

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES  
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Developmental Disabilities Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

**LOCATION**

Governor's Council Conference Room  
550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1230  
Anchorage, Alaska  
Teleconference

**Meeting Date**

Wednesday, November 6, 2019  
1:00 p.m.

**Attendees:**

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus  
Corey Gilmore  
Art Delaune  
Maureen Harwood  
Margaret Evans  
Alex Gimarc  
Charlene Taufest  
Lyle Downing  
David Boswell  
Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich  
Grant Bradley  
Caitlin Rogers  
Karen Ward  
Deb Etheridge  
Oscar Cedano  
Alex Fogarty  
Rebecca Stapleford  
Kirsten Swann  
Genevieve Casey  
Kim Champney

**Staff:**

Kristin Vandagriff  
Anne Applegate

**Guests:**

Dr. Randall Zernzach  
Dr. Siv Fasci

Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

**Call to Order – 1:00 p.m.**  
**Roll Call – Quorum established**

### **WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR**

Corey Gilmore welcomed members to the meeting and shared that the committee is looking for a co-chair. If anyone is interested, they should contact Corey.

Alex Gimarc encouraged committee members to use people first language.

### **Introductions, Announcements, and Good News**

No introductions, announcements, or good news was shared.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

#### **Approval of the Agenda**

Margaret Evans **MOVED** to approve the agenda with an amendment to allow the guest speakers to present before reports, **SECONDED** by David Boswell. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED**.

#### **Approval of the Minutes from the Previous Meeting**

Charlene Tautfest **MOVED** to approve the minutes from the September 2019 meeting as presented, **SECONDED** by Margaret Evans. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED**.

#### **Correspondence**

Anne Applegate reported that the correspondence that was sent to Council members was the comments on the proposed waiver amendments to the day habilitation definition and service limits.

### **Autism Spectrum Disorders, Diagnosis, and I/DD Waivers**

Dr. Randy Zernzach and Dr. Siv Fasci joined the meeting. Dr. Randy Zernzach introduced himself as a developmental-behavioral pediatrician working at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, specifically with children and young adults. Dr. Siv Fasci introduced herself as a developmental-behavioral pediatrician working at Providence Medical Group who is evaluating children for neurodevelopmental

disabilities.

Dr. Zernzach stated that there is a qualifying diagnosis certification for the intellectual and developmental disabilities waiver. When a provider is asked to complete that form essentially affirming the existing diagnosis of autism, there is a requirement that the affirmation is done by a small number of specialists such as a clinical psychologist, a developmental-behavioral pediatrician, or a child psychologist. That process is causing a bottleneck because not all children with autism can access one of these specialized providers, which results in delays in enrollment for receiving waiver services. It is also notably different for rural and remote clients. Dr. Fasci stated that she was under the impression that there was an exception made for nurse practitioners that were trained in the evaluation and pediatric neurologists that are fellowship trained and have a specialty in neurodevelopmental diagnosis could affirm diagnoses.

Caitlin Rogers clarified that the Qualifying Diagnostic Certificate (QDC), which is the annual requirement of the level of care packet, can be signed by an advanced nurse practitioner, a nurse practitioner, a school psychologist, and a wide variety of professionals. She noted that the initial qualifying diagnosis requires a specific level of professional to do those diagnostic evaluations. Caitlin further qualified that when an individual is enrolled in a waiver, they have met the requirements around a qualifying diagnosis, and there is not a requirement for another comprehensive evaluation documenting the diagnosis.

## **REPORTS Q&A**

### **DD Collaborative Update**

Kim Champney reported that there is a new opportunity that is happening monthly, Empower Hour, which is an evening one-hour Zoom call for people with disabilities to have a peer support networking opportunity. Last month there were 17 who called in for a discussion on relationships led by Corey Gilmore. Next Thursday, the discussion is on embarrassing disability moments and how to manage them led by Maggie Winston. Kim will send a flyer to Lanny to put out on the Governor's Council listserv.

Kim Champney reported that one of the outcomes of the DD Shared Vision is a priority related to direct service provider workforce and creating a system that values the role of DSPs statewide. With the help of the Trust, direct service providers formed a professional association that is led by DSPs for DSPs. They held a planning meeting a couple of weeks ago and created a strategic plan and a mission and vision statement. Their action plan revolves around raising the bar as far as the professional expectations of the DSP workforce. There are 12 members on the steering committee, and their number one priority is to push forward the recommendation that there is a higher level of entry-level requirements to be a DSP.

