



Approved Minutes of March 10, 2011

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Donna Bouteiller; Jennifer Carroll; Jack Frost; Jim Heffernan, Chair; Thomas Kalal; Sheila Mulvey; Peter O'Meara, Ex-officio; Dr. John Pelegano, Secretary; Lou Richards; Patti Silva, Patrick Vingo, Vice-Chair.

Absent: David Hadden, Gregory Kelley.

DDS STAFF IN ATTENDANCE: Christine Pollio Cooney, Legislative and Executive Affairs; Kathryn du Pree, Deputy Commissioner.

GUESTS: Quality Management Service Division staff: Kathy Chatlas, Leah Clark, Daniel Micari.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No one from the public attended the March council meeting.

REVIEW OF THE FEBRUARY MINUTES:

Patrick Vingo motioned to approve the minutes of the February 17, 2011 meeting and John Pelegano seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

OMBUDSPERSON REPORT:

Ed Mambruno was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. His report was handed out and he will cover any questions at the April meeting.

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION:

Jim Heffernan introduced Dan Micari, Director of Quality Management, and his staff, Kathy Chatlas and Leah Clark, who are Quality Management Supervisors. Mr. Micari and his staff attended the council meeting to present an overview of the Quality Management Services Division (QM). The QM focus is to ensure the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) maintains the quality of services offered to individuals with intellectual disabilities to maintain the department's commitment to people and their families. Mr. Micari explained the licensing process for Community Living Arrangements (CLA) and Community Training Homes (CTH).

Mr. Micari responded to questions from Mr. Heffernan regarding the intensity of reviews between the two licensed settings. He then discussed DDS' Emergency Management unit, which oversees plans for emergency relocation and maintains an emergency management database and a geographic information system. DDS requires all licensed settings to maintain an emergency individual fact sheet.

Leah Clark discussed the Quality Service Review (QSR), which is used in all service types except CTHs. A random sample of 800 individuals across all providers is selected to respond to HCBS waiver requirements for statistically significant sampling procedures. Ms. Clark explained the review process including a jeopardy call if there is any immediate serious concern for one's health

and safety. Jennifer Carroll asked what information is shared with guardians. Mr. Micari explained that these situations must be immediately addressed and that case managers and agency directors are notified.

Ms. Clark discussed the indicators used to determine quality and a person's satisfaction with support and services. The indicators relate to seven focus areas: planning and personal achievements, safety, relationships and community inclusion, health and wellness, choice and control, satisfaction and rights, respect and dignity. Reviewers review the individual plan and other documentation; observe service delivery; and interview participants. Review findings that show indicators that have not been met must be addressed both for the person and systemically. Providers are expected to use the data as part of a self assessment and to inform a continuous improvement plan.

Ms. Chatlas discussed the performance of the 17 CLA's that were transitioned to private providers this past year by comparing their quality data before and after the transition. The data showed that the quality of service was maintained with only minor variations that were felt to be secondary because of either the small sample size or the difficulties that would be anticipated in any transition between caregivers.

Christine Pollio Cooney agreed to email the presentation to council members.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:

Christine Pollio Cooney provided an update on DDS bills and other bills of interest. The department's autism bill and registry check bill were both voted out of the Public Health Committee (PHC) with favorable reports. The remaining respectful language bill is still in PHC and the sexual assault bill needs to be acted upon by the Judiciary Committee. The department testified at the Appropriations budget hearing on Wednesday, March 2nd. The follow up subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 11th. Ms. Cooney will email links for the testimony to committee members.

Ms. Cooney reminded council members about the budget process. The Appropriations subcommittees will report to the full Appropriations committee. The Appropriations Committee will vote its own version of the budget out of committee by the April deadline. It is possible that this year, the budget negotiations with the administration could occur prior to the Appropriations Committee's deadline. If this is the case, the budget voted out of Appropriations may be more in line with what actually passes the legislature than in past years.

The Department testified in support of the Governor's budget bill related to increasing insurance revenue from the Birth to Three Program.

Ms. Cooney updated members on the Criminal Background check legislation. The Department of Public Health testified on a proposed bill in the Aging Committee and asked that the committee consider incorporating language that would allow the state to access federal grant money by instituting a pilot federal background check program for certain direct care service providers. Ms. Cooney will update the council as this bill (Senate Bill 3) moves forward.

The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee is expected to vote on a new study scope regarding a comparison of DDS's public and private residential services.

