



State of Connecticut Council on Developmental Services

DDS

APPROVED Minutes of the September 19, 2019 Meeting

Location: 460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

In attendance: Adrienne Benjamin; Pamela DonAroma; Christine Hainsworth-Straus; Karen Hlavac, Secretary; Jamie Lazaroff; Rick Lenz; Diana Mennone; Arlene Reith; Rick Rothstein; Dr. Neil Stein; Deborah Ullman; Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Chair; and Kevin Zingler, Vice Chair

Absent: Joseph Duffy; Dawn Oduor

DDS Staff: Commissioner Jordan Scheff; Krista Ostaszewski, Director of Legislation, Regulations and Communications; Rod O'Connor, Legislative Liaison; and Joseph Carvalho, Executive Secretary

Introductions

Lisa Weisinger-Roland, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. Ms. Weisinger-Roland asked if there was anyone from the public who wished to speak.

Public Participation

Stan Soby, Faye Lenz

Stan Soby thanked the department for working with provider agencies on the Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) implementation.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the June 20, 2019 Council meeting were approved as amended. The motion for approval was made by Kevin Zingler and seconded by Pamela DonAroma.

Topics of Discussion

Commissioner's Report

- Commissioner Jordan Scheff updated the Council on staff changes in the Governor's office. He described his work with the new Commissioner of Social Services, Dr. Deidre Gifford, and his efforts to work with other state agencies to find fixes for problems between agencies and those that overlap several state agencies.
- The Commissioner explained some of the successes that the department has had over the past year including using Integrated Supports through an I.D. Partnership pilot program and Enhanced Family Supports as a way of reintegrating individuals with complex needs back into a community setting. With the success of the DDS Step Up/Step Down unit, DDS is hoping there will be interest from the private sector in expanding this model to a unit for children.
- Commissioner Scheff discussed the improved communication between DDS and the Department of Children and Families (DCF) concerning DCF's Voluntary Services Program and DDS's Behavioral Services Program. The Commissioner highlighted the department's focus on introducing and using various levels of technology to help individuals live more independently. These technologies range from low tech to high tech solutions for everyday challenges and can be mixed and matched and tailored to the individual's requirements. DDS is working to find different ways of providing supports through technology so that DDS funding can be used to provide more services to more individuals. The Commissioner discussed DDS's new webpage devoted to [Assistive Technology \(AT\)](#).
- Adrienne Benjamin asked about the DDS Step Up/Step Down Unit and some of its outcomes so far. The Commissioner said that with DDS opening the Unit, it could be done relatively quickly as opposed to an RFP process for a private provider to develop this type of unit. He stated that the hospitals where individuals with

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complex needs were waiting for an appropriate placement are pleased that DDS is now able to provide services for these individuals and then can transition them back into the community. Enhanced Family Supports are part of the solution once the individual has been stabilized in the Step Up/Step Down Unit.

- The Commissioner discussed his series of Family Forums and Staff Forums. One of the topics discussed at both staff and family forums was Medicaid eligibility redeterminations and how the process could be made easier and more seamless for families. Commissioner Scheff also described a DDS pilot system, Electronic Mail Management Assistant or EMMA, which uses agency data to generate automated email messages alerting stakeholders of key information. The first slated pilot project will use EMMA to notify DDS case managers and private providers of Medicaid changes to individuals supported by DDS. It is projected to reduce the wait time of notification from multiple weeks to one day.
- The Commissioner mentioned that the public employees who had been assigned to supported living programs were being reassigned to other programs such as Enhanced Family Supports and Quality Management.
- Commissioner Scheff explained that the department was beginning a series of family and provider focus groups in various locations of the topic of [Reimagining Employment and Day Services](#). The goal of these focus groups is to build a framework for the department to strengthen and improve employment and day service options for individuals.

New Business

- The November meeting of the Council will be a joint meeting with the three Regional Advisory Committees (RACs). One of the topics of discussion at this meeting will be the DDS residential services waiting list.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING:

October 17, 2019 at 4:30 p.m.

DDS Central Office

460 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, CT 06106