

**Advisory Council Meeting
January 17, 2019
4:00 pm
Ella Grasso Center, Stratford, CT**

Minutes

Members Present

Sue Bastien, Charles Bergamo, Lori Chiappiniello, Marina Derman, Gil Kellersman, Karen Simon, Arlene Steinfeld, Cindy Stramandinoli

Public

Lynn Arezzini

Call to Order

Chairman Bergamo called the meeting to order at 4:08 pm

Review of Minutes

The Advisory Council reviewed the Minutes of the September 20, 2018 meeting. ***Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the Minutes.***

Chairperson's Report

- Chairman Bergamo suggested that someone volunteer to take the role of Vice Chairperson. Karen Simon and Susan Bastien nominated Marina Derman as the Vice Chairperson. ***Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the nomination of Marina Derman as Vice Chairperson.***
- The group reviewed the names of the RAC members who have not attended several meetings. Those members will be receiving a letter thanking them for serving on the Council. Mr. Bergamo will draft a letter and send to Eunice Rivera, Executive Secretary to the Regional Director, to send out to those members.
- Work Groups: There was a brief discussion on the "Café to Go" subgroup of the South Region RAC. That group that was very active and developed a proposal for a shared living model that was adopted. The group seemed to be inspired by this idea and Chairman Bergamo again encouraged the membership to share ideas on what sort of focus areas should the West Region RAC should concentrate on. Some ideas that were suggested were behaviors and how to cope; Grads and Age-outs (how to reach out to more families).
- There was a lengthy discussion on Grads and Age-outs and the definition of each group. Grads are individuals that graduate and live at home. Upon graduation, these individuals are placed in a day program. Age-outs are individuals that are residentially placed during their high school years and age-out of their programs at the age of 22. Upon aging out, they are transferred to DDS and are residentially placed under DDS. Individuals who are eligible for age-out status must be residentially funded by the LEA one year prior to becoming eligible as a DDS age-out.

Some of the members feel that there is inequity in how individuals are prioritized in terms of funding for residential placements. It seems that at times, individuals who are in greater need of supports do not get funding; while some individuals who are higher functioning seem to be getting more funding. The disappointment in fairness and objectivity was voiced.

One of the members inquired if there was a statute or ruling that dictates how individuals are given consideration for residential placements. Fritz and Chairman Bergamo agreed to look further into this and report back their findings.

- The topic of priorities for consumer placement in the Department was raised. Ms. Stramandinoli was advised by Commissioner Scheff that individuals who are considered “forensic” are the individuals who get placed first. These are individuals who are exiting the correctional system or have had issues with the law and need immediate placement.

Director’s Report

- We have a new Governor, Mr. Ned Lamont.
- Commissioner Scheff was reappointed.
- The budget will be in place until July 2019. The Department has fared well with the allocations given to DDS.
- Last year, DDS received \$5 million to address individuals who were being dropped off at emergency rooms. A result of this funding, the Department has created a **Mobile Crisis Unit**. At this point in time, staff are being hired and trained to man the unit. The unit will be available, in the near future, for families to consult with in order to diffuse situations at home and avoid a “crisis” or an unnecessary trip to the emergency room. DDS has met with the Department of Mental Health to get feedback on how their crisis unit works. There will be a brochure explaining the Mobile Crisis Unit and when to call. It will be shared with the RAC once it is available.

A discussion on when a family should resort to calling 911 took place. The membership inquired as to how effective the Mobile Crisis Unit would be in the case of a true emergency. It was advised by one of the RAC members for families to visit with their local police department to introduce them to their family member with an intellectual disability. Some departments (i.e. police department; ambulance service, etc.) enter the data into their database and the information is shared with other emergency personnel so that the staff in their respective areas knows how to approach the individual when responding to an emergency related to them.

- Krysta Oslowzewski has replaced Christine Pollio as the DDS Legislative Liaison.

New Business

- Ms. Derman distributed a handout: “Join the Lower Fairfield County – Families for Families”. Copy on file.
- Topics for future meetings: There was a suggestion to have the Special Needs Liaison from a business like: Shop Rite, Walgreens, or Panera Bread to come speak at one of the RAC meetings to talk about what makes an individual successful working with them or what they look for when they hire an individual.

Chairman Bergamo shared that he can get a speaker to come to the meeting if members suggested topics they are interested in hearing about.

It was mentioned by a member of the public who joined this meeting that as a result of the Clifford Beers presentation, she has been using their services for her family member. She was grateful that this presentation was made because this provider is a great resource to her.

Members also suggested that presentations like the ones presented to the RAC should be available for all DDS families.

- Ms. Derman inquired if the information on the Waiting List census is available yet. Fritz will inquire with Commissioner Scheff.
- **Schedule of future RAC Meetings:**

2/21/19	6/20/19
3/21/19	9/19/19
4/18/19	10/17/19
5/16/19	11/14/19

Citizen Comment

A focus on behavioral supports should be an area that the Department focuses on. The goal should be for individuals to have adequate behavioral supports that would allow them to succeed in the community. It would also help the individual become as independent as possible. It was suggested that the West Region host a presentation with a speaker on behavioral supports. A comment was made about former presentations that were offered at the Trumbull Mall Community Room.

Adjournment

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council adjourned the meeting at 5:50pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Eunice B. Rivera

Executive Secretary