

**Developmental Disabilities Services**  
**State Program Standing Committee (SPSC)**  
**June 18, 2015**  
**Comfort Inn, Berlin**

**Attendees:**

Members Present: Emily Anderson, Max Barrows, Linda Berger, Julie Cunningham, Bethany Drum, Joe Greenwald, Greg Mairs, Ed Place, Theresa Wood, Connie Woodbury, Susan Yuan,

Guests: Bill Ashe, UVS; Jessalyn Gustin, CAP; Dustin Redlein, CAP; Wanda Moch, Janet Durkee, CAP; Barbara Weintraub, RMHS/CAP; Michel Kersten, RMHS/CAP; June Ward, RMHS/CAP; Karen Schwartz, VTDDC; Joy Redington, Transition II; Rachel Colby; Ellen Malone, CAP; Rich Atkinson; Nancy Breiden, DLP/VLA; Lori Lintner, HCRS; Bart Mair, Lincoln Street Inc; Marlys Waller, VCP; Mark Utter, Ron Holm, Rutland LSE; Ted Earle, Rutland LSE; Lisa Lynch, ARC Rutland Area/Rutland LSE; Bill Herrington, Rutland LSC; Cathy Hull, UVS; Ron McCarthy, VFN; Kris Medina, GMSA; April McCandless, WCMH; Karen Topper, GMSA; Loren Roth; Susan Roth; Marie Zura, HowardCenter; Julie Tessler, VCP; Dick Courcelle, RMHS

State Employees: Chris O'Neill, Jennifer Perkins, Joy Barrett, Lisa Parro, Camille George, June Bascom, Emma Harrigan (DMH), Alice Kennedy, Jeff Coy (via phone), Jackie Rogers (via phone)

**I. Welcome, Introductions, Review Agenda, and Approve Minutes**

Theresa explained that the current operating procedures allowed the State Program Standing Committee (SPSC) members to give their voting proxy to another member of the Committee. Anne Bakeman has given her proxy to Susan Yuan, and Barb Prine has given her proxy to Theresa.

The meeting minutes from the May 21<sup>st</sup> meeting were reviewed. The following corrections need to be made:

- II: Upper Valley Services Designation Review, page 2, last sentence: The SPSC voted to recommend re-designation of UVS, all standards were met.
- III: DAIL Budget Update, first line: SFUY should be SFY
- III: DAIL Budget Update, page 3,
  - Second paragraph: Pilot should be changed to early implementers; Add - The SPSC would like to see more DS services in the early implementation areas.
  - Change Discretionary Funding heading to Discretionary/One-Time Funding

Connie made a motion to accept the May minutes as amended, Ed seconded. Motion passed.

## **II. Commissioner Wehry**

Commissioner Wehry is leaving DAIL and would like to acknowledge and thank the SPSC for all their work during her tenure. The Commissioner feels that the SPSC is a critical and important part of the system. She has been the Commissioner for 4 ½ years and is happy with what has been accomplished during that time, but there is more work to be done.

The new DAIL Commissioner, Monica Hutt, has knowledge about the disability community and State government, so it is expected to be a smooth transition. Crossover training will begin on July 6<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Wehry's last day is July 17<sup>th</sup>, and Commissioner Hutt will officially begin in DAIL on July 20<sup>th</sup>.

The Commissioner feels the right decision was made this year about whether to distribute any discretionary funds to agencies as one time funds. AHS Secretary Cohen has received the letter from the SPSC about the one time funds. He has been on vacation; however, the Commissioner is sure he will be responding directly upon his return, if he has not yet done so.

The SPSC showed their appreciation to Commissioner Wehry.

## **III. SPSC Meeting Schedule for 2015**

The SPSC usually takes one month off during summer, usually August. There are some items tentatively scheduled for the July meeting, so the SPSC will not meet in August again.

The SPSC members voted on their top three DD Act Principles in the DS Annual Report in which they wished to discuss. They will talk about what is positive, what needs work, what wasn't in the report that would be useful to have, and any suggestions they may have. The top three Principle choices and the Committee members who will lead the discussions are:

Family Supports – Susan Yuan and Anne Bakeman (volunteered by Susan Yuan)

Adult Services – Joe Greenwald, Barbara Prine

Meaningful Choices – Connie Woodberry, Julie Cunningham

Family Supports will be discussed at the July meeting.