Kim Champney reported that there is a quarterly meeting of the DD Systems

Collaborative next Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. The steering committee for the DD Vision will be reviewing the plans that are being forwarded by the action teams this year.

### **DD Network Partner Update: Center for Human Development (CHD)**

Karen Ward briefly reported that they are moving forward on the National Core Indicator (NCI) surveys.

Kim Champney shared that 650 people who receive at least one service under the Medicaid waiver received letters saying they have been selected to participate in the NCI face-to-face survey. The survey takes about an hour, and the interviewer will come to the person's home or meet them at a place of their choosing to conduct the survey. The interview is to gather information around the gaps and barriers to living the life they choose. Kim noted that because the letter states that if people wish to opt-out they should contact CHD, they are experiencing a trend of people opting out, in particular both public and family guardians. She believes that people don't understand the purpose and lack the information that defines that the survey is a significant opportunity to document the quality of life for people with disabilities and how the system is working and that the survey has no impact on a person's services. Kim encouraged spreading the word about the survey and encourage participation.

### **DD Network Partner Update: Disability Law Center (DLC)**

Dave Fleurant was unable to report as he was in Florida meeting with the Social Security Administration to discuss the representative payee issues.

### **Chair's Report**

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus reported that the work has begun on planning for the February Council meeting in Juneau. Surveys are going out from the Council to gather input on the Council's roles and responsibilities and also to gather feedback from consumers and families that support consumers.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus reported that there are a series of four webinars available through CHD related to developing cultural language and linguistic competency for community organizations. Those webinars begin November 14<sup>th</sup>. More information is posted on the Governor's Council website.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus shared that she has been chosen to sit on the Trust's Trustee Selection Committee. The Trust has two open positions, and while they currently have five applicants, they are looking for more people who would be interested in serving.

### **I/DD Unit**

Maureen Harwood reported the following items of interest from the I/DD Unit:

- The Developmental Disabilities grant has ended.
- EVV is a continuing process.
- Harmony is the data system that SDS uses, and they have been working very hard to make it a system that will support the needs of individuals and how they process and track their information. Currently SDS partners have a read-only role, because SDS doesn't have the extended access component.
- The National Core Indicator is a big project for the Unit.
- The joint task force for the Early Learning and Care System met and submitted the continuation request for the Preschool Development Birth to Five Grant.
- ILP has completed fiscal monitoring of Early Childhood.
- SDS continues to respond to requests from the Coordinating Council for ways to look at gathering information from assessments.
- Work is continuing on updating the person-centered supports planning intake process. They don't expect much movement because of the data system and policy changes.

Caitlin Rogers reported the following information:

- 681 individuals on the Registry
- Most recently drew 9 individuals for an I/DD waiver
- Most recently drew 21 individuals for the ISW
- The capacity for the ISW is 600. To date, they have received 341 support plans
- Of the 341 support plans, 306 have been fully approved

Anne Applegate brought forth a recommendation to reconvening the workgroup on the DDDR. Anne suggested putting out a call for group members within the committee in December/January and look at meeting in the new year.

### **General Council, Executive Committee, Legislative, & ACL Living Well Grant Update**

Kristin Vandagriff reported the following updates for the general Council:

- The Legislative Committee met and solidified support for the SESA reauthorization and discussed the potential political platform for the legislative session. The committee will be watching for changes to the ABLE Program through the legislative process, and they will be focusing on the importance of HCBS and Medicaid for individuals with developmental disabilities as well as cost efficiencies.
- At the Executive Committee level, work has been focused on the FY 21 budget, which has been submitted; grant and federal PPR reporting; monitoring pre-filed bills; and planning for the Juneau Council meeting in February.

## **Mental Health Trust Authority**

A report from the Mental Health Trust Authority was not available for the meeting.

## **AADD**

Kim Champney reported that Lizette Stiehr sent an update as follows:

- AADD monthly meeting is scheduled for next week.
- The AADD face-to-face meeting has been scheduled for April 20 – 21, 2020 in Anchorage.
- AADD has joined a collation called Alaskans Together for Medicaid, who are working on advocacy related to Medicaid budget reductions.
- AADD continues to be active in their advocacy in support of companion services.

## **Housing**

Oscar Cedano reported the following information related to housing:

- Grants for homeless individuals with disabilities have been available since July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- The state has accessed federal funding for housing opportunities for persons with HIV/AIDS.
- The 811 Program is still making progress, and they continue to receive applicants. The program has been expanded to new tiers, including homelessness and low-income individuals.
- AHFC's consolidated five-year plan process is working through the stakeholder feedback portion of the process.

