



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

**June 2023 Monthly Report to the Council on Developmental Services**

**Assistance to Individuals and Families**

In relation to my duties as Ombudsperson, between 5/17/2023-6/13/2023 I assisted approximately 70 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. Transition supports.
19. Transportation.
20. Questions about benefits and funding.
21. ADA, HIPAA, and disability rights information and referral.
22. Individual incarcerated.
23. Information/research/referral community resources.
24. Group home/facility closure.
25. Programmatic Changes and Waiver Supports.
26. Questions about providers as rep payees.
27. Collaboration, communication, and coordination with community organizations and hospitals.
28. Group home strikes.
29. AT Conference.
30. Legislator questions/constituent issues.

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
- Self Determination Directors
- 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 State Employee Leadership Network (SELN) Strategic Planning Steering Committee and SELN Leadership Subcommittee.
- 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 Disability Rights CT.
- Consultation with ARPA consultants Deloitte & the McDowell Communications.
- Consultation with Council on Developmental Services subcommittee on DDS Abuse & Neglect process.
- Attended DD Council Bridging the Gap between Aging and Disability Services presentations.
- Member of BRS CT Competitive Integrative Employment Grant Individualized Supports Subgroup.
- Attended 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday Forum on Innovative Options.
- Attended May Commissioner's Forum.
- Strike Monitoring.
- Consulted with Long Term Care Ombudsman and DSS on ICF group home closure.
- Consulted with DSS re: provider payee responsibilities.

**Areas of Concern**

- Impact of staffing crisis on access supports, person centered planning, advocacy, provider flexibility and quality of supports.
- Supporting, protecting, and encouraging individual and family advocacy.
- 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.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Shannon Jacovino**

**Ombudsperson**

**June 14, 2023**