

# DS State Program Standing Committee (SPSC)

May 19, 2022

## Meeting Held Virtually on Microsoft Teams

### Attendees

**Committee Members:** Max Barrows, Dawn Danner, Bethany Drum, Ed Place, Karen Price, Barb Prine, Cheryl Thrall, Lyn Ujlaky, Connie Woodberry and Susan Yuan

**Guests:** Julie Cunningham, Joshua Kussius, Kalobe Brown, Tonya Mason, Hannah - Heartbeet, Collette Wilson, Jessica Stehle, Jen Hayes, Hasan, Karen Topper, Jess Moore, Barbara Lee, Kara Artus

**State Employees:** Jennifer Garabedian, Hilary Conant, Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Hilary Conant, Lisa Parro, Jessica Bernard, Jessica Nadeau and Judy Spittle

### Roll Call and Review Agenda

A roll call was completed, and the meeting agenda was reviewed.

### Meeting Minutes, SPSC Member Check-In

The SPSC meeting minutes from the April 2022, meeting was reviewed. Max asked for more clarification on the Workforce topic related to the 71%. The Committee did not recall what this meant either. It was determined that this would be looked into, and further information would be indicated and noted on these minutes before they could be approved at June's meeting.

*Changes: Max requested for my clarity on the 71% workforce statement written in April's minutes. After looking into this, we found that it was a 31% staff turnover rate from Fiscal year 2021 from the Working "draft" Workforce Recruitment Retention Strategic Plan.*

*A request was made to include Kirsten Murphy's comments related to the encounter data discussion that Encounter Data should be made public in the future.*

*The requested changes will be made included in April meeting minutes and then brought back to next meeting (June 16<sup>th</sup>) to approve.*

### Families First Presentation

Julie Cunningham began by acknowledging Anne Bakeman who recently passed away and acknowledged her contributions.

Julie provided a presentation of the issues that youth with disabilities in foster care are dealing with. Many of the youth are being sent out of State to residential programs that lose touch with their communities. When they turn 18, they return to Vermont on the adult DS waiver and must build up their lives and have experienced the trauma of institutionalized care.

Many of the youth in this situation have had many foster care placements and multiple stays in the residential schools. It is very difficult to trust systems and professionals when you have moved so many times.

Banyhan House – Families First

Teenagers 15-18 stay 6 months, working on what their interests are, jobs etc., launch these youths into the community with stability

We need help from the SPSC. Because of new federal requirements that DCF must do to prevent residential care, it would be helpful to have training resources on

1. person centered planning process and self-advocacy skill building  
Children at the table  
Trainings for GALs
2. Understanding the history of institutionalized for children and youth with disabilities

Barb asked that the Power Point presentation be emailed to the group.

K Topper – how can you do the person-centered planning without the person being there?

Joshua Kussius, Clinical Director at Families First and Kalobe Brown, self-advocate shared his experience living in a foster care environment.

Kalobe Brown went into custody at 8 years old and short stints in foster homes, landed in residential institutionalized setting.

Kalobe had Issues with anger, physical and mentally abused at the facility in Massachusetts. He now lives in a home care provider and has his own space in Vermont. He has gone thru HireAbility and has a job. He has a lot of talents. Kalobe has done well in the Community. He has developed skills and helped put on the training for Banyan House opening.

C Thrall thanked Kalobe for sharing his experience.

Hilary Conant asked Kalobe what advice he may have for us when working with others that might be going thru the same experience. Get to know the person, eye to eye. Be friendly and calm. With this legislation how can this be an opportunity for DDSD to prevent out of state residential placement/institutionalization for children in custody.

Kirsten—Vermont has just recently created an Office of the Child Advocate and that person should be brought up to speed immediately.

Topper – to get involved with other advocacy groups

Karen Prine – get a Team together with Marshall Paul – head of Public Defenders.

Cheryl Thrall made a motion to a formal recommendation for a work group be established/conveyed (GMSA will work with FF), the motion was seconded and passed.

For the Julie’s full presentation, see the below link.

<I:\DDSD\DS State Program Standing Committee\Agenda Minutes 2022\Families First 5-19-2022 SPSC.pdf>

DDSD Director Updates

Bill Ashe will be presenting at next month’s meeting. There is also re-designation for HCRS.

The new Appointments for committee members are with the Governor’s office. Judy/Lisa are meeting with the Governor’s staff next week to hopefully resolve and finalize all of this.

There will be a July meeting, but August meeting will be cancelled for the summer break.

Legislative Update—

Bill H720 status—the final bill has not been sent to the Governor yet. We are waiting to be sure that it is signed into law. There were several changes made throughout the rule making process, but final edits to the bill include:

1. The requirement for annual onsite quality reviews was taken out and replaced with a requirement for two reports to be submitted about the quality review process. One to be submitted in November of 2022 and the other in January 2023.
2. A Residential Developer Limited Services position for DDSD
3. Project Pilot grants aimed for increasing residential capacity

In the Budget Appropriation (or “Big Bill”), Legislature approved an 8% increase in Provider Rates. Waiting for final bill to be sent to the Governor for signature or veto.

Premium Pay and Recruitment Grant

1. Agencies that apply will receive dollars that can be used for premium/retention pay. This

grant allows for agencies to provide one-time bonuses to staff who meet specific eligibility criteria.

