

State Program Standing Committee (SPSC)

March 18, 2021

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees

Committee Members: David Ballou, Susan Yuan, Lyn Ujlaky, Connie Woodberry, Max Barrows, Anne Bakeman, Barb Prine

Guests: Ann Shumacher (HC), Cheryl Thrall, Jess Moore, Tonya Mason, Emra (Homebase), Taylor Morrow, Karen Price, Lynne Cleveland Vitzthum, Lee Reilly, Karen Topper, Bart Maier, Jen Hayes, Tanya Ides, Kathleen White

State Employees: Jennie Masterson, Kirsten Murphy, Monica White, Jessica Bernard, Selina Hickman, Chris O'Neill, June Bascom

Roll Call, Review of Agenda & SPSC Member Check-in

A roll call was completed, and the meeting agenda was reviewed. The SPSC meeting minutes from the January 21, 2021 meeting were reviewed. Anne made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as written; David seconded the motion and the motion to accept the meeting minutes was passed.

SPSC members gave updates, and appreciation was voiced in the ability, and flexibility, of individuals being able to schedule to have their vaccines.

Meet the Commissioner

Monica White, Interim DAIL Commissioner, introduced herself and spoke with the meeting attendees. Monica was the DAIL Director of Operations and a leader for the Department in directing response to COVID 19 prior to moving into the Commissioner's position.

DS Payment Reform Update

The DS Payment Reform work continues with the two main streams: Standardized assessment implementation, and providers submitting encounter data on services that are delivered.

Needs Assessment

The contract with a vendor to do the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS, the assessment tool) has just been sent to the vendor for signature. Once DAIL receives the signed contract, an announcement of the vendor can be announced, and the State can set up a meeting with the vendor to start planning. This spring the vendor will hire assessors and train them, will hold training sessions (probably by webinar), hold informational meetings to explain the new process and their role, where people can have the opportunity to ask questions. The anticipated start date to conduct assessments is July 1st. (Addendum: On March 29, 2021, DAIL signed a five-year contract with Public Consulting Group to perform the needs assessments for individuals with developmental disabilities using DDS Home and Community-based Services.)

Supplemental questions to the SIS will help identify when people have needs that are not specifically addressed or not addressed in detail on the SIS. These questions will be drafted and brought to the stakeholders for input.

Approximately 500 – 700 assessments will be completed between July 1st and February 2022. The assessments will be used to gather information about the services people are currently receiving. This information will help determine the services an individual may receive and will be used to help design the payment model. Until that time, the Equity process will continue to be used for any service changes.

Encounter Data

Some milestones for the Encounter Data have been met. The Encounter Data Submission Guidance that provides information about the services that are delivered to individuals has been updated and is posted on the DDSD website. A webinar to walk through the guidance took place on February 26th for the providers, and a copy of this webinar is posted on the DDSD website. <https://ddsd.vermont.gov/projects-initiatives/dds-payment-reform/dds-payment-reform-encounter-data-workgroup>

The codes on the ARIS time sheets and forms for payment have been updated. These changes are going into effect for the pay period of March 14th, with a grace period for people to get used to the new forms and adjustment to the codes. On March 5th, Jessica Bernard, DDSD, and Jennifer Garabedian, ARIS, provided a training to employers and employees on the new forms. A link to this training is posted on the ARIS website. <https://dvha.vermont.gov/initiatives/payment-reform/developmental-disabilities-services>

The designated agencies started reporting encounter data on March 1st. Agencies are in various stages of using this system. An expected final date for all agencies to report encounter data has not yet been set.

Statewide Advisory Workgroup

The DS Payment Reform Statewide Advisory Workgroup will be reconvening on April 9th. This workgroup will also be reviewing the additional questions for the SIS.

Lincoln Street, Inc Re-Designation

The review for re-designation of Lincoln Street, Inc. (LSI) was held in November. There were no areas of concern, all areas were met, which is consistent with their 2016 and 2018 reviews. LSI always tries to adjust their quality improvement as needed.

Some key things that were noted: LSI has had a significant expansion of their youth and young adult services; LSI has always discussed what people want with a group of families before spending funds on something; They have a good relationship with Springfield Hospital; They have moved to independent decision making; and They are always willing to accept areas the need to be addressed and make changes.

LSI has recently restarted some of their services. LSI has been short staffed through the pandemic and really thank the adaptability of the people they serve.

GMSA is impressed with LSI. They have a self-advocate meeting once a month, have self-advocates directly involved in training new staff, and they do an excellent job to support self-advocates in the leadership series. GMSA would like to see more self-advocates from that area at the weekly Zoom meeting; Cheryl will look into this.

DDSD Updates

United Counseling Service (UCS) Review

DAIL is in the process of gathering information for an Additional Agency Review, which is a hybrid between a quality review and a re-designation review, with United Counseling Service (UCS). This special review allows DDSD to be more targeted in its review than the Quality Services Review, and this must be authorized by the DAIL Commissioner. Megan Tierney-Ward, Deputy Commissioner, approved the review in the absence of a Commissioner (prior to Monica White's appointment). UCS has been proactive and transparent in its work with the Division and has reached out for assistance; working with UCS now can help prevent the potential of a provisional re-designation later.

