

DS State Program Standing Committee (SPSC)

June 18, 2020

Skype Meeting

Attendees

Committee Members: Anne Bakeman, Susan Yuan, Lyn Ujlaky, David Ballou, Max Barrows, Bethany Drum, Joy Redington, Ed Place, Barb Prine, Connie Woodberry

Guests: (Not all guests participating on the conference call were identified) Lynne Cleveland Vitzthum, Lee Reilly, Karen Price, Josh Bertini, Kara Artus, Jess Moore, Karen Topper

State Employees: Kirsten Murphy, Susan Aranoff, Selina Hickman, Lisa Parro, June Bascom

Review Agenda and Minutes

A roll call was completed. The DS State Program Standing Committee (SPSC) meeting minutes from the May 21, 2020 meeting were reviewed. The following edits were requested:

Page 3, first paragraph:

The DDS Quality Management Team gave an overview of the Agency Designation Report Counseling Service of Addison County (CSAC), DDS Specific Draft to State Program Standing Committee.

Page 3, paragraph 4:

Administrative Rule 4.9 – Consumer Support, Treatment, and Records

The Individual Support Agreement (ISA) is acceptable; there is a big improvement since last the designation review. The agency needs to do some additional work on the timeliness and quality of the ISA in order to be compliant with all the standards and guidelines. There were issues discovered with the timeliness and completeness of Housing Safety and Accessibility Inspections for a number of new shared living home. Some of this may be due to the transition to a new database for housing inspections, with changes in the process, and gaps in agency resources to timely schedule the housing inspections, as needed. The agency has responded well to the feedback they have been given, and they have reached out requesting technical assistance.

Bethany made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as edited, Rachel seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

SPSC Member and Other Updates/Check-ins

Joy thanked everyone for the kind get well wishes and is glad to be back.

The DD Council has some unspent funds due to COVID. They will use these funds to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) for individuals who need it. They are asking self-advocates to do a brief survey monkey about any PPE needs (ex: face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer) <https://ddc.vermont.gov/news/do-you-have-face-masks-gloves-and-hand-sanitizer>

There are a lot of questions about benefits, such as how unemployment affects Medicaid, and the reporting of stimulus checks. VT Legal Aid has a really good website that addresses a lot of the benefit questions, and Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA) is working to make this information accessible. If anyone has questions, they may call VT Legal Aid. <https://vtlawhelp.org/coronavirus-updates>

Just this week a document was sent with guidance about the ability to have someone support you if you go into the hospital. All 16 hospitals in the State have the policy in place. People should know, and be confident, that someone can be with them. GMSA has created a very good video about this.

<http://www.gmsavt.org/3665-2>

COVID-19 Update, Selina Hickman

While reopening efforts continue, the Governor has extended the State of Emergency until July 15th. Limited one-on-one activities in the community can start again. Previously a person-centered employment support assessment tool was created, and a new similar tool, a community activity assessment tool, has been created. This tool is to assist agencies about the questions to address when people are returning to community activities.

Yesterday, the Governor announced several measures to gradually ease restrictions on Vermonters in long-term care facilities, hospitals and those over the age of 65, up to 2 visitors per day with visits happening outside and within the rules. Guidance has been shared about senior centers reopening and there is technical assistance available.

The Office of Public Guardian has very slowly started some face-to-face guardianship home visits and evaluations. They are addressing all the risks involved. More information about this may be available at the next SPSC meeting.

People receiving services, not just providers, need to have PPE. DAIL has started to work through the State Emergency Operations to find out if anything can be offered. At this time, there are some masks available.

There has been flexibility in service delivery, allowing people to do things differently than they would normally do, until the end of June. DAIL is reviewing everything to determine what may be rolled over into July. It is believed a majority of the items will be able to be rolled into July; however, unless new money becomes available, some things such as stipends won't be able to be paid. DAIL is closely watching the funding by legislature.

Max inquired about how many people were working pre-COVID and how many people are working now or working less hours now. A lot of self-advocates have been talking about going back to work; however, they have not figured out how to do so and there is no follow-up, and not much communication, to assist them in doing this. It is felt there should be some type of accountability about how the state is helping people to get back to work, if they want to get back to work, information available, and a plan in place.

Jennie Masterson has been having regular Employment Coordinator updates throughout COVID. Most of the Employment Coordinators are doing what they can, but some may have restrictions within their agencies as far as essential services. Barb stated there was a Zoom meeting about returning to work, with advocacy tips for self-advocates who want to get return to work and don't feel their team is doing what they need to do. Barb stated it was reported that there were 1400 to 1600 people, with ID/DD, receiving supported employment before COVID.