## **IV: Update on One Time Funding**

Commissioner Wehry already gave an update to the SPSC about the discretionary and one time funding, and there is nothing further to add at this time.

The SPSC requested a meeting with AHS Secretary Cohen and would still like to meet with him even if a response to their letter is received. Theresa will follow up with a phone call to Secretary Cohen's office.

## **v. DS Advocacy Initiatives**

Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA) [www.gmsavt.org](http://www.gmsavt.org) (Chris Medina, Max Barrows and Karen Topper)

*(GMSA Plan for the Future handout)*

In the Green Mountain Self Advocates (GMSA) 5-year strategic plan, they outline 8 priorities for GMSA:

- Work with Schools.
- Engage people outside of the “disability world” to know our mission and programs.
- Offer more training resources on basic self-advocacy, sexuality and Training of Trainers.
- Connect with people with disabilities who are not yet part of the self-advocacy movement.
- Provide more information about local services.
- Build stronger connections with local groups.
- Encourage family members to support self-advocacy.
- Help connect self-advocates with their communities.

GMSA supports 21 self-advocacy groups. The peer to peer connections are key, and are a safe place for individuals to express themselves, what they want, and be proud of who they are. It is also a way to learn about barriers other people are facing and work together to find solutions. The VT Peer Mentoring Project brings hope and many positive things for the mentor and mentee, and a sense of equality and partnership. The overall goal is an increase in the quality of life and independence, and a sense of self.

GMSA works with disability rights groups, such as Vermont Family Network, VT Center for Independent Living, Disability Rights VT, DD Council, VT Coalition for Disability Rights, VT Wellness Coalition, and others, making sure that everyone understands what is going on. Involving people with disabilities and their families assist in making changes closer to what is needed and wanted. “Nothing about us, without us.”

Some areas that need more work are: supports in decision making; sexuality education and support to have relationships. “We want what you got.” The Division has taken a position on sexuality that remains valid and could be used as a starting point for further action. It can be found at: <http://www.ddas.vermont.gov/ddas-policies/policies-dds/policies-dds-documents/policy-education-support-of-sexuality/view?searchterm=sexuality>

A SPSC member indicated that support for parents with disabilities to raise their children was another area in which further education and training is needed.

Accessibility for communication helps Kris Medina engage and take charge of his life. A person’s confidence will only increase with support to help them speak up more. Every person has something to say and it needs to be heard.

GMSA works with high school students transitioning to adulthood from high school. Max has done some presentations in schools, and GMSA had a one-day youth summit last year. (More youth summits are being planned.) This education includes information about how to stand up to people who are treating people badly due to their disability, and standing up for needed accommodations. It is very important for people to know about self-advocacy.

GMSA is collaborating with Developmental Services Directors from around the state and the Vermont Council on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities to define and design a model of paid peer mentoring. This includes a training curriculum that will ultimately be used to enhance the peer support skills of self-advocate leaders from GMSA membership. The group intends to submit a funding proposal in August 2015 to the Vermont Community Foundation to fund a 1-3 year pilot period for developing a training process and implementing a pilot program.

The Voices and Choices conference is a very popular event. GMSA sends out a 'save the date' notice in January and is using social media to pass on further information. GMSA was asked to reconsider other types of notification about the conference.

#### Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council or VTDDC) (Karen Schwartz)

The new DD Council annual report was handed out. (This has not been posted on the web yet.) The VTDDC president's message sums up everything the DD Council has done over the last year. Some of the highlights are:

- Led the coalition that helped to pass Act 140, with the first changes to Vermont's Developmental Disabilities Act since it was passed in 1996.
- Peers from grantee GMSA were in the national press with the Governor as he signed the Respectful Language bill.
- VT passed the first-in-the-nation Taser Bill.
- VTDDC was very active connecting people with legislators.
- VTDDC has been reaching out to people in many ways; including Facebook and a new e-newsletter, VT Council Connections (You can also sign up to get the newsletter on the VTDDC website: [www.ddc.vermont.gov](http://www.ddc.vermont.gov); or call VTDDC)
- The DD Council advocated for the Bill that was passed by the Vermont Legislature this year to set up ABLE accounts (Achieving a Better Life Experience.)

The strategic plan for federal funding, State Plan Goals for 2016 are part of the annual report.

Act 140 changes how the System of Care Plan changes are made. These changes will need to go through a new process, even for the one-time funding.

