



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

March 2023 Monthly Report to the Council on Developmental Services

Assistance to Individuals and Families

In relation to my duties as Ombudsperson, between 2/16/2023-3/15/2023, I assisted approximately 31 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/problems related to staffing crisis.
6. Abuse & neglect.
7. Health & safety.
8. Understanding & navigating DDS system.
9. Communication.
10. Day supports.
11. Residential supports.
12. Behavioral Services Program
13. Information/research/referral community resources.

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,
- Regional Directors & Assistant Regional Directors,
- Case Manager Supervisors & Case Managers
- Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Self Determination Directors
- Health Management Director
- DDS Legal Department
- Self Determination Directors
- DDS Abuse & Investigation Division
- DMHAS, DCF, BRS

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) Leadership Subcommittee.
- Member of Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- Co-chair of ARPA Individual & Family Engagement Committee.
- Member of ARPA Advisory Committee.
- Attended DDS state-wide and regional meetings including incident command calls, waiver team meetings, DDS Leadership meetings and others.

- Monthly meeting with Deputy Commissioner Velardo.
- Monthly meeting with DDS Health Management Administrator.
- Bimonthly meeting with DDS Director of Case Management.
- Regular meeting and collaboration with DDS Director of Diversity Equity & Inclusion.
- 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
- Met with The Arc Connecticut, Keep the Promise Coalition.
- Attended public hearing on HB 5001, An Act Concerning Resources and Support Services for Persons with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability, and DDS Appropriation Hearings.
- Attended Council on Developmental Disabilities Legislative Committee meeting.
- Meetings with CT DDS Director of Specialized Service Development, Health Management Director and Abuse and Investigation Division Directors to better understand DDS supports, policies and practices.

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

March 15, 2023