

DS State Program Standing Committee (SPSC)

November 19, 2020

Microsoft Teams

Attendees

Committee Members: Bethany Drum, Ed Place, Rachel Colby, Dave Ballou, Max Barrows, Susan Yuan, Lyn Ujlaky, Connie Woodberry, Anne Bakeman, Barb Prine

Guests: (List of guests announced; may be others)

Sue Aichroth, Judy Cookson, Michelle Paya, Joe Greenwald, Karen Price, Karen Ciechanowicz, Michelle Kersten, Beth Sightler, Lily Johnston, Barbara Lee, Jason Sibley, Lee Reilly, Leigh Studley, Zoltan Sachs, Brent Hewey, Lynn Cleveland Vitzthum, Dawn Danner, Leigh Dudley, Jennifer Wolcott, Julie Martin, Mike Reilly, Emily, Marie, Nicole Leblanc, Jessica Steele, Tonya Mason, Mike Reilly

State Employees: Selina Hickman, Lisa Parro, Kirsten Murphy, Jessica Bernard, Susan Aranoff, Ellen Booth, June Bascom, Clare McFadden, Chris O'Neill, Joy Barrett

Roll Call, Review of Agenda and Meeting Minutes

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

The meeting minutes for the October 15, 2020 DS SPSC meeting were reviewed. Rachel made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as written, and Dave seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved as written.

Champlain Community Services (CCS) Re-Designation

In March 2020, the DAIL Quality Management Unit began the Quality Service and Re-Designation reviews of Champlain Community Services (CCS); however, due to the Governor's Stay Safe, Stay Home order, the Quality Service Review was not completed until later in the summer and the agency received the quality review report in October.

The DAIL Quality Management staff gave an overview of the information in the Agency Designation Report for Champlain Community Services, Inc. draft report dated November 12,

2020. There are no areas of concern in the review; all areas of corporation status are in good order, updated, and monitored; staff morale is usually very good; services and supports are person-centered and individualized; and all board members are individuals receiving services or family members of people receiving services. There were minor deficiencies in the individual service records, training and onboarding with electronic health records, but the agency has been responsive to the feedback from DAIL. Specialized Service Agencies (SSAs) are not required to provide comprehensive services, however, CCS does well with this and collaborates with the local DA related to crisis and clinical supports.

Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA) reported that CCS works with 5 high schools in the Bridging Program and they prioritize self-advocacy. GMSA is able to work with the individuals in the program. CCS also supports and helps fund individuals to attend conferences, listens to GMSA about services, and they advocate and support events, initiatives, and legislation.

CCS Executive Director, Elizabeth Sightler, spoke about CCS and its programs and services. Here is some of the information:

CCS started working with the special educators in 5 schools to create the Bridge Program. The program has a strong collaboration and works with students, with varying disabilities, on transition goals: life outside living with parents, empowerment, community connections. CCS stays in contact with the individuals once they leave the program and is hoping to create an alumni program.

CCS purchased computers for all of their staff and hired an IT specialist. Since last year CCS has had 100% turnover of their Service Coordinators but are now fully staffed with Service Coordinators again. It is important for CCS to have the people that work for them feel valued and appreciated.

They are working to manage anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic; keeping communication going, getting information out to individuals, making individuals feel comfortable, and making sure individuals are getting what they need while keeping everyone safe.

Seven medical students reviewed redacted CCS' Individual Support Agreement (ISA) plans and cataloged all the ISA goals to help CCS obtain information about how to support individuals. A survey was completed with primary care providers to obtain information about the knowledge of primary care providers and to obtain information about the issues of individuals with developmental services they serve. CCS' goal is to identify the successes and best practices.

CCS is one of the 50 best places to work in Vermont, continues to be the highest supported employment program in the state, was Shortlisted for the Zero Project Award in Austria (did not win, but was proud to be in the running, <https://zeroproject.org/about-us/zero-project-awards-info/>), as well as earning other awards and recognitions.

Some meeting attendees praised CCS for being a place where people cared about each other, has tremendous leadership, is upbeat and has informative updates on their website available to everyone, and is leading the way for people during the pandemic.

The SPSC members will vote about their designation recommendation for the DAIL Commissioner after the meeting has ended.

DS Payment Reform – Clare McFadden

The Encounter Data Team continues to work on the encounter data. There are a lot of moving parts and some issues to resolve in order to provide clear guidance to the agencies for the encounter data they report. The team is working with the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) to get the issues resolved. Yesterday there was an increase in the numbers of people affected in the pandemic, so the date by which agencies are to report encounter data was pushed back to March 1, 2021 in order to give the agencies more time to get their system set up.

DAIL received seven (7) proposals for an organization to conduct the new Needs Assessment, the Supports Intensity Scale. 1 vendor was in Vermont, the others were out of state vendors. There is an internal team that has reviewed the proposals and decided to offer the opportunity to negotiate a contract with one of the bidders. A contract with the vendor has to be signed and in place before DAIL can announce the chosen vendor.

Once the State has a vendor, they will definitely be providing background information to them about Vermont's system and could invite them to attend a SPSC meeting to provide information about their company and obtain feedback about what is important for Vermont. It was recommended to have Kim Allshouse, a knowledgeable assessor with New Americans, to also work with the new vendor to help them get an understanding of people Vermont from diverse cultural and experiential backgrounds. Clare agreed to follow up on these suggestions.