DDSD has met with the DS Director, Dawn Danner, to discuss the areas of concern. One of the biggest issues is the difficulty UCS is having with recruiting and retaining staff, creating a concern that services are not being delivered as they should be. Some of this may be due to the compensation and staff burn-out; however, it could also be linked to organizational structure.

The review will include focus groups with individuals receiving services, family and guardians, service coordinators, service providers, the leadership team, the quality team, and will meet individually with the Executive Council. If someone is not comfortable in a group setting, they may reach out to DAIL staff (Jennie Masterson, Chris O'Neill, Jeff Nunemaker), and the opportunity to speak with someone without their home care provider will be available. After these meetings, DDSD will meet with the DS Director and Executive Director. A notice about the

review was sent to the DS Director and the Executive Director, and the review will begin next week on the 24th. DDSD will send the DS SPSC a copy of the letter.

Intensive Transition Supports

A Request for Proposal (RFP) has been posted for Intensive Transition Supports. The Intensive Transition Supports Initiative is to provide time-limited supports for recipients of DD Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) who are experiencing a crisis, and whose current needs exceed other available clinical and crisis supports in the DD services system. This is additional expertise, outside of a hospital setting for people in crisis. There has been a lot of interest in this around the State. The RFP will be posted this week and the link will be shared.

DDSD Town Hall

The DDSD Town Hall is next week, 3/23/21 at 1:00, and will focus on vaccines and information on masks. GMSA reviewed the information to ensure it was accessible. The information about the Town Hall will be sent out again.

Conflict of Interest in Case Management

After about 6 months of stakeholder involvement in 2019, it was determined that most Vermonters would like to have a Choice Model to address the Conflict of Interest in Case Management. The Choice Model would allow individuals eligible for DS services to choose the type of case management they would like: a case manager through the DA/SSA or a case manager through someone who is independent of the agency. Before Vermont can proceed with this model, it needs to be accepted by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

DAIL escalated the need for additional discussion with CMS on the Conflict of Interest in Case Management and about 2 weeks ago, had a meeting with CMS representatives from across different groups. There is another meeting scheduled with CMS at the end of the day on Friday for a deeper discussion about the Choice Model.

If peer navigation is part of the Choice Model:

- Susan has some information she can share and will assist as much as she can.
- DD Council funds a Leadership program and they are working on an advanced level. The DD Council has been in conversations with GMSA about other models in which to train peers to work with peers. There is also a challenge grant, but this needs State match.
- GMSA has been talking with some people doing a training in Nebraska with family members and self-advocates about person centered planning; they would like this training brought to Vermont. Teaching self-advocates about peer training and how to talk with people about person center planning.

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Funding

Some HCBS funding is coming to the State that has not been available before, 1.9 Trillion dollars in COVID relief funds – a 10% match increase so State funding will be able to go further, effective April 1, 2021 and ends March 2022. (The funding does not have to be spent by March 2022.) This information is evolving, and CMS is developing the guidance about the rules, and limitations,

about using the funding. The State legislature will determine how these funds will be distributed; they are already considering an increase rate to the DA/SSA.

Meeting attendees felt there should be stakeholder input about the funding. While everyone is able to contact legislature to provide input on ideas for the funds, it was felt that it would be important for DAIL to have a meeting with stakeholders as DAIL knows the rules for the funding, and it would allow collaboration about DAIL priorities in the System of Care (SOC) plan. Selina will pass this onto the DAIL Management Team.

Self Neglect Working Group

According to H.611, An act relating to the Older Vermonters Act, a Self-Neglect Working Group is being created. The purpose of the Group is to “provide recommendations regarding adults who, due to physical or mental impairment or diminished capacity, are unable to perform essential self-care tasks.” One of the members of this Working Group is a ‘disclosed consumer’ to be appointed by the DS State Program Standing Committee (SPSC.) The individual may be a member of the SPSC, or it may be an individual who is not a member of the SPSC. (“Disclosed Consumer” means someone who is a consumer of services and has openly disclosed that to the group.)

The SPSC members have not been able to identify a nominee for this workgroup, therefore, DDSD asked the SPSC if they would give DDSD permission to send a notice to the DA/SSA Directors to see if an agency may help identify a nominee. And due to the limited timeframe to find a nominee, before the next SPSC, how the SPSC would like the decision of the nominee to be made. The SPSC give DDSD permission to send a notice to the DA/SSA Directors on behalf of the SPSC to help identify a nominee. Anne made a motion to have the SPSC Co-Chairs make the final decision about who to nominate to the Workgroup. Susan seconded the motion, and it was passed.

Updates

GMSA has created more than 13 simple language booklets about COVID-19, and they are celebrating one year of 3 weekly presentations, with presenters being people with intellectual disabilities. The number of attendees on the presentations have increased to about 130 attendees nationwide.

The DD Council is working with the Vermont Department of Health Equity Planning Team on vaccines for people with DD