Every other year there is a VT Leadership Training Series that train people in advocacy. At the Statehouse tomorrow, there will be a graduation for 19 participants/self-advocates who have completed this training. VTDDC was not involved in the VT Leadership Training series last year; however, they will be involved this year.

Next year VTDDC will need to file a new 5 year plan. The process will include forums around the state, an online survey, and a hard copy survey.

## **VI. Rutland Mental Health/Community Access Program Re-Designation**

A review of the Rutland Mental Health Designation Report dated June 4, 2015 was given. The report is a combination of findings with the Department of Mental Health's (DMH) and DDS. The Overall Re-designation Summary sheet was created for just DS services. After a brief discussion, it was felt the summary sheet should correspond with the final report so the following

areas were changed on the summary sheet: 4.1, 4.3, 4.12 were changed to Does Not Meet Requirements.

Since the review, Chris O'Neill has worked with Rutland Mental Health Services – Community Access Program (CAP) to correct some of the areas where the standards were not met. And since the review, the Executive Director, Dan Quinn, has left the agency, and the Board of Directors are no longer allowing staff to be on the Board, which was strongly suggested by AHS Secretary Cohen. A plan of correction has been submitted and feedback on this plan was received last week. However, the SPSC role is to make its recommendation based on the final report.

A staff survey completed last year by CAP clearly pointed to some significant issues with the executive leadership; however, the results of this survey were not shared and things did not move forward. The Executive Board was not aware of the results, and some of the Board members did not even know the survey was completed. The survey results have now been shared, and since last Tuesday, the culture and atmosphere have changed substantially, and the strategic plan is clear. Modernization has improved, but there is more to do.

It was noted that the review of CAP was completed in August 2014; a quality services report was provided in March of 2015; and a follow-up correction plan was submitted in April 2015. There were a couple of continuing investigations that were in process after the review was completed which prevented DAIL from addressing some of the issues and concerns with CAP during this time.

SPSC members raised questions and concerns about this report appearing more in-depth than most, wondering if extra steps were taken in this situation which would create a different standard, and concerns with the timeline of the report; as well as whether budget cuts had any impact on the findings. Emma Harrigan from DMH explained that the desk audit policy and procedures for DMH changed in 2009 and there is a more in-depth review completed now which could account for the additional information in the report. Despite DDS being limited in addressing some issues due to open investigation; DDS and CAP had multiple conversations (verbal and written) and meetings between the time the review was completed and when the final report was issued.

Ellen Malone, Vice President of Developmental Services at CAP, has not had a chance to review the feedback; however, she stated: “We are deeply committed to ensuring high quality, person-centered supports to the individuals and families served through the Community Access Program and to building responsive, collaborative relationships with all partners. We look forward to accessing technical assistance and ongoing feedback from DDS to assure our Plan of Correction is satisfactory and effectively implemented.”

The next step is for CAP to present DDS with a report on its progress. The ultimate decision about the designation status of a DS provider is made by the DAIL Commissioner. Given the transition of DAIL commissioners, Camille anticipates that both will discuss the outcome before a decision is made, regardless of who signs the letter.

The SPSC voted to recommend that CAP's designation be Provisional/De-designate (1 vote for Provisional; 11 votes for Provisional/De-designate; and 1 vote for De-designate.)

## **VII. SPSC Updates and Announcements**

The State is already preparing for the 1115 Waiver renewal in 2017. DDS and the Department of Vermont Health Access (DVHA) are creating a task force to look at the clinical services in DS to ensure that DS clinical services meet the regulations and federal requirements. There are continuing challenges accessing certain clinical services through State Plan Medicaid, particularly individual therapy. The work group will examine this issue and under what circumstances it makes sense to fund individual therapy and other services through DS Home and Community Based Services. Other possible topics for the work group include a variety of alternative therapies and services, such as facilitated communication, horseback riding, etc.

The task force will be made up of a representative from the DD Council (whose representative will be Susan Yuan), representatives from GMSA, 2 DS Directors, Pat Frawley from VCIN, June Bascom, Amy Roth, Mary Alice Favro (UVM), and Camille George. Linda Berger volunteered to be on this task force to represent the SPSC. Meetings will be open to the public and minutes of the meetings will be shared with the SPSC.

There is no plan to change the DS State System of Care plan in the immediate future; however, Camille is open to that possibility if needed in the future.