

West Region Advisory Council

Minutes

Via teleconference

May 14, 2020

Participants:

Sue Bastien, Marina Derman, Chuck Bergamo, Karen Simon, Lori Chiappenello, Fritz Gorst Gil Kellersman

Member of the Public: Laverne Moore (CFSN)

1. CALL TO ORDER –

A roll call was made by Chairperson Bergamo. After verification of a quorum, the meeting was called to order at 4:06 pm

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETINGS MINUTES –

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the Minutes of January 16, 2020.

3. CONDUCTING A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE CALL –

Mr. Bergamo explained the difficulty of holding a conference call with participants sometimes speaking over each other. He requested that participants wait for their name to be called so that they can be the only person talking at a given time. All of the membership agreed this would be the best way to have an orderly discussion.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT –

Mr. Bergamo asked the public participant if she had any questions or comments. She replied “no”.

5. CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT –

Mr. Bergamo spoke about the letter that was shared with the Council via email concerning the \$1,200 stimulus payment. Information was shared so that this payment will not affect an individual’s income guidelines.

6. REGIONAL DIRECTOR’S UPDATE –

Several questions were sent to Mr. Gorst concerning the current pandemic. (Questions were shared via email with the Advisory Council and are on file). Fritz explained that the current situation is a very difficult one that came upon everyone in a very short and unexpected timeframe. Everyone has been doing their best to manage with the resources given to them. In the beginning it was a bit more challenging because everything happened so quickly. He shared that the Department has the following link to update families and providers: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Information-For/Individuals-with-Disabilities>. All the questions that were posed, can be answered on the link. If there are any other concerns, they can be emailed to Eunice.

Fritz gave an update on COVID-19 data (i.e. deaths, hospitalizations, etc.) This information is found on the website: <https://portal.ct.gov/DDS/General/COVID19/DDS-COVID-19-Figures>.

The Council members questioned whether donors have been acknowledged by the Department. At this point, the Department is collecting the names of donors. The acknowledgments will go out later. The names of donors can be sent to Eunice Rivera.

7. NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. Kellersman shared that the Kennedy Center has been holding a Town Meeting on Thursday where they have been updating families on the current situation.
- Mrs. Derman inquired if the RAC can help with advocating for individuals to have someone with them when they are hospitalized. This was a huge concern by the RAC. Everyone feels that it is very important for our population to be accompanied by someone due to many factors (i.e. sensory issues). Fritz explained that the Department is not able to change the Governor's Executive Order. Mr. Bergamo suggested that the RAC Chairpersons send a letter forward advocating for a change.

An example was shared by a Council member that she did not bring her son to the hospital for fear of having to leave him alone.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to have Mr. Bergamo contact the other RAC Chairperson's to suggest an advocacy letter be put together to advocate for consumers to be accompanied when in the hospital.

- The question was posed on food delivery and getting help to families that cannot get to the store. Fritz suggested that individuals that are having difficulty should contact their case manager.
- There was a discussion on how the department will be opening programs, etc. The Department is going to be working on a master plan to phase in opening in compliance with the Governor's orders.
- A member of the Council shared how her son has COVID and how the home is being operated with live-in staff.

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8. NEXT MEETING –

- June 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. via teleconference 1-866-564-5764 code: 6431046
- July, August

September 17 4 pm - 6 pm Ella Grasso Center Stratford, CT

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council adjourned the meeting at 4:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Eunice B. Rivera
Executive Secretary, DDS West Region