



Jodi M. Rell  
Governor

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## **Minutes ~ April 10, 2008**

### **Members In Attendance:**

Patti Silva – Chair, Jennifer Carroll – Vice Chair, Stuart Brown, Ed.D., David Hadden, Esq., Lou Richards, Kevin Morey, Dr. John Pelegano, MD., Sheila Mulvey, Peter H. O’Meara-Ex-Officio

### **DDS Staff:**

Christine Pollio – Legislative & Executive Affairs Director  
Ed Mambruno - Ombudsperson  
Rod O’Connor – Legislative Liaison  
Ivette DeJesus – Executive Secretary

### **DDS Guests:**

John Tierney  
Joe Drexler  
Gerry Daley

Patti Silva - Chair opened the meeting.

### **Citizen Input:**

Pat Johnson from Oakhill attended the meeting.

Mr. Johnson:

- Mr. Johnson thanked the Council for all of their support.
- Mr. Johnson talked about the lobbying not manifesting in a positive manner but will continue to lobby.
- Mr. Johnson also informed the Council that the state is waiting until state taxes have been completed and depending on outcome, Private Providers may get some additional dollars.
- Mr. Johnson thanked the Commissioner and DDS Staff for taking a look at data for the Private Provider sector.

### **Presenters/Guest:**

John Tierney on E-Learning.  
Joe Drexler on Provider rate & funding of Day programs.

### **J. Tierney:**

- It has been about a year since the last presentation on E-Learning.
- The E-Learning implementation started with the new hires in September 2007.
- He supplied handouts on the E-Learning program.
- He shared that this program is currently used in 29 states, 15 states are utilizing it statewide.

- Mr. Tierney invited the Council members to try out the E-Learning program “hands on.” Discussion took place and Ivette will send Mr. Tierney the Council members email address so he can send them information on it.
- He discussed and explained the course process.
- He shared that for Private Providers to have an administrator license through DDS, the cost is \$2800 annually.
- DDS currently has 7600 members on this new system (some not currently active yet), 5600 are DDS employees.

### **J. Drexler:**

- Mr. Drexler discussed the Medicaid waiver and provided handouts to the Council. The handouts he provided included many charts and data. He discussed and explained what this data means.
- He shared that \$340 million is reimbursed by the Federal Government.
- He shared that DDS has started to resurvey other states regarding wage levels and turnover in comparison. He also shared that we are one of the best paying states in the Country and one of the highest cost in the Country.
- He also discussed the states cost settlement analysis for Private Providers.
- Mr. Hadden questioned what is the break down of other revenue for Providers? Mr. Drexler responded that other sources include LEA’s, DSS, DCF, and some work with DMHAS as well.
- David Hadden added as he reviewed some graphs and information supplied by Mr. Drexler, we all have worked hard to support this infrastructure. It’s a dismaying message to see so much in red and Council concurred.

### **Minutes:**

March Council minutes were approved with one correction to change Dr. Pellegano to Dr. Pelegano.

### **Ombudsperson Report – Ed Mambruno:**

#### **Mr. Mambruno informed the Council of the following updates:**

- Mr. Mambruno met with OBRA Nurses in Wallingford. He was invited to this by David Carlow, Director of Health & Clinical Services
- Mr. Mambruno did some Nursing Home visits. He found out that three consumers had passed away and two were still listed in eCAMRIS. He e-mailed the case manager so they can fill out a death report and send it to Central Office.
- P&A requested a copy of his Nursing Home Review Sheet. They thought that it would be a helpful tool for the Fatality Review Board to use in the future
- He spoke to a father who called regarding services for his son/daughter. The individual is of school age. He discussed getting a Voluntary Services application and a Blue Book, which details how waiver program works. The father was interested in out of state services and thought that by calling the office he could receive services. Mr. Mambruno discussed the matter with the region.
- A mother called the office regarding issues with her son/daughter’s placement at a group home. She claims the provider was having a hard time ensuring the safety of her son/daughter. Mr. Mambruno spoke with the region which was very familiar with the

case. The mother was meeting with both the private provider and the region to discuss the situation and weigh their options.

- He received a call from a relative of a consumer who was concerned that her niece/nephew had been inappropriately placed out-of-state for personal family reasons and that they the family was defrauding the state. He recommended that they speak with the Guardian to resolve this issue. If the state funding was fraudulently obtained and the allegations can be substantiated, the Attorney General's Office/Whistleblower Unit, Office of the Chief State's Attorney and/or Auditors of Public Accounts can be contacted.

### **SNF'S Visits:**

Windsor Health and Rehab, Windsor -- Visited six consumers

Wintonbury Care Center, Bloomfield – Visited four consumers

Chelsea Place Care Center, Hartford – Visited three consumers

Sterling Manor, East Hartford – Visited three consumers

Riverside Health Care Center, East Hartford – Visited four consumers

Two consumers were excited to be leaving for a group home and CLA placement. Both individuals also have work programs. Another consumer was being considered for a possible placement in a CLA.

