

**DDS West Region  
Advisory Council  
MINUTES  
Thursday, September 21, 2023  
Via Microsoft Teams  
4:00 p.m.**

In attendance: O'Brien, Shannon; Bastien, Sue; Chiappiniello, Lori; Kellersman, Gil; Steinfeld, Arlene; Derman, Marina; Simon, Karen

Guests: Michael-Martusis, Dory E.; Ramirez, Adriana; Brown, Kenerick; DeGrosse, Michael

- Call to order - Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to call the Meeting to order at 4:10 pm
- Review of Notes – No quorum at last meeting
- Introductions of new the Quality Improvement Director and Community Companion Homes (CCH) Manager

Shannon explained how the Department has done a reorganization of the divisions statewide. This was done to equalize different roles across the state as well as change the reporting structure. A new area was reintroduced to the Department and is being overseen by the Quality Improvement Director. Also, part of the structural change was assigning each Self Advocate Coordinator to specific divisions. The Self Advocate Coordinators were formerly reporting to the Self Determination Director. Now, they each report to a different division. We are also getting a 4<sup>th</sup> Self Advocate Coordinator who will be based out of our Danbury Office.

- Mr. Michael DeGrosse introduced himself as the new CCH Manager. He replaces Tim Braziel who was the former manager for the CCH Program. Michael was formerly the Assistant Manager for CCH and was promoted to Manager. He shared some background information on his education, former employment, and his number of years in the CCH program.

Mr. DeGrosse shared a brief overview of the CCH Program and how he works with families and CCH licensees to expand the program by helping individuals to be placed in CCH placements. Currently, there are 130 CCH homes in the West Region and roughly 350 or so throughout the state. Mr. DeGrosse offered to host an information session to anyone that would be interested in finding out more about the CCH Program. He can be reached at [Michael.DeGrosse@ct.gov](mailto:Michael.DeGrosse@ct.gov) or 203-805-7403.

- Ms. Dory Michael-Martusis introduced herself as the new Quality Improvement Director. This is a role that was reinstated after being eliminated some years ago. Dory explained what her focus will be and what areas she's responsible for. She will be charged with reviewing data trends in certain areas (i.e. trends in agencies that need to be corrected, among other trends within the Department). There will also be a focus on diversity and inclusion of individuals. She will be working with a Self-Advocate Coordinator who will also be helping her to educate different sister agencies, people in within the department, outside the department and individuals themselves and families on different things that are happening in DDS. She will also be involved with Emergency Management which is a new facet within this role where she will also be thinking about the safety of the personnel that works for DDS as well.

Dory can be reached at [Dory.Michael-Martusis@ct.gov](mailto:Dory.Michael-Martusis@ct.gov) or 203-805-7445.

- Kenerick Brown also joined the meeting. He reports to Dory Michael-Martusis and is the Abuse Neglect & HRC Liaison for the West Region. He gave an in-depth overview of his role with investigations and how the Department monitors investigations and ensures timelines for closure are met. Mr. Brown also explained how his division oversees the investigations from the time that they are reported as an allegation and the steps that the investigation goes through. He shared steps on how the process moves along and what happens during the investigation. Members of the Council asked questions about how an allegation is reported and who submits allegations. Kenerick shared the different areas that are responsible for different allegations based on their age.

### **Information for Abuse Neglect Allegations**

- **AID** (victim age 18-59\*)  
Abuse Investigation Division (formerly known as the Office of Protection and Advocacy, OPA or P&A)  
**1-844-878-8923**
- **DCF** (victim under age 18)  
Department of Children and Families Care Line  
**1-800-842-2288**
- **DSS** (victim over age 59)  
Department of Social Services  
Centralized Intake  
**1-888-385-4225**

He also gave a brief overview of his role as the Human Rights Committee (HRC) Liaison and how they review cases to ensure the least restrictive measures (i.e. Measures that would be intrusive, or restrictive or aversive to that individual). If there is a program that is being instituted behaviorally because of a behavior of an individual, those types of items are reviewed (i.e. alarm chairs, bed alarms, etc.). Lori indicated that some hospitals are restricted from using any alarms. Kenerick stated he would share this concern with our Nursing Division so that they can follow up.

He is available at [Kenerick.brown@ct.gov](mailto:Kenerick.brown@ct.gov) (Abuse Neglect & HRC Liaison) or 203-805-7456.

- Chairs Report

None

- Directors Report

Shannon reported that the Commissioner will be conducting his stakeholder meetings again. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is committed to keeping all stakeholders informed of the work the agency is doing to advance our mission and vision through upcoming community forums in October. The schedule is below:

- ❖ Tuesday, October 10th from 6:00 - 8:00 PM
- ❖ Thursday, October 12th from 9:00 - 11:00 AM
- ❖ Tuesday, October 17th from 6:00 - 8:00 PM
- ❖ Wednesday, October 18th from 9:00 - 11:00 AM

- ❖ Jordan has hired Mary Pat De Carlo, who is a former employee division director at Kennedy Center, to work on workforce development and hiring. Her title is Director of Workforce Strategies. She is a direct report to the Commissioner.
- Bill 5001 – there is a paid caregiver component of that bill that is being worked on. There is going to be a public hearing soon. DDS is preparing a report to submit to CMS by 11/1/2023.
- ❖ Transitional Life Skills College, is going to be a program for young adults. DDS has to have a plan in to the legislator by January 1st, 2025.
- All Case Manager vacancies in the WR have been filled.

➤ New Business

The RAC was encouraged to read highlights from the 2023 legislative session and learn more about House Bill 5001 and its impact. Access the Simplified bill analysis for House Bill 5001 <https://www.cga.ct.gov/2023/BA/PDF/2023HB-05001-R010848-BA.PDF>

- ❖ Web link to access Commissioner Scheff's Fall meetings and registration information- <https://portal.ct.gov/DDS/General/DDS-Stakeholder-Updates/2023-DDS-Stakeholder-Updates>
- ❖ Information on the DDS STEP Initiative can be found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/DDS/STEP/STEP>
- ❖ DDS videos <https://www.youtube.com/@ctdds/playlists>

➤ Old Business

➤ Opportunity for Public Participation

Adrianna Ramirez- [aramirez@ctfsn.org](mailto:aramirez@ctfsn.org) Assistant Executive Director- CT Family Support Network (203) 699-6123 – Shared that there are CTFSN Support Groups. The meetings are virtual. You can go to their Facebook page for more information.

3. NEXT MEETING –

Shannon asked the group if they were interested in having a regional representative come and report on what is happening in the West Region on DDS initiatives. The group agreed that would be very welcomed.

Date of Next Meeting- **October 19, 2023 at 4pm** via teleconference; invitations will be sent out via Outlook.

ADJOURNMENT

***Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council adjourned the meeting at 5:18 pm.***

Respectfully submitted by:

Eunice B. Rivera  
Executive Secretary, DDS West Region