

West Region Advisory Council

Minutes

Via Teleconference

4:00 p.m.

September 16, 2021

Participants:

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

1. CALL TO ORDER –

The meeting was called to order at 4:20 pm

2. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF LAST MEETINGS MINUTES –

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the Minutes of April 15, 2021.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S UPDATE–

Mr. Bergamo reported that the Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities adopted their new 5-year plan. They are accepting looking for grantees. Mr. Bergamo will be forwarding information to the WR Regional Advisory Council to review and share with anyone that might be interested in participating in the grants. Deadline to submit grant is at the end of October.

4. REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S UPDATE –

- This summer was pretty good. The number of COVID positive cases was down. There was a small uptick after Labor Day. We continue to monitor. There was one death of an individual. That individual was not vaccinated.
- Each region has 6 open meetings for all DDS staff, providers and families to provide input into the development of the 5 Year Plan. This morning, the first one was held in the West Region. Good information was shared and will be forwarded to the Commissioner's Office for review. The other meetings are scheduled during the next few weeks into October. Eunice will be sending forward the email invitation to the RAC for those interested in registering for one or more discussions.

There was a brief discussion on how families were notified of these meetings. One parent explained that she was informed via a Facebook page and didn't receive notification directly from DDS. There was concern that this information was not shared with families. Fritz will mention that to CO.

The meetings are organic and not being recorded. Staff, providers and families can share what they think is working and not working in the Department. Any ideas or feedback are welcome during these sessions.

- A brief conversation about how an individual is assigned a case manager took place. Individuals that are grads or age-outs get assigned a case manager. All other individuals are assigned to the Helpline. Fritz explained that some individuals stay in school until the age of 22 and then are assigned a CM through DDS. There was a question about why everyone is not assigned a case manager. The answer is that there is a shortage of resources. Case managers move around, and vacancies occur. There aren't enough positions to serve everyone with their own case manager. The Helpline is there to serve individuals without a dedicated case manager.
- A compliment was shared on how our Transition Team is great and assists families with transitioning into DDS services.

5. NEW BUSINESS

- COVID vaccination requirements have been rolled out by the Governor through an Executive Order. All DDS staff must be vaccinated or submit to weekly testing to be in compliance with the Executive Order. Fritz will be meeting with Central Office to further discuss how this will be handled.
- Marina shared that she is sitting on the SELN Committee. This committee will be discussing employment opportunities for our individuals. She will provide the WR RAC with updates at the next meeting.

6. OLD BUSINESS

The group talked about difficulty in finding staff to serve individuals. It was suggested that DDS start up an employment division. This would help families to review applicants and hire staff through the Department.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one from the public participated in the meeting; therefore, no public comment.

7. NEXT MEETING –

October 21 - 4pm via teleconference; invitations will be sent out via Outlook.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Respectfully submitted by:

Eunice B. Rivera
Executive Secretary, DDS West Region