

Family Support Council Meeting
August 7, 2021
Zoom Meeting
Meeting Minutes

Members present: Sarah Carlson, Amber Finnesand, Krista Bau, Christine Kenser, Tim Reinbold, Joanne Hairy Shirt, Bridget Leiseth, Pat Norin, Diane Baumiller, Michelle Powers,

Members absent: Letty Thelen

DHS Staff: Jaze Sollars, Kade Anderson, Joey Younie, Julie Hand

I. Call to Order

Sarah called the meeting to order at 8:33 AM CT.

II. Introductions

Everyone has been on the council. No introductions occurred.

III. Approval of Minutes

Diane motioned to approve minutes. Michelle seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote.

IV. Executive Committee Voting

Sarah nominated Bridget as Chair, Amber as Vice Chair, and Tim as Secretary. Michelle motions to have nominations cease. Pat seconds the motion. Sarah amended nomination to Amber as Chair, Bridget as Vice Chair, and Tim as Secretary. Michelle motions to approve nominations. Pat seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote.

V. Family Support 360

A. General System Overview and Update

There are 1,343 current participants. Openings in central part of the state and southeast. Still waiting lists in the West, Northeast and Sioux Falls areas. The new Benchmark Sioux Falls area program still has a couple of openings. Michelle requested exact numbers on the waiting list, Jaze advised the state does not keep a waiting list and that information has to be collected from providers. Jaze agreed to get that information to the council as soon as possible.

Discussion was had about a routine dissemination of the waiting list numbers to the council.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) advised on the newest Front Door initiative and that a likely launch date would be 2023. This initiative would involve Dakota at Home and the hiring of additional intake staff at DDD. One staff has already been hired at DDD to fill this role. At the end of October a survey is going to be sent out to families who have recently been added to DDD services to gather information on how to improve the initial process of applying for DDD services.

A single universal application was given out to all providers to use as the Family Support 360 application.

B. Adaptive Recreation Funds

The adaptive recreation expansion to the rec category was an additional allowance so no increase in funding. The adaptive recreation expansion became active on July 1st. Comment on Safety Care Brochure, behavioral support training, on August 17th.

C. Safety Care Brochure/Class

The Safety Care training is an additional resource for families. Many CSPs use Safety Care. DDD is wanting to expand the number of Safety Care trainings that it provides. If the Safety Care training for families goes well DDD does plan on doing more trainings. The Safety Care for Families training is specifically geared towards families. DDD has two safety care trainers Brooke Nelson and Carrie Geppert.

D. EVV/AWC

Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) has had some technology issues, it was expected to some degree. EVV vendor has been working through some of those things. No issues with compliance. Continuing to use the app and has been in effect for about 8 months.

Agency with Choice (AWC) is the model that allows participants and families to hire providers. AWC providers serve as the fiscal agent. Recently AWC providers have implemented a cap on the number of hours that providers can work. Have heard from AWC providers that they are having difficulty taking on new providers. Requested that providers audit their lists so that only active providers are in the system. LifeScape is still accepting applications. Jaze has heard from multiple families that they are having difficulty getting a provider hired.

Pat inquired about monies that came in through the Federal Government. Those Federal dollars were mostly for Community Support Providers for staff. Legislators did allocate additional funding for direct support professionals. This allows providers to have more equitable wages but still having difficulty finding staff.

Jaze has been talking with Long Term Services & Supports (LTSS) about expansion of providers for Family Support. Families have expressed interest in a pool of providers. This would include extensive system change within the Family Support Waiver. However, it is being negotiated between DDD and LTSS.

VI. Waiver Renewal

Janet Whiting joined the meeting.

During waiver renewal the Council and DDD would like AWC addressed. DDD is collaborating with LTSS to expand the provider pool. Working on drafting definitions and certifications around therapies. This would include music, horse, water, and possibly art therapy. DDD is diving into federal authority and the taxonomy which is a list of allowable services that states can add to their waiver. Jaze hopes by the next council meeting to have a draft of the new definitions to go into the new waiver. These will also need to be posted for public comment.

AWC sessions will need to find additional ways to get input from stakeholders and get stakeholder engagement. Pat was on the last stakeholder AWC meeting and would encourage more people to participate.

Pat inquired about stakeholder meetings. Pat advised that it is critically important that we know what we need and what others may need. A lot of the families have no idea how to get what they need. People who have attended the stakeholder meetings have stated that they felt they were not listened to or even that they were treated badly (DDD did acknowledge awareness of the situations).

Family Support Coordinators feel that they are receiving a lot of distrust from families they support. The coordinators are required to be the messenger of what families can and can't get. The wording "self-directed" is being misinterpreted. Coordinators are feeling like they are uninformed going into meetings with families. DDD did advise that there are monthly meetings with coordinators to go over these changes that do occur.

Families would like to see the Family Support Council agenda out sooner. Families are not sure where the agenda is or how the meetings are being conducted. DDD advised that there are certain rules they must follow regarding open meetings. DDD has been in contact with the Office of Boards and Commissions to make sure they follow those laws. All Governor's boards are housed on the Boards and Commissions website. Getting the agenda out earlier is a priority for DDD. Other possibilities considered would be using Family Support coordinators to get the agenda out to families. DDD is also looking into developing a Listserv. Families could sign up and then receive the agenda automatically.

