



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Elisa F. Velardo
Deputy Commissioner

Minutes of March 2, 2023

ARPA Residential Transformational Committee Meeting

Location: Meeting held Virtually via Microsoft Teams

In attendance: Peter Mason, Pam Fields, Peter Engelbrecht, Heather LaTorra, Lori Coughlin, Kathy Bobenski, Carly Bobenski, Kathy Calo, Brian Holmes, Tammy Venenga

Guest: Maria Fitzgerald; Alexis Calarco

Absent: Jaymie Nedinsky, Mary Pat DiCarlo,

Introductions Peter Mason, called the meeting to order at 2:07 pm.

Peter reviewed the rules for public meetings

The minutes from February 16th - Peter E. made a motion and Brian 2nd to accept the minutes and the motion carried

Update by Maria Fitzgerald from McDowell Communications

- Reviewed the surveys that were sent out to stake holders (Res groups; Families and Individuals supported; DDS employees) .
 - Gathering information on where these populations were for information and what they had heard about the DDS ARPA Plans
 - It identified that there were people who have heard and would need additional education; the level of knowledge is still not overwhelming
 - Will repeat survey in a year to see how the education has impacted knowledge of these groups
 - Working with video company to create 7 educational videos on success stories for moving to independent levels to be released by the end of the month. These videos and the activities are designed to help Individuals, families and guardians see opportunities.
 - The communications plan was shared with some of the ARPA committees. McDowell has lots of activities going on to communicate with families and DDS Staff; Deloitte is working with the providers
 - There will be a global communications newsletter every other month emailed to DDS Staff and Providers and sent by mail to individuals supported and their staff; newsletter will be in Spanish and on DDS website, it also has a QR Code; Unfortunately mailing is not sustainable need to work on getting everyone on email.
 - Peter M explained that there was some uneasiness on doing surveys because they were not aware. This will give us a baseline, encourage questions, curiosity and make building blocks to move forward.
 - It was recommended by the committee to use every social media source.
 - Suggested to also open provider stakeholder meetings to more people across the state so we are not repeating.

- Looking at changing website as we move forward to be more user friendly and build on a STEP page. Make it visually appealing and accessible to stakeholder. We can expand how we communicate in a different fashion and with some of our existing models
- It was suggested DDS put a booth at the June AT Conference to promote STEP
- The commissioner will be announcing a rebranding from Moving on to STEP (supporting transformation to empower people); this represents DDS and its mission, values and goals; Stepping into independence will outlive the current ARPA funding

DDS Updates:

- Appendix K has been submitted (describing different incentives and looking for CMS Approval. This will assist in the initiatives; also looking into FY 25 budget to legislatively move unspent ARPA \$\$'s into the next two years.
- Looking at outcome payments; must go through a public hearing; Finished with what we want with public hearings in May.
- Phase 1 FAQ; working on open forums with Deloitte and making this FAQ a living document; expecting a couple submissions this week. Important to know what people are planning; Working with Deloitte on a rough draft on DDS System, Deloitte has set it up as “transformation Aims” one for Residential and one for Day Services. Next step they will look at “targets and activities” which will be the meat of it all. It will be a lengthy document. The “Activities” is what DDS needs to change the systems. It is taking them awhile to put it together and for DDS to review. Until we see a document it is recommended to skip the next meeting. The committee will then review and provide input. The original was a dry presentation and want to make it spicier so we don't turn people off
- Peter explained that there are a host of things they are looking at. The benefit councilor would need to go under BRS but they are thinking to hire their counselor to work in DDS they can train and oversee the process. Once the plan is complete Deloitte will work on communicating that plan. Deloitte will work on the regional administrations and private providers. McDowell will work on DDS Staff (case managers), Families and Individuals
- There was a presentation on shared housing and DDS is looking to add this to the 4th Tuesday's presentations
- Brian asked if there were any documents on the Shared Housing; Peter explained they were still working through the logistics of this model. There are issues with conflict of interests when the family purchases the home, decisions are taking too long and DDS is looking to spread things up.
 - Heather talked about shared living verses shared housing...reverse CCS;
 - It is shared living when two people rent; no conflict of interests; shared apartment
 - Heather will submit a whit page on shared housing and its uniqueness to families and individuals there are also concerns with DOL laws; there was a discussion on how do we research other states and how they are doing it....some states are calling CCH's shared living; this should be an option; its not for everyone but no one service is; it must be set up as a level playing field for all we have to make sure it does not benefit some families more that others. . Families can donate but it cannot be tied to rates.
- DDS is also looking at a website for self-determination. It is delayed...do not have a new date
- AT Grants- 19 individuals submitted and 5 providers...grants for AT at Day Programs
- Non-project based supportive housing NOO. The due date is next week. This is working with existing complexes and seeing is we can work with them to create new supportive models.

- Pam Fields reported that Kat Wood Director of Community Integration at MidState presented at a national housing committee (ANCOR)
- We discussed the transformation plans. Pam mentioned its hard to create the plan when it is something you are already doing. Heather agreed. For her area she sees lots of issues with the wear and tear on the properties for the landlords. There was mention of paying the providers for just doing a plan. That may help in phase 2...It would also be retroactive to past plans
- Tammy from DDS stated that all these new housing initiatives are interfering with the placement of age outs. There are no incentives to back fill bed and it may be easier to just close the homes to maximize staff. Its not really clear if this problem is from staffing of from the transformation initiative.
 - Heather spoke about turning her DCF home to a transition home to move out at 26 instead of 21;
- Pam explained an initiative that MidState is doing to train staff on mental health and trauma informed care.
- Kathy Calo commended that proper planning at a younger age might assist. There are also aging in place issues
- Homework...what else do you need /want DDS to do.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. Next meeting date April 6, 2023. Minutes submitted by Pam Fields