



**State of Connecticut  
Independent Office of the Ombudsperson for Developmental Services  
460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06017**

**January 2022 Monthly Report to the Council on Developmental Services**

**Assistance to Individuals and Families**

In relation to my duties as Ombudsperson I communicated with individuals, families and advocates on numerous issues including:

1. Private provider COVID policies regarding vaccination, testing and notifications to individuals and families,
2. Abuse & neglect reporting and the DDS critical incident policy
3. DDS rent subsidies,
4. A 30-day notice of termination by a private provider,
5. Mediation between a provider and a family,
6. Community Companion Homes,
7. Impact of staffing crisis on provider flexibility and ability to obtain supports,
8. Questions about school supports,
9. Community supports for a person with autism and alcohol issues,
10. Problem solving on how to navigate the system and utilize DDS funding to live in the community,
11. Visitation at DDS Regional Centers,
12. Difficulties finding Day & Employment supports particularly for individuals with high levels of need,
13. Concerns about access to medical care for people with I/DD,
14. Case Management,
15. Self-directing supports,
16. Supported Decision Making,
17. Various issues around vaccination – guardian refusing to vaccinate individual, individual refusing to get vaccinated, vaccination of private provider staff,
18. How to apply for Medicaid, CFC and DDS supports,
19. Augmentative alternative communication,
20. Impact of staffing crisis on individual choice, provider capacity and provider flexibility.

To address these concerns, I connected families with resources and information outside of DDS, made one report to the Abuse and Investigation Division, and worked with and maintained regular contact with the following people and entities within DDS:

- Commissioner Scheff,
- Deputy Commissioner Mason,
- Regional Directors & Assistant Regional Directors,
- Case Manager Supervisors & Case Managers

**Interaction with DDS**

- In addition, to assisting individuals and families, I have been meeting with DDS Executive Management Team, Regional Directors and Management Teams, Division Directors, and other staff.
- I have joined the State Employee Leadership Network (SELN) Strategic Planning Steering Committee and will be co-chairing the SELN Interagency Collaboration Subcommittee.

- To learn more about the inner workings, leadership structure, and day to day operations of DDS, I have been attending regular state-wide and regional meetings including incident command calls, forensic meetings, waiver team meetings, provider leadership meetings and others.
- I have met with and will continue to collaborate with the DDS Self Advocate Coordinators.

### **Interaction with the Community and Councils**

Outreach and meetings with other agencies, advocacy groups, Councils, provider organizations and stakeholders including but not limited to:

- Council on Developmental Services,
- The Arc Connecticut,
- Home and School Association of Southbury Training School,
- CT DDS Families First,
- PATH,
- CT Family Support Network,
- The Connecticut Community Nonprofit Alliance,
- Regional Center Family Groups,
- The Regional Advisory Councils,
- Disability Rights Connecticut,
- Southbury Training School Board of Trustees,
- CT State Independent Living Council,
- New England Healthcare Employees Union,
- DDS qualified providers,
- NEAT Marketplace
- New Jersey Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families

### **ADA and Other Calls**

I continue to receive numerous calls from individuals who do not have I/DD seeking help and information on a variety of issues. In the past month I have referred people to the following resources:

- CT ADA Coordinator
- CT Fair Housing Coalition
- CT Legal Services
- Eastern CT Area on Aging
- Disability Rights Connecticut
- CT Probate Court and other resources on the limits of conservatorship in CT
- Southeast Mental Health Authority
- Transitnet & Mobility Management

### **Areas of Concern**

- Impact of staffing crisis on ability to access supports, person centered planning, provider flexibility and morale.
- Consistency and accountability for COVID policies and reporting structures for private providers.
- Impact of loss of staff and experience, particularly at STS and Regional Centers due state employee retirements.

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
**Shannon Jacovino**  
**Ombudsperson**  
**January 20, 2022**