform. And repurpose homes
- Peter stated the initiative is not designed to consolidate homes there must be a setting change and the incentives are for moving out of the CLAs. As people move and people come off of the waiting list they must go to the right support not just move into a CLA
- Mary Pat stated to keep in mind the unintended incentives. It may be easier to close homes and move staff to existing homes. Opening behavioral homes will require more staff.

❓ There was a question about disincentive's around ICF; ICF is DSS not DDS

- Peter stated that each provider cannot do everything providers must pick a niche this is especially true due to the staffing crisis; DDS is giving retention incentives. We need to maximize the staff we have. Hopefully providers will restructure instead of close. But "I" get that some may choose to close.

❓ Some one asked if during the stake holder sessions if people understood the different funding out there

- Peter showed charts of the incentives and other forms of supports including revised rates; tech infrastructure \$; work for stability; AT grants; supportive housing grants (non-profit based). A recession would give us more staff.
- Pam also mentioned there are AT grants for existing group homes to help provide resources for the existing staff.
- Peter talked about moving to phase 2, There are 350 surveys submitted out of 9,200 as of Tuesday, individuals may not have seen the surveys; 1300-1500 surveys went out to individuals who are their own guardian, some went to individuals in CLA & CRS; in spring we will release a template
- Betsy stated they are taking things on a case by case basis; the plans must make sense and have a decrease of unintended consequences.
- Out of the 25 agencies interested 9 are from the North (7 plans 6 res, 1 day and 2 both) ; 11 South (4 submitting and 3 West;
- There will be input sessions for case managers and providers
- Training for Case Managers – supporting them to gain more understanding of the process; it is hard to train the numbers, we have a community consultant who will be doing a newsletter, it is not an easy feat, there are gaps and changes in emails. Have to mail it out, has to be in English and Spanish,
- DDS needs to clearly articulate a menu of options – a list to look at
- DDS will be creating videos on support types based on actual settings hopefully by the end of March so families and people supported can see what they look like
- Mary Pat stated DDS needs to get information out, maybe put a flashy part on the website. Peter stated they are looking at it but stuck with state website designs. Have been putting things on social media.

- Peter shared that they are using some ARPA dollars to do a website for self-determination and self-hire hopefully available March 1.
- New AT grants are posted including new grants for day programs to purchase AT.
- Supportive housing grant should be out by the end of the month
- Discussion on shared living and Lori added working with families around purchasing housing Peter explained it is more complicated than we think. There are related Party issues; and dealing with conflict between the families, staffing issues etc...the house is the lease expensive part.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. Next meeting date Feb 2, 2023. Minutes submitted by Pam Fields