## **Stone Soup Group**

Alex Fogarty reported the following activities for Stone Soup Group:

- Stone Soup Group is in the midst of planning for the Parent Conference scheduled for March 27 – 28, 2020. The theme for the conference is person-directed lives.
- Stone Soup Group has hired a parent navigator in the Fairbanks region. She will also be coordinating the MAP Program.
- Stone Soup Group has opened its Developmental Disabilities Resource Center (DDRC) in the Mat-Su Foundation Building.
- Stone Soup Group's Annual Santa Party has been scheduled for December 7<sup>th</sup>. Registration is open and can be accessed through the website.

## **Key Coalition/Campaign & Peer Power**

A report from Key Coalition/Campaign and Peer Power was not available for the meeting. Anne Applegate noted that Key is moving forward with the creation of their platform and organization for their meeting in Juneau in February.

## **API Advisory Board**

Charlene Taufest reported that at their last meeting, they set up the bylaws and began the formation of the advisory board. The next steps include recruitment of individuals for the advisory board. Charlene noted that API is interviewing for a new CEO.

## **Diversity, Inclusion, and Cultural and Linguistic Competence Update**

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus reported that the series of four webinars on cultural and linguistic diversity registration is open. It will be offered through Zoom. Karen Ward noted that the purpose of the training is for organizations who are interested in developing a plan to become more culturally and linguistically competent.

Anne Applegate offered to send the agenda to the Council to members who are interested in participating.

## **AD HOC AND WORKGROUP UPDATES**

### **Medicaid Ad Hoc Update**

Art Delaune stated that the Medicaid Ad Hoc has not met since the last report.

### **Workforce Workgroup Update**

Kristin Vandagriff reported that Lanny Mommsen has an analysis compiled, and they will pull this workgroup back together to review the data and begin making recommendations.

### **FASD Workgroup Update**

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus reported that the focus for the next FASD Workgroup meeting will be a presentation from Lanny Mommsen on clarifying the role of the Governor's Council and the relationship between the Governor's Council and the workgroup.

### **Supported Decision Making (SDM) Update**

Anne Applegate reported that the SDM Symposium is scheduled for November 15<sup>th</sup>, and she expects a good turnout. Anne encouraged people to visit the website as there is always new content.

Anne Applegate reported that they are picking the cast for the PSA that is being funded by AARP. The focus of the PSA is seniors with early-stage dementia and how every decision every day matters.

## **TABI ADVISORY WORKGROUP**

Kristin Vandagriff reported that the TABI Workgroup finalized their mission statement, which is to understand, educate, and advocate for the needs of all Alaskans regarding traumatic and acquired brain injury. The workgroup is now discussing a core set of values. A needs assessment was conducted by CHD, and it is in the process of being finalized. As far as the workgroup's state plan, they have identified five priority areas, prevention, awareness, resources, data, and infrastructure. Kristen noted that the workgroup reported that the Head Injury ECHO is going to launch sessions in January of 2020, and the Alaska Brain Injury Network is working on brain injury screening clinics.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Work Plan Discussion**

Kristin Vandagriff provided a brief review of the DD Committee work plan. She noted that it is her understanding that there were no significant changes recommended to the work plan. Kristin encouraged committee members to review the work plan and forward any feedback or input they might have to Anne Applegate.

### **Lifetown**

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus asked committee members to click on the link provided in the agenda and look at that site mainly through the lens of individuals who do not qualify for a waiver or adults who need some supported housing or a teen in transition. Jeanne described the resource as a training site for people who are transitioning who need skilled people to help them to learn how to access their communities.

## **OTHER**

Alex Gimarc brought forward a request to add to a future meeting agenda a discussion on Medicaid/Medicare-purchased home medical supplies.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS/CONFERENCES**

### **January TBA**

FASD Workgroup meeting

### **November 15, 2019**

SDMA Symposium

**January 14, 2020, 2:30 - 3:30 p.m.**  
ACL Living Well Federal Grant meeting

**February 4 – 5, 2020**  
Winter Council meeting

**February 6 – 7, 2020**  
Key Campaign

**OTHER INFORMATION FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

None.

**TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next DD Committee meeting is scheduled for December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Margaret Evans **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting, **SECONDED** by Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus. Hearing no objections, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.