The assessments will not be started until at least 7/1/21. There are a number of things that need to be done before the Needs Assessment process begins. DAIL will work with the stakeholders to obtain information and work out the details about how the contractor will intersect with the providers and how information will flow between the state, contractor and agencies. Webinars, training, or some type of material and training about the roles of the people participating in the assessment will need to be done. The use of the assessment information to create an individual's plan and budget is not in the near future, but will happen further down the road in the development of a payment model. The Needs Assessment will help design the payment model. The design of the payment model is a future task and stakeholders will have an opportunity to be involved in that.

All the DS Payment Reform workgroups were paused in the spring due to the pandemic, and only the Encounter Workgroup has reconvened. DAIL will be reaching out to individuals who were on the DS Payment Advisory workgroup to set up a meeting in December. This meeting will update

everyone on the status of DS Payment Reform work. With Clare's new position in DAIL, it is expected that the timeliness of information will flow much better.

Last year the company who owns the tool did a presentation about the assessment and the process of how assessment are done. Clare can set up something for the SPSC.

COVID Survey Update – June Bascom

At the last SPSC meeting June obtained feedback from the meeting attendees on the draft of the COVID survey tool. A couple of changes were made to the survey and a link to the survey was sent out to the designated agencies to be forwarded. The DD Council, GMSA, and some agencies have volunteered to help people fill out the survey. The information and link are also posted on the DAIL website, along with a copy of the survey that can be printed.

(<https://dail.vermont.gov/dail-covid10-survey>)

Intensive Transition Support – Selina Hickman

The home and community-based services system has challenges in meeting the crisis needs of individuals with complex, co-occurring disorders and that present with intensive behaviors and risk of harm to self or others. The primary challenge is to meet the transition needs of individuals while community providers arrange for appropriate long-term supports in the community after hospitalization or other similar crisis episodes.

Selina reviewed a draft of DAIL's Intensive Transition Supports request for proposal to create statewide capacity to deliver intensive transition supports for Vermonters with complex needs and who present with intensive challenges. Feedback on this draft is due by next Tuesday.

The work outlined in this request for proposal (RFP) is outside the scope of the work in the current Vermont Crisis Intervention Network (VCIN) agreement.

VT System of Care: Special Initiatives – Amy Roth

Due to time limitations, this agenda item has been moved to the December SPSC meeting.

DDSD Updates – Selina Hickman

Jessica Bernard, new DAIL Senior Auditor and Program Consultant, was introduced to the meeting attendees. Jessica will be continuing the work that Jennifer Perkins was doing.

Conflict of Interest in Case Management (COI)

The new agreement for technical assistance for conflict of interest in case management has been signed; next week DAIL will start the next round of technical assistance and continue to move forward.

COVID 19

DAIL is working with the agencies in situations where there is a positive test for COVID-19 or exposure to the virus that involves either people receiving services or staff members. The Vermont Department of Health (VDH) has been an incredible partner leading the way of communications, contact tracing, testing, best ways to stay safe, how best to quarantine, and individual situations of those who are exposed.

Last week the Governor issued guidance about ceasing to socialize in multi-household groups, which has created a lot of questions for people receiving DS services. The Governor's order does not require the shutdown of supports as was done in March, rather, it is a new urgency to do more than what has been done by looking at each individual, supports an individual is receiving, and assessing the area where risks and the level of virus in the area may have changed.

The difficulty of care stipend continues to be available for unpaid family caregivers; however, there is a change in the source of funding in each quarter. DAIL just received \$700,000 for family care stipends, which will be distributed based on a review of eligibility for individuals who are living with their families and who meet all necessary eligibility criteria.

Temporary COVID-19 payment model reinstated

Effective November 1st, DDSD has returned to its temporary payment model that changes how DAs and SSAs are reimbursed for delivering developmental disabilities services. This change is due to the increased rates of COVID-19 and the ending of alternative funding available through the Coronavirus Relief Funds. Public notice about this change can be found here:

<https://humanservices.vermont.gov/sites/ahsnew/files/documents/MedicaidPolicy/GCRProposedPolicies/20-115-Proposed-GCR-DDS-PMPM-restart.pdf>

Updates

Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA)

The Voices and Choices Conference is being held the week after Thanksgiving. You do not need to register and there is no fee. Information for the conference can be found on the GMSA website: <http://www.gmsavt.org/2020-voices-and-choices-conference/>

The Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN) presented Max with the self-advocacy movement annual service award.

In the past 3 months, GMSA has done 4 national presentations on the intersection of racism and ableism.

Max was asked by Jennifer Johnson, (Deputy Commissioner of the Administration on Disabilities and Director of the Office of Disability Service Innovations at [the Administration for Community](#)

Living (ACL), to present at the HCBS conference with her. They will be joined by experts from Harvard Medical School and the University of Cincinnati Medical School to talk about health disparities for people with disabilities.

DD Council

White-Paper on Employment: The Council is working alongside the Public Assets Institute, the Vermont Center for Independent Living, and several other organizations to share the story of employment, gaps in the workforce, and how hiring people with disabilities strengthens communities.

The DD Council worked with the hospital organization to revise the minimal standards to the visitor policies and procedures for the exemption to the protocol for individuals with disabilities who need someone with them for an accommodation. An appreciation to Agency of Human Services (AHS) Secretary Smith for addressing this during his press conference.