There is some data pre-COVID; however, DAIL does not have complete data related to employment. Lynn Cleveland Vitzthum and June Bascom are working to obtain more information. They are discussing the possibility of gathering representatives for a workgroup from the DD Council, DS Directors, GMSA, and Jennie Masterson to look at the information about what happened with COVID, where things were previously and where they are now. It is very complicated as there is not a statewide database, agencies have to manually collect this information, there are different un-expected circumstances, and the information provided needs to be useful once it is received.

The designated agencies are having person-centered conversations with people who want to return to work, and some have been returning to work. In some situations though, things change; such as with Howard Center and CCS, there were some people who were going to return to work but then there was the outbreak in Winooski/Burlington area so for safety reasons this did not happen.

It was noted that while there is a pool of people who have been out of work due to COVID, there is also some people who are waiting to get hired and are in a holding pattern due to the virus.

Self-advocates are reporting that case managers are very seldom talking with them. Selina has raised this issue again with the DS Directors during their weekly check-in on Monday, and reiterated the expectation of staff being pro-actively meeting people's needs. If anyone hears about a specific situation that is not getting anywhere, call DDSD.

System of Care (SOC) Extension

The System of Care (SOC) plan describes the services for people with disabilities and their families. The current System of Care (SOC) plan is for Fiscal Year 2018 to Fiscal Year 2020. The Developmental Services Division was planning to request an extension to the plan due to the hard work that will be necessary for DS payment reform. Now the uncertainty of COVID has pushed the timelines even more. DAIL would like to request a 1-year extension which will hopefully provide time for meaningful engagement and local SOC plans, and give time for comments, questions and concerns. DAIL has drafted a timeline for the SOC extension, which will be shared with the Committee.

Since it takes a while for feedback and conversations about payment reform, and parts of the SOC changes need to go through Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR), the question was raised to DAIL as to why they are only requesting a 1 year extension. In the past, DAIL has only asked for 1-year extensions and they can do another 1-year extension if needed; but it is something they will look at further.

It was noted that it appears DAIL has already made the decision to request the extension; if they want to push it out another year, it is requested that they bring this to the committee to discuss first, before a decision is made.

It is felt there continues to be a disconnect between providers, the State, and self-advocates. It seems that providers meet with the State and after things are worked out, then input is obtained from self-advocates. DAIL was asked to consider including individuals with disabilities when they are trying to work things out.

DDSD Updates – Selina Hickman

Conflict Free Case Management

In February, DAIL talked about their commitment to move forward with the Choice Model for conflict free case management (COI), and the next few steps were identified. The Choice Model is when a person can choose to keep their current case management who works for an agency or may choose to have case management that does not work for the agency. The work on COI has been paused due to the pandemic but is now continuing to move forward. DAIL is working on a draft of what the Choice Model could look like, based on feedback from stakeholder engagement, and will send this to the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) free technical assistance to determine if Vermont is on the right track. This assistance will let Vermont know if CMS will approve this model before a lot of work is put into it and it goes to legislature.

The draft of the roles and responsibilities is being shared with CMS technical support in July with the hope that this will help to ensure compliance with CMS expectations. It will be brought to stakeholders in late summer/early fall; based on feedback from stakeholders, the model will be

prepared for the next legislative session for review; and if the legislature approves it, the Choice Model will be implemented July 2022.

It was noted that to implement the timeline there are multiple pieces of compliance that needs to be completed, such as who does the evaluation needs to be decided before who does the case management. It was suggested to DAIL to have multiple phases to the timeline, not just one timeline.

Payment Reform

Currently the Payment Reform workgroups are paused until workgroup participants have the bandwidth to restart them. Clare McFadden will be asked to attend the next SPSC to give a full description of the activities and products of DS Payment reform and provide information as to where and when this will start again.

GMSA, DS Directors, VCP, DD Council, SPSC Member Updates

Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA)

GMSA is continuing to have national and local zoom calls on COVID-19. The main focus recently has been on racism and police violence. GMSA has put out a statement on this. A plain language booklet has also been put together:

<http://www.gmsavt.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Green-Mountain-Self-Advocates-Speaks-Out-Against-Police-Brutality-6.2.2020.pdf>

GMSA has updated their plain language booklet on bringing a supporter with you into the hospital and recorded a video letting everyone know that the office on Civil Rights issued guidance to all hospitals that they have to allow a person with a disability to bring a supporter with them into the hospital. Yesterday, Secretary Smith addressed this with the State.

Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council)

Remember to do share the survey for personal protective equipment as explained above.

Bethany motion to adjourn meeting; joy seconded. Meeting adjourned 11:04