

DS State Program Standing Committee (SPSC)

June 16, 2022

Meeting Held Virtually on Microsoft Teams

Simple Language Summary

Attendees

Committee Members: Max Barrows, Dawn Danner, Bethany Drum, Ed Place, Karen Price, Barb Prine, Cheryl Thrall, Lyn Ujlaky, David Ballou, Priscilla Connolly, Barbara Lee, Connie Woodberry, and Susan Yuan

Guests: Bill Ashe, Jessica Stehle, Elise Hayden, Marie Lallier, Karen Topper, Kara Artus

State Employees: Jennifer Garabedian, Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, June Bascom, Laura Siegal, Lisa Parro, and Judy Spittle

Roll Call and Review Agenda

Max and Judy did roll call, and Max reviewed the meeting agenda.

Meeting Minutes, SPSC Member Check-In

The Committee approved April's minutes with proposed changes.

The Committee reviewed and approved May's minutes.

Payment Reform/SIS-A—Bill Ashe

Bill Ashe was at the meeting to share a plan of SIS-A could work in the future.

This plan includes an independent case manager—that he called person an “Independent Guide”. The plan uses the SIS, by and independent assessor.

Bill also talked about a “Context Assessment”. This is a set of questions that asks about the person's situation, like who do they live with, or do they have a trusted person that can help keep them calm.

Once an assessment was done, there would be an ISA and funding. The Guide would be part of the ISA, with people from the Agency.

This plan did not talk about payment reform. It did say that if you don't think that the amount of support that you receive meets your needs, you still have appeal rights. Bill also reminded people that if your needs change the assessment could be done again. The steps would be followed to get a new ISA and funding.

We talked a little about the Settings Rule. We will put this on a future agenda. Jennifer will ask Shawn Skaflestad to come and talk with us about the State's Transition Plan.

National Core Indicators In-Person Survey (NCI) – June Bascom

June Bascom talked about the NCI In-Person Survey. She told us that this is a national in-person survey of services around employments, rights, services planning, community inclusion, choice, and health and safety for adults. The last time that Vermont did this survey was fiscal year 2019. We have not done it since because of the pandemic.

There are some good things about the survey. It lets us compare how Vermont is doing against the rest of the country. It has a lot of questions that tell us information about how people are feeling. It tells us if people are getting access to medical care. We learn what they think about the supports available. There are questions about how well they feel they have been informed about supports and options.

There are things that make this survey hard. It is a long survey. Vermont does not get to pick the questions we want to ask. We cannot look at the information by agencies. It is a lot of work. It is expensive.

We have not done the NCI for three years because of the pandemic. We want to be sure that we look at outcomes and survey people. But we want to talk with stakeholders to understand what they want the Division to look at.

Director's Updates

Jennifer gave Director's updates on H720. This was passed into law and is now Act 186. The Division is working on setting up the Steering Committee for the Pilot Planning Grants.

The Division is working on getting the new housing position that was part of the bill approved.

The "Big Bill" became Act 185. This Act does a lot of things including gives that DA/SSA rate increases. The Division is working with the Business Office on how to apply these increases. More information will out soon.

Collective Bargaining Agreement Minimum Rate Increases: Individual Employer/Independent Direct Support Workers minimum wage increases to \$13.44/hour and \$215.04/day starting July 3, 2022. Legislature gave additional money to make sure that individuals have access to the same level of services if their budgets were built on wages less than this amount.

New State Program Standing Committee members were announced: Barbara Lee, Priscilla Connelly, Chad Cleverly and Lehana Guyette have joined the Committee. Susan Y was re-appointed. Welcome Barbara, Priscilla, Chad, and Lehana! Thank you, Susan, for your continuing to be a part of the Committee!

Update on DDS Crisis Capacity Expansion: The State is creating a new program called Intensive Transition Supports (ITS). We are opening 4 beds total but starting with 2 at Lamoille County Mental Health. This support will help people who are in crisis. ITS and VCIN will work together to help people. The plan is for this to start later this summer.

COVID Unpaid Family Stipends:

We talked about the unpaid family caregiver payments. caregivers. This is still available and has continued through 6/30/2022. The State will get updated information on the website.

New Business

The Federal Government has given more time to use the FMAP money. The new date to use the money by is March 31, 2025. The Committee said the State has not done a good job telling people how to apply for funding and is looking for a report on what the money will be used for. They have asked to have a report on this at a future meeting—hopefully in July.

Other updates

GMSA, the DD Council, VCP and Laura Siegel gave updates.

The meeting ended. Then, the Committee met in Executive Session.