

DDS North Region Regional Advisory Council

September 16, 2015

Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Collette Bement, Nancy Bilyak, Donna Clauson, Joe Duffy, Elisa Velardo, Claudia Neumann

Guests: Mary Lou O'Connor, Linda Denning, Jill Hall, Andrew Selinger, Tamara Selinger

- The meeting began with introductions. Elisa Velardo introduced herself as the new Regional Director for the North Region and Council members shared what brought them to the Council.
- DDS Vision Story/Project Teams – A video presented by Commissioner Murray was shared with the Council regarding the DDS Vision Story. The video was shared with all DDS staff and is an overview of what the new vision and direction will be for the Department for the future.

Elisa explained how the Vision came about and the plan for restructuring so that roles that were all handled separately in the past will now be brought together. Part of this restructuring is Cres Secchiaroli's new role at Central Office which will oversee all of the financial information so that reporting can be more consistent and data can be retrieved from one place. The current 5-year plan has not changed. This will address the steps and how long it will take to get there.

DDS has been working with Blum Shapiro who are efficiency experts who have worked with other State agencies as well. Part of the plan will be to develop Project Teams with the objective of working on specific projects which will have a specific outcome in a specific amount of time. Five areas have been identified for the focus of the Project Teams.

Areas are:

1. Overtime
2. Voluntary Services Program (VSP) – it was explained that the name of this program has been statutorily changed to Behavioral Services Program (BSP), however, the program itself has not changed.
3. Respite
4. Provider Engagement
5. Organization Structure

Elisa stated that this is all in the very beginning stages. The roll out was just last Wednesday and the Project Teams are just beginning to be developed.

The video is also available on the DDS website.

- There was a brief discussion of transition of rates. It was shared that the reduction of the higher funded providers has been delayed for one year. There was a concern that taking funds away would be stripping away needed services to give to other providers.

There was a concern raised regarding private day providers not providing the full amount of contracted hours. It was stated that the day rate is for 6 hours per day which is considered a full-time day program which should also not include the transportation.

- Clinical – PRC (Program Review Committee) program changes – A pilot program has been developed in the North Region to change the focus of the PRC process and how it works. The new process really focuses now on the most complex cases where the individual is on multiple medications.

Across the state, it was agreed that even though reviews were happening statewide, there was no change or reduction in the amount of medications which is a concern. This is why the pilot was developed. Elisa stated that she will invite Dr. Covino to attend the next meeting to further elaborate on the PRC pilot program

- PRAT (Placement & Resource Allocation Team) – it was explained that the process has been evolving, especially over the past couple of years. With the very limited resources presently, the reviews take less time. Each case is reviewed on an individual basis. The resources are managed very carefully and it is very difficult to allocate the limited resources that are available.

Elisa asked if there were any questions or issues that anyone would like to discuss or have further clarification on.

It was asked that clarification be given on how and when families will be involved in the new Vision and also transparency of the department. Elisa stated that she would bring that feedback to Central Office and have it addressed and added to the Frequently Asked Questions on the DDS website. That section on the website is changed and updated on a regular basis as more questions are asked.

- Healthy Eating Initiative – there is a movement across the agency, in partnership with provider agencies, regarding dysphagia and special diets. This is the most preventable cause of death so the feeling is that if one life can be saved through this effort it is worth it.
- Objectives for NR Advisory Council Meetings – Elisa stated that if anyone wishes to share agenda items before the meetings, they are always welcome to. Anyone can contact either Claudia or Elisa to add items to the agenda.
- Elisa was asked if there have been any further rescissions. So far none have been communicated, however, it is always a possibility.

The next RAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October, 2015 at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Claudia Neumann
Executive Secretary