2. Retention Bonuses for Independent Direct Support Works through the Collective Bargaining Agreement. ARIS will send independent employers and their eligible Independent Direct Support Workers the necessary forms to complete to access this opportunity when it becomes available.

Workforce Crisis—

Barb Prine mentioned the ongoing workforce crisis issue and suggested this be a standing agenda item or holding space to discuss.

Payment Reform Update – Encounter Data

See Hilary Conant’s presentation below.

<I:\DDSD\DS State Program Standing Committee\Agenda Minutes 2022\Agendas\Encounter Data Report Process for SPSC.pdf>

Conversation regarding this presentation included a reminder that the 2014 State Auditor’s report indicated that there should be a more standardized process for accounting for services provided,

DDSD is in the early stages of encounter data collection. Reporting of individual services (for example, information related to one specific individual’s service delivery) is not something DDSD would report out on. DDSD is not the only source of that information. Agencies are submitting the data into the MMIS and should be able to report out that level of information using their own systems. DDSD does not have a method for comparing services authorized versus services provided at this time.

As the Division develops a new database, DDSD will look for stakeholder input on data collection and need at the aggregate level. Individual questions about services authorized and provided will continue to be answered at the agency level.

Max asked, “if the encounter data shows that I did not receive my services, then where did the money for those services go?”

Jess answered: We currently are working with a different payment model. COVID flexibilities allow agencies to bill an entire budget as long as 6 units of service have been provided. DDSD has been working with agencies to gather information about how additional funds have been used through this period. Each agency was allowed to focus on the needs of the people in their area and make those determinations.

Comment was made that there should be more accountability from the State in regard to how the money was spent.

Kara Artus reminded folks that for Transition 2 (folks who self and family manage), there is a reconciliation process that happens at the end of the year and any funds that are not spent, goes right back to the State/CMS.

## New Business

### In-Person Meetings:

Bethany Drum – when are we going to meet in person again? Barb Prine suggestion every other month in person and then remote: Max: It would be important for health and safety for everyone to be vaccinated and wear masks.

Barbara Lee: Consider offering a hybrid model – in person and have ZOOM options

Previously, meetings were held in Sally Fox conference rooms in Waterbury

Find out restrictions on WSOC meeting space. Judy and Jennifer will do this and bring back to June's meeting.

Because of the burden on the system, we are not engaging in the National Core Indicators (NCI) for 2022-2023. Understandable, but if we are not doing the NCI, is there a less burdensome survey to measure quality? How has COVID impacted? Qualitative vs. quantitative? What are we doing if we are not doing the NCI?

National Core Indicators —based on the workforce crisis and continued public health related concerns, we opted to not engage in the NCI. We wanted folks to focus on other initiatives. Does not mean we won't go back to the NCI. This is not the only way we can assess quality; we want to continue to discuss ways we can measure quality with our stakeholders

Max— some questions and want this put on in June agenda

- How long has NCI been put on hold?
- Does the State hire a team of people to do interviews?
- Can DDSD explain system burden more?

Jennifer will ask June Bascom to come and talk about the NCI Survey, the decision and DDSD's next steps for stakeholder engagement at our June's meeting

### Other updates

GMSA

Voices for Choices conference virtually in September and in person, April 23 and 24<sup>th</sup> in 2023.

I know it has already been mentioned but I want to add that GMSA mourns the loss of Anne Bakeman. She always sought out the voices of people who get services and made sure people listened. She has been a champion of self-advocacy, self-determination and making sure people who use Alternative ways to communicate are included. We appreciated having this powerful parent as our ally. She was an excellent role model of how to balance what is important to a person from their perspective with what is important for a person from the perspective of other people in their life.

Max did a Keynote to SANYS (State Self-Advocacy Association of New York State), their statewide self-advocacy organization.

DD Council

The **Vermont Leadership Series** has been moved from the summer to the fall/winter. The dates are: Weekend #1, Oct. 29-30; Weekend #2, Dec. 3-4; and Weekend #3, Jan. 7-8. See <https://ddc.vermont.gov/plan-and-projects/leadership-series> for more information.

**Employment for All!** Is an on-line course over the summer from mid-July to mid-September. It ends with an in-person workshop on Sept. 24, 2022, in Burlington. The course focuses on Customized Employment and Micro-Enterprise. GREAT option for a parent who has been struggling to come up with an employment option for their family member with a disability. See: <https://ddc.vermont.gov/employment> for more information and registration. Providers are also welcome.

**SDM Strong!** Is a weekend training on July 30-31 for transition-age individuals and their support team (parents, providers) to learn about alternatives to guardianship and supported decision making. Spaces are limited. See <https://www.vermontfamilynetwork.org/event/sdm-strong-a-supported-decision-making-training/> for more information.

All people, given the right support, can build meaningful and financially rewarding careers. The question is not *if* work is possible (it is!) but rather *what* work is the best fit for that person.

**Customized employment** is a strategy designed to identify and support someone – including someone with higher support needs – in a work opportunity that matches the individual’s strengths and interest to the employer’s need. A customized employment opportunity may not follow a traditional job description. It may even involve creating one’s own business. In fact, individuals with disabilities and their families are increasingly turning to entrepreneurship as a career strategy.

Dawn Danner – DS Directors in person retreat – Jessica and Jennifer, Hilary attended. It went well.

## **Wrap up**

The meeting adjourned.