The Department will be testifying on a bill in the Public Health Committee to expand the Autism Pilot program to New London County. The bill is in conflict with agency bill H.B. 6278 that deletes the autism pilot language in statute. The new autism waivers, expected to be submitted to the legislature soon, will require that as resources become available, autism spectrum disorder services must be available statewide, thus making the bill unnecessary.

Ms. Cooney reminded members that CTN has an “on demand” feature where the budget hearings, the Governor’s town meetings and other meetings of interest can be viewed.

Mr. Heffernan asked Ms. Cooney if she was tracking the “Sustinet” bill which could have an impact on many DDS consumers who are Medicaid recipients. Ms. Cooney mentioned that Rod O’Connor was at the meeting where this bill was discussed and she would ask him to provide an update at the April meeting.

COMMISSIONER’S UPDATE:

Commissioner O’Meara noted that DDS’s multi-layered approach to Quality Assurance allows the department to get a pretty clear picture of DDS and provider operations. Connecticut has one of the most sophisticated quality management programs in the country.

Commissioner O’Meara reiterated the strength in Governor Malloy’s recommended budget as it relates to DDS services. As the budget process continues, DDS staff will alert council members if there appear to be any major changes from the current proposal.

Capt. Sarah Brusco will be taking on a new assignment with the State Police and the Department of Public Safety has agreed to appoint a replacement to the DDS Director of Investigations position. From a safety perspective, DDS Investigations is a pillar of quality management. The guarantee that our consumers will be free from harm is of utmost importance to the department.

Commissioner O’Meara announced that he has officially retired from state service; however, he has agreed to stay on until his successor is named. Although this time of uncertainty and the unknown is unsettling for some, DDS staff remains well focused on the DDS mission and their tasks during the transition. We will continue to keep members informed as to the status of the appointment of a DDS Commissioner.

Mr. Heffernan thanked Commissioner O’Meara for his leadership over the past 16 years and for his ability to balance the tug and pull of so many different constituencies. The Council presented the Commissioner with a clock, shaped like a lantern because he “has led the way” with an inscription for their gratitude for his years of service. The Commissioner thanked council members for their incredible support through the years and said it was a joy to work with each of them.

OLD BUSINESS:

Patti Silva reminded council members of the legislative meet and greet scheduled at the legislature for April 20th. A planning meeting will take place March 15th and she will make sure that an email with details goes out to members after that meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Sheila Mulvey brought up the issue of reinstating an Ad Hoc committee to provide legislative oversight and work on testimony on behalf of the council. Sheila described that there may be certain situations when the Department cannot weigh in on a specific piece of legislation but the Council

may want to. She described House Bill 6486, a bill regarding personal care attendants, as an example. Ms. Mulvey made a motion to establish an Ad Hoc Legislative Committee for the purpose of updating council members on pending legislation and legislative actions and recommending actions. Patti Silva seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Jen Carroll, Sheila Mulvey and Patti Silva all agreed to serve on the committee.

Ms. Cooney shared that Deb Heinrich from the Office of Policy and Management has agreed to attend the Council's April 14th meeting. Ms. Cooney will touch base with Ms. Heinrich as the date gets closer to confirm her attendance.

Mr. Heffernan brought up the issue of council members being able to call in to meetings if, for example, members were out-of-state on business. A discussion ensued regarding the technology that might be needed for this to work and what limits the council might want to consider. Ms. Cooney reported that a conference line could be made available for meetings. The associated cost would be six cents per minute per line, and the department would agree to pay for it. Dr. Pelegano brought up the possibility of "Skype" which is a free web-based video service. Jen Carroll mentioned that the Family Support Council had recently decided to end its practice of allowing members to call into meetings as it had become difficult to manage as more members called into the line and stopped showing up at meetings. Ms. Cooney reminded members that the bylaws would have to be amended to allow members to call in and vote at council meetings. Jack Frost asked if the public would also be allowed to call in. The council agreed that the conference line would be available to members only. Pat Vingo asked if there were any legal requirements regarding individuals having to be present at a meeting to be counted as part of a quorum. Tom Kalal made a motion to have Ms. Cooney and Mr. O'Connor draft language for the bylaws that would allow members to move forward with the teleconference option. Dr. Pelegano seconded the motion which passed unanimously. This issue will be discussed at the April meeting.

Ms. Cooney reminded members that the Council is still in need of a consumer member. She has contacted the Trades for any potential referrals, but has had no feedback yet. Mr. Heffernan asked Ms. Cooney to follow up with the Self Advocate Coordinators to see if they have any suggestions. It was also suggested that DDS post something on the website to solicit potential interested consumers.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m. on a motion by Tom Kalal, seconded by Patti Silva, which was unanimously passed.