Conversation was had by the council about defining self-direction in the waiver. A possible need to change the mission statement. DDD advised that the companion, respite, personal and se would be self-directed services but do have parameters that need to be followed to maintain federal compliance. A clearer definition of self-direction may need to be developed to make it clear for families.

A question was raised by the council regards to adding more general funded services. DDD does have the ability offer additional services with the general funds. DDD does have more flexibility with general funds but still are required to follow guidelines set forth by CMS and DSS. Who gives approval on general funds? Appendix A describes admin authority and describes role of DSS and DDD. DSS approves all policies aka financial assistance guidelines. We do have the ability to add services but need approval through DSS. Budget comes through legislative session. General funds are typically used for smaller purchases and not larger purchases.

Discussion was had about a funding request for a fence that was denied. DDD advised that other resources would need to be looked at first. Eligibility-based services should be used as a last resort. Eligibility-based services may not always be there for use. Using community-based resources is a much more sustainable path.

VII. Family Self-Advocate Conversations

Council members did attend these conversations. DDD is Planning to host them every other month through November of 2021. After November DDD will reevaluate at that point on how often they will occur.

The Council would like a direct link available to the public, closed captioning, and a possible newsletter. Once the DDD listserv is established it would be a great way to get a newsletter out to families. The poll question was off putting for some families. A possible option for "none of these".

Is it considered a public meeting? The response from Joey was that it isn't necessarily closed but targeted for specific groups although attendance is open.

If council members are approached by families Jaze advised that the family is welcome to call DDD and they would be glad to answer any questions.

VIII. DD Council Update

Arlene gave an update to the council. Arlene is getting assistance from Disability Rights South

Dakota who has hired a self-advocate coordinator for 15 hours a week. The self-advocate coordinator will be in charge with building back up the advocates for change.

The DD Council is in discussion to create a website for the council. It will serve as a hub for disability information for state government and outside of state government.

IX. Community of Practice Update

Julie Hand gave Community of Practice (CoP) update. The new membership year started in July. The DD Council approved membership fees.

In April, May, and June there were technical assistance meetings from national CoP. These meetings included DDD leadership and Arlene. Looked at common goals; access to mental health supports, navigation of services, communication, accessibility, education, and how to get active stakeholder engagement – help families and individuals become strong leaders.

Parents are involved but ideas are needed to get self-advocates to attend. They do not want just professionals in the meeting and hope for more involvement from families and self-advocates.

The CoP is hosting Charting the LifeCourse events for establishing family ideas and getting families involved in leadership, regarding carrying the framework forward.

Amber does attend the meetings when she is able but voiced the possibility of moving times to in the evening or over the lunch hour.

How do families attend the meetings? DDD has a distribution list that an email gets directly sent to. It is not a public meeting. The family would have to extend interest to DDD to get started with attending meetings. A comment was made from the council to DDD to make it clearer for families on how to attend these meetings.

X. Future Meeting Locations

In March 2020 we were meeting across the state in different locations. Opened discussion on upcoming meetings and possibility of in-person. Next meeting will be October 16th and then December 4th. Consensus was to stay with Zoom meetings due to continued Covid concerns. Can reach more people with Zoom meetings than in person so hybrid model might be more appropriate going forward once Covid concerns subside.

A possible device to do the hybrid method may need to be obtained.

XI. Family Support Council Position Update

There are three current openings on the council; one for an individual, family member under 21, and one for family member over 21.

DDD is requesting assistance in outreach. Ideas were the possibility of having applications at DD council meeting. Sending a message out to state COP team. Get something out to school district to Special Education coordinators. Going through the school may pose an issue in getting message out. Medical physicians and Family Support Coordinators were also discussed.

XII. Public Comment

Arlene with the DD Council advised SD conference for Developmental Disabilities will be occurring in Sioux Falls on September 28th, 29th, and 30th. The conference is being held at the Ramkota in Sioux Falls. Arlene also discussed the keynote speakers for the conference.

XIII. Council Discussion

Do families have a choice in who they chose for an AWC provider. Families do have a choice on who they select as an AWC provider. It is currently limited due to openings.

Can agencies other than LifeScape and LifeQuest be AWC providers? LifeQuest, LifeScape, VOA, CFI, and Dakota Milestones are all AWC providers.

Possibility of moving October 16th meeting? After discussion it was decided to leave the meeting as is.

LifeScape is the only AWC provider who has openings. LifeScape requires providers to hand deliver their ID which can be a barrier.

Is there any movement on the 20 hour cap for AWC? Jaze advised that DDD sees a timeline of the waiver renewal in the spring of 2022.

Do you anticipate another meeting for AWC sub-committee? We anticipate another meeting soon. DDD will get dates out once it is finalized.

Adjournment

Krista made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:22 AM CT. Pat seconded the motion. The motion passed with a voice vote.

X

Tim Reinbold
Secretary