



M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

COUNCIL ON MENTAL RETARDATION



Minutes ~ September 18, 2007

Members In Attendance:

Stuart Brown – Chair, Karen Hlavac – Vice Chair, Patti Silva, Lou Richards, Jennifer Carroll, Robert Wood, Ed Walen, Chavis Chappell, Peter H. O'Meara-Ex-Officio

DMR Staff:

Ed Mambruno – Ombudsperson
Christine Pollio – Legislative Liaison
Ivette DeJesus – Exec. Secretary

Stuart Brown - Chair opened the meeting.

Citizen Input:

None.

Minutes:

July minutes approved with two minor changes.

Ombudsperson Report – Ed Mambruno:

Mr. Mambruno informed the Council of the following:

- CO's Legal staff interprets my statutes favorably to meet with consumers at Skilled Nursing Facilities. Will begin to meet with consumers when IT produces list of facilities and names of consumers as well as their case managers.
- Will be interviewing for staff for the office of the Ombudsperson.
- Spoke with distraught mom who was berated by an alleged State employee who did not think it was appropriate for mom to take her daughter to a casino. Alleged State employee asked for individuals name so that they could "report her to the authorities". To date have not received further information and or contact from mom.
- Received an e-mail from an individual whose friend is the mother of a son with a diagnoses of autism/mental retardation. When this mom approached the school, with doctor's request for specific services/supports, school noted that just because this individual has a diagnoses it does not necessarily mean they qualified for services. I recommended that a call P&A to request an advocate for the next PPT. In addition, if they feel they had been discriminated against I discussed with them the intake process at the CHRO.
- Received an e-mail from a relative of an individual who wanted to comment on the terrific care that this individual receives at the Torrington facility

Legislative Report - Christine Pollio:

Ms. Pollio informed the Council of the following:

- Council name change was included in legislation during the past session. Now will be called: Council on Developmental Services. The council's name will change but not its initiatives.
- There is a committee to address all the name change related with Central Office and Regional Staff.
- Contracts and addendums will be changed as they are done or upon renewal, which is the end of this fiscal year.
- Families, Private Providers, etc., will keep getting information. This will be a gradual change.
- Legislative proposals due to OPM 10/4. Will keep the Council posted once proposals are in. If budgetary, it will not be through Christine, it will be through Vince.
- There were lots of hot topics this summer. For example: bonding bill (not in yet), Cheshire murders, laptop security issues, and Senator Deluca issue.
- There was a meeting regarding the Watertown Group Home, since the last meeting Christine and Ed Hoyt attended meeting.
- There was another group home issue in Wethersfield. Christine attended with John Houchin.
- Mr. Wood questioned Christine: If a million dollars was approved for x,y,z in bonds, why does it have to still go through the bonds commission. Christine replied, 1st step is Appropriations, and 2nd step is authorization/allocation through bond commission. Basically it is a legal process of check and balance.
- The Dental Coordinator position has been filled. She starts in October.

Commissioner's Updates:

The advertisement has been done for the new West Region Director. We are looking at November 1st to name someone.

Southbury: Due to not admitting any more people, we are in the process of closing a few buildings and consolidating resources. Will have one empty building to be able to move people into when construction is going on in buildings that have people in them. We will be closing 3 cottages, affecting a total of 37 people. One building had 6 people living in it.

Ms. Carroll questioned, will STS ever reopen admission? – Discussion has been put off for another meeting.

Commissioner stressed how much respect is to be given to families for whatever decisions they make or had made in the past for their children to live at STS.

Organizational changes are occurring but this doesn't change the service delivery. Some of the changes are as follows: Quality Management system now reports directly to the Commissioner. The Strategic Leadership Center does not exist as a separate division. Staff and Educational Support will report to HT, IT to Financial and IT Services and Waiver of Policy to the division of Family and Community Services. Christine Pollio is now the Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs. A legislative person will be hired to assist with legislative issues.

Lap top controversy: protocols and procedures are being established.

The Audit report for 2003/2004 has a lot of negative comments about DMR, since then a lot has been corrected.

Ms. Fritzie Levine was a great advocate and supporter. The Levine family raises money for the department. Fritzie's family said they would continue to do so. She passed away this past summer. She will be greatly missed. She brought people together and helped people understand the changes in our service delivery system.

West Region Update: Dimitri will remain as Regional director until October 31st. Fritz Gorst will be Acting Director until a new person is hired if it takes longer than anticipated.

Jennifer Carroll:

The dental meeting consisted of Dave Carlow, some dental students, Ms. Carroll and the dentist (Dr. Skammel). This dentist truly cares about people with disabilities. Dr. Skammel is from Long Island. He has offered to come back. He use to have his own practice but is retired and dedicates a few days per week to United Cerebral Palsy (UCP). Dr. Skammel also stated that he would be willing to dedicate a day to CT.

Old Business:

N/A

New Business:

****The next meeting will be held on October 11th.****

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned: 8:00 p.m.

On behalf of the Council: "Thank you Jennifer for the COOKIES"!! ☺