

# **DDS North Region Regional Advisory Council**

September 26, 2018  
Meeting Minutes

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Members Present: Kathleen Tetreault (Vice Chair); Donna Clauson; Donna Cohen; Joe Duffy; Collette Langner; Ron Langner; Lori Sandora; Annette Scully; Tammy Selinger; Elisa Velardo, DDS North Regional Director

Meeting was called to order at 5:10 pm.

- Legislative Update – session has not started yet.
  - Kathleen Tetreault shared that she attended a presentation last evening with Dawn Lambert from DSS. The CFC program was discussed. The DD community was really hit the hardest when cuts were made to the program. Budgets were originally inflated and are now being adjusted. Those that have budgets that were cut have a right to a fair hearing. There have been approximately 100 filed so far.
- Regional Director's Update:
  - Elisa Velardo reported that we have been working very aggressively to get last June's grads placed and are doing very well with those. The vast majority have been placed.
  - DDS is continuing to work with providers to build capacity, which is a great need. There have been limited opportunities for people in GSE (Group Supported Employment). We have been working very hard on expanding employment opportunities but group options have decreased. People in our DDS Public Day Services program have now been moved to private opportunities so we have more staff to work on expanding employment options.
  - CCH Initiative – last year we were given authorization to make 60 new CCH placements (20 in each Region) and individuals were identified by asking those that indicated they were interested in pursuing a CCH. Quite a few of those have already been placed and a few more are in the process. Of the 20 in the North Region, 14 have been placed, and 5 more are in process. An RFP was also put out over the summer, to new providers who do not already have CCH's, to expand the CCH program. We were able to award two additional providers per Region.
  - A question was raised regarding assistive technology. Elisa explained that DDS staff have gone to specific training around assistive technology and the Department now ensures that one of the staff that has been trained is part of the PRAT team in each region.
  - Family Grants – The structure of the program has been changed and is a little different this year. The grants will now be reviewed statewide in order to provide better consistency. A statewide group is looking at the requests and has identified some ways to maximize family grants as much as possible.
  - Mobile Crisis and Step-Down Unit – \$5 million was awarded to address emergency crisis situations. Plans for both are in process.
    - Step-Down Unit – currently individuals that end up in the ER are having to stay there while planning is taking place. Individuals have been in the ER for extended periods if they are not able to return home. The Step-Down Unit will offer the opportunity for the person to leave the ER. Initially the capacity will be 5 individuals, possibly 6 in the future. It will be located at the Hartford Regional Center in Newington, which will be the only one for right now. It may be

expanded to the other regions sometime in the future. It is expected to open in November or December. The stays will be temporary and will be time-limited.

- The second piece is “crisis prevention” to help prevent people from having to go to the ER. Currently DDS has Family Support Workers who provide assistance to families with needs that they can provide, such as going to appointments or recreational activities. We currently have 11 Family Support Workers, however, as part of this initiative, the number of positions will be increased to 18 in each region. The 7 new positions would be evening and weekend positions so they will be available whenever the services are needed. Families can access the IFS workers through their case manager. Donna Haley is the manager that oversees this program.
- New IP Process – Council members who have already participated in one of the new IP’s shared their experiences with the new process. Most of the feedback was positive. There was some concern with being told that the individual must be at the meeting. In some cases, this is not a realistic expectation. Elisa explained that the intent is to have the meeting be person-driven, and have the person be as involved as much as possible so the meeting really is about them. The goal is to maximize participation and input to make sure the person is involved without causing additional hardship. Other feedback was that the meetings were much more meaningful with there being much less focus on data and much more person-driven.
- AAIDD New England Region 10 Conference is scheduled for Friday, October 26<sup>th</sup> at the Mystic Hilton. Val Bradley is the keynote speaker, Commissioner Scheff will be in attendance as well.
- There was a request to check the date of the Starlight Ball which may be in conflict with the Special Olympics state games. We will follow-up and check on the date.
- Presentations for Year Ahead
  - Kathleen Tetreault will present at the next meeting regarding Special Needs Trusts.
  - CTFSN will be asked to present for the November meeting.
- Eligibility Discussion – a question was raised regarding an individual who is 60 years old who could not be determined eligible for services because there were no records available for the eligibility review. Elisa will follow up with the DDS Legal Department regarding this issue.
- Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Meeting was adjourned at 6:57pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Claudia Neumann*  
Executive Secretary