



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

August & September 2023 Monthly Reports to the Council on Developmental Services

Assistance to Individuals and Families

In relation to my duties as Ombudsperson, between 7/19/2023- 9/19/2023, I assisted approximately 67 individuals, families, advocates, guardians, DDS staff, legislators, state agencies, providers, and members of the community on numerous issues including:

1. Individual rights.
2. Legal representative rights and responsibilities.
3. Eligibility.
4. Issues/complaints about private providers.
5. Issues/complaints about DDS.
6. Issue/complaints about a guardian/legal representative.
7. Issues/problems related to staffing crisis.
8. Complaints from family members who are not legal representatives.
9. Quality of supports.
10. Abuse & neglect.
11. Health & safety.
12. Understanding & navigating DDS system.
13. Communication.
14. Issue/complaints with fiscal intermediary.
15. Employment supports.
16. Day supports.
17. Residential supports.
18. Questions about benefits and funding.
19. ADA, HIPAA, and disability rights.
20. Information/research/referral.
21. Programmatic Changes and Waiver Supports.
22. Legislator constituent issues.
23. Issues with for individuals in hospitals or skilled nursing facilities.
24. Supports for youth with IDD.
25. Collaboration with Long Term Care Ombudsman.

To address these concerns, I connected families with resources and information inside and outside of DDS, and maintained regular contact with the following people and entities within DDS:

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

- Health Management Director
- DDS Legal Department
- Director of Case Management
- Self Determination Directors
- DDS Abuse & Investigation Division.
- DSS
- CT Long Term Care Ombudsperson
- Disability Rights Connecticut
- CT state legislators
- Hospital social workers

Interaction with DDS, other state agencies and community organizations

- Member of DDS Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee and DEI Strategic Planning Committee.
- Member of Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- Co-chair of ARPA Individual & Family Engagement Committee.
- Member of ARPA Advisory Committee.
- Member Supported Decision Making Coalition.
- Attended DDS state-wide and regional meetings.
- Monthly meeting with Commissioner Scheff.
- Monthly meeting with Deputy Commissioner Velardo.
- Monthly meeting with DDS Health Management Administrator.
- Bimonthly meeting with DDS Director of Case Management.
- Meeting and collaboration with DDS Director of Diversity Equity & Inclusion.
- Meetings and consultation with advocacy organizations including The Arc Connecticut, the CT Family Support Network, and the Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- Consultation with ARPA consultants Deloitte & the McDowell Communications.
- Member of BRS CT Competitive Integrative Employment Grant Individualized Supports Subgroup.
- Attended DDS Assistive Technology Conference
- Attended DDS STEP trainings.
- Member DDS transportation workgroup.
- Consultation with CHRO.
- Attended DDS presentation on Diabetes Research presentation.
- Meeting with DDS leadership on access to supports for individuals with diabetes.
- Attended DDS employment forums.
- Visited STAR Inc. Technology Center.
- Attended Medicaid Long Term Services & Supports Rebalancing Initiatives Steering Committee Meetings
- Reviewed and provided recommendations for DDS communications with individuals, families, and advocates.
- Attended meeting with DDS and Supported Decision-Making advocates.
- Met with the New England Healthcare Employees Union, District 1199, SEIU.

- Attended meetings on updating the DDS website.
- Attended the Council on Developmental Disabilities Bridging the Gap Between Aging and Disabilities Services meetings.
- Attended DDS Video Launch Party.

Areas of Concern

- Impact of staffing crisis on quality and access to supports, health and safety, and person-centeredness of supports, and individual and family advocacy with private providers.
- Provider accountability.
- The lack of support options for individuals with developmental disabilities who are not eligible for DDS funding.
- Disproportionate guardianship statistics in CT as compared to other states, and the lack of information on alternatives to guardianship.
- Access to supports for individuals with diabetes.

**Respectfully Submitted,
Shannon Jacovino
Ombudsperson
September 20, 2023**