

DS State Program Standing Committee (SPSC)

August 18, 2023

Meeting held virtually by ZOOMGov

Attendees

Committee Members: Barbara Lee, Bethany Drum, Ed Place, David Ballou, Barb Prine, Cheryl Thrall, Max Barrows, Collins Twing, and Dawn Danner

State Employees: Jennifer Garabedian, Hilary Conant, Bard Hill, Conor O’Dea, Dylan Frazer, Carolyn Bowen, Julie Abrahamson, and Judy Spittle

Guests: Michael Kasper, Judith Jackson, Chuck M, Collette Wilson, Marie Lallier, Jen Hayes

Roll Call and Review of Agenda and minutes –

The July minutes were reviewed and a motion to approve by Max Barrows and 2nd by Cheryl Thrall.

Barbara Lee thanked Dawn Danner for her time on the committee. Dawn is leaving UCS and today will be her last SPSC meeting.

Director’s Updates

UVS – has been re-designated

Act 186 awarded 3 grants in different areas of the state. The grants included models and options such as intentional communities, supportive housing, and a study on expanded use of “Smart Home” technology to support individuals and supplement the use of direct care. Julie Abrahamson will give a full report as things start to progress.

- Smart home Technology – Chittenden County
- Supportive housing – Orange County
- Intentional community - TBD

Clare McFadden, TII, Quality Team member, Ellen Booth and Deb Smith from the Specialist Team are working on updating Self and Family management guide. SPSC Committee would like to review the guide once done.

Conflict of Interest

Jennifer Garabedian with Dylan Frazer and Conor O’Dea from DVHA reviewed the

HCBS-COI Options

<https://vermonthcbs.org/hcbs-coi-options/>

The State of Vermont is seeking public feedback on these HCBS-COI options from August 11 to September 15, 2023.

There are different ways to get involved.

- Public webinar date – August 14, 2023
- Virtual Town Hall via ZOOM
- In-Person Town Hall Forums

Principles and Goals – developed with Advisory and Steering Committees, which include key stakeholders

5 different programs. Options being offered are specific to each program

Today, we are going to review the Developmental Services option

The State of Vermont would award up to 2 statewide contracts to deliver case management for the DDSD program. The Case management organization (s) would then apply through a state-run competitive process.

Current Designated Agencies (DAs) and Specialized Service Agencies (SSAs) would no longer deliver DS case management.

- These changes would allow DAs and SSAs to continue to provide direct services for people eligible for Developmental Services.
- There will be changes to case management services but very few changes to direct home and community-based services
- Case management providers would not be the same organizations as the providers delivering direct services, so there would not be any conflict of interest.
- People needing services would have a simple system to choose a case management provider and to access HCBS.
- One to two case management organizations for the entire state could help to make sure everyone gets the same high quality case management services
- Existing providers could think about ways to work together.

| PROS | CONS |
|---|--|
| No conflict of interest This would meet federal requirements | People will need to be supported to understand the changes in the system and the new roles and responsibilities of case managers and providers |
| An independent case manager would offer and support choices. They would help address problems/concerns with services and supports | Changes will be hard in case management. Big change in the current HCBS services delivery system for DS |

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|---|---|
| If two contracts are awarded, people will be able to choose from different case management organizations | Not many local Vermont organizations who may be ready and able to become a statewide case management provider |
| It would be easy for people to understand the simple system for choosing a case management provider and getting services | A process where providers apply to the state and compete for the contracts |
| Having only one or two case management organizations would offer more consistency and equity for people across the state | The state role will change to manage competitive contract activities and oversight of case management |
| Competitive contracts can help the state to make sure the case management providers do a good job | |
| Independent statewide case management provider(s) may be able to help with other system functions including training, data management and reporting | |

The below Functions Charts indicates the roles of the State, DA/SSA and the Contracted Case Management Entity with the six functions listed across the top. You can also review the chart here [Developmental Services – Vermont HCBS](#)

| Roles | Eligibility & Enrollment | Needs Assessment | Person-centered Planning | Referral & linking | Service/Resource Approval | Service Monitoring and ongoing Coordination |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| State | Approves people to get services | Keeps track of information about people's needs | Makes sure case managers are doing good person-centered training | Makes sure case managers are supporting access to services and choice | Approves service plans. State makes sure services are aligned with needs | Makes sure case managers are doing a good job |
| DA/SSA | Tell people where to go to apply for services | Share what they know about the person | DA/SSA can be included if person wants them to | DA/SSA's do some coordination | N/A | Document how services are helping people |
| Contracted case management Entity | Help people apply for services | Collect information on the person's needs | Help people make decision and goals | Help understand choices about providers and choices | Submit service plans to state for approval | Check in with person regularly |

Questions/Concerns from SPSC Committee

- will the agencies have a point person managing the staffing. There is a need to still have a service coordinator.
- concern about those who have a long-term relationship with providers. How will someone transition from their long-term relationships? To add an unbiased view.

Timeline of implementation

Corrective action plan with CMS is due by May 2025

<https://vermonthcbs.org/developmental-services/>

Other updates

GMSA – November – January – leadership with VFN and DD Council

VCP – template for residential requirements– sent plain language to GMSA. VCP will bring to SPSC to share once in plain language

Direct Support Professional Appreciation Day – Families First, Julie Cunningham is leading the charge in September

DDSD -- Jennie Masterson is retiring at the end of August. Jessica Nadeau will be moving into the Supported Employment position. DDSD is currently interviewing for the Quality Management Reviewer position