### **Legislative Report - Christine Pollio:**

Ms. Pollio informed the Council of the following updates:

- Ms. Pollio asked the Council if they have viewed the legislative page off of the DDS website yet? Response was no by Council. Christine asked that they try viewing it. It has a lot of information. Rod has been keeping it up to date on a weekly basis.
- She supplied the Council with a copy of the legislative page.
- She also supplied a copy of the latest legislative update and thanked Rod for his hard work on it.
- Discussion and explanation of the different bills took place.
- The Council name change is on the House calendar.
- The Democratic budget came out the week after the last meeting. It is the same as the Governor's midterm adjustment. The only addition was the \$50,000 for the Best Buddies program.
- The Program Review and Investigations Committee was approved to do the Scope of Aging Needs Study and it is underway. They are currently meeting with different people and collecting information.
- This legislative session ends at Midnight on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May.
- She mentioned that the Rescue Fund bill is still alive. This is bill number 413.

### **Commissioner's Updates:**

- Commissioner informed the Council that they might possibly see a human interest piece in the Sunday paper. Its a family in West Hartford regarding Services and Supports. This is in relation to the housing crisis and a mortgage foreclosure but not sure of what will be printed.
- UCONN update: DDS attended a meeting at UConn this week. We are looking to do some great things with their assistance. DDS is looking to do some infomercials around

the waiver at the Health Center. The entire E-Learning program opening up a lot of doors for all. Another thing we are going to do is to initiate some video conferencing. This will allow, for example, to link the Council up to the three Regional Advisory Council meetings via video conferencing. DDS is also looking to possibly do this with the Trade Association meetings that are held once a month. DDS is looking to do this next year. Uconn can provide the technology and video links to make all these things happen.

- The Program Review Committee is looking into the Aging consumers in our system and our caregivers.
- The dental coordinator is doing a great job. She is helping families and she has even started her own newsletter.
- The Commissioner shared with the Council that some negative trends have been identified in fiscal integrity. Too many have been identified in the past year. Last year we have found fraud with workers and a family member. We are currently increasing audit and investigation staff. There has been overtime fraud. We had to put something in this month's newsletter informing staff that this will not be tolerated.
- DDS-CT is one of the best in the country and we do not want these negative issues to impact our credibility.
- DDS is also reminding employees that there is a great employee assistance program if they are experiencing financial pressures.
- Due to the discussion at hand, Patti shared a scenario she witnessed at a store having to do with a possible consumer of ours.

#### **Old Business:**

- The bylaws were discussed. Rod did a detailed run through of the bylaws explaining what it said prior to change and what it says now. The Council thanked Rod for doing such a great job revising the bylaws. A motion to pass the bylaws as amended was done and all approved.
- QSR to be invited to present to the Council again. Commissioner suggested that it might be helpful to have them test the new system before they come again. The Council agreed and decision was made to have them come to the July meeting.

#### **New Business:**

- Ms. Silva had requested that Respectful Language be on the agenda for this meeting to discuss as a Council. Chavis was a great advocate for this need and she wants the Council to possibly move forward with this. She would like to open a dialogue with media. Ms. Pollio interjected. This is something that has been brought up before. She feels it would be best to meet as a smaller group internally first. The group should include a representative from different areas such as a Self Coordinator, People First person, a member of the Council. There is currently a meeting scheduled at OPA from 1-4pm on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Council to let Patti know if they have an interest in attending this meeting and then she will appoint someone to represent the Council. Stuart Brown gave some suggestions on how to pursue such dialogue with the media, he suggested including the Ombudsperson for the paper in the group meetings.
- The Secretary position for the Council needs to be filled. Please inform Patti if you have an interest. Patti would like to appoint someone at the May meeting.
- Christine is working with the Governors office on Chavis' replacement to the Council.
- Stuart Brown shared that his wife was on Good Morning America regarding students with Asperger's Syndrome. He will send Ivette the web address on this so that Ivette can distribute to the Council.
- Christine shared that she saw Bella (Patti's daughter) on TV with Patti's husband for Special Olympics.

- Patti shared that Bella is going to light the Olympic flame at the Opening Ceremonies of the State Games at Southern Connecticut State University on June 6th. She was chosen because Patti's husband Manny is a police officer and has been participating in the Torch Run for several years. Once Special Olympics found out that they had an officer who does the Torch Run, who has a daughter who is a Special Olympic athlete, they were very excited.

### Dave Hadden:

Mr. Hadden brought up for discussion a resolution, which the Council adopted to urge the Governor and legislative leaders to provide a meaningful increase to fund private sector providers in the upcoming year.

Reasons offered by Mr. Hadden in support of the resolution:

- The current budget proposed before the Legislature calls for only 1% increase in allocation to fund private providers serving citizens with developmental disabilities.
- Even though:
  - Private sector wages are 45% less than those in the public sector
  - Approximately 2/3 of citizens served by DDS are through contacts with private providers.
  - The private sector has faced annual cost of living increases over the past 20 years of over 4%.
  - While the annual average rate increase to private providers over the past 20 years has been only 1.4%.
- As a result:
  - Wages for direct care workers in the private sector have been consistently reduced for 20 years.
  - Turnover rates in the private sector remain high due to the draw of higher wages in the public sector.
  - Quality and consistency of care has decreased or is severely threatened.
  - Our vulnerable citizens are assuming the risks to their care and safety.
- Accordingly:
  - Seek a motion of the Council to:
    - Urge the Governor and Legislative Leaders to provide a meaningful increase to fund private sector providers in the upcoming year.

**\*\*The next meeting will be held on May 8, 2008.\*\***

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned: 9:10 p.m.**