

Self-Direction Advisory Board Meeting Minutes December 4, 2024

Attendance: See attached

Nancy Alterio called the meeting to order.

Liz Sandblom read the roll call.

Nancy asked for motions to accept the 9.4.24 minutes.

First Motion: Robin Foley

Second Motion: Liz Fahey

Motion passed unanimously.

Introductions: Colin Long (OIG) replacing Matt Bruening, Catherine Burke (DDS) replacing Rich Santucci, Nora Bent (Arc) replacing Leo Sarkissian

DDS Updates: Sarah Peterson

- We are still looking to fill 1 last seat which is a family member slot.
- DDS Leadership updates: Tim Cahill is now the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Operations, Chris Klaskin is now our Chief of Staff, and Liz Sandblom is our Acting Assistant Commissioner of Operations
- The Self-Direction Regulations were published in October after a lot of work and input from you.
- Acumen will be taking over for Public Partnerships as the FMS for PDP and December 22nd is the official go live date. We believe that Acumen has a lot to offer and will improve the services for people who self-direct. The team has been working hard to make sure we address any issues that may arise.
- Teryl Smith will be leaving, and Holly McCarthy will be the Acting Director of Client Assessments. Teryl has built a strong team of professionals and thank you to Teryl for all of your hard work.
- The SIS-A team engaged with a public relations firm, MORE, to engage people in the Path Forward Project and we will be working with them on increasing diversity and education as it relates to the SIS-A and will be expanding to self-direction. We will be looking to improve our self-direction website to make it more user friendly and accessible with MORE
- We had our first self-direction conference in October and a lot of individuals and their families came out. We had about 300 people in attendance which also included self-direction and DDS staff. We are hoping it will be an annual event.

Questions/Comments

Nancy: I had a chance to attend the conference, and the keynote and other speakers were very inspirational.

Q: Do we have a budget update?

A: No. We are still waiting. The budget recommendation by the governor will be coming up in January.

Q: Do you have a plan/timeline to develop guidance and policies around the regulations?

A: We're looking to you all for input on this process and looking to get started early next year. SDAB subcommittee has been focusing on the independent facilitator. The 2 biggest pieces are independent facilitator and budget development. We will also look at the participant toolbox and see how we can align it with regulations.

Q: What's the process for a family member to get on SDAB?

A: Reach out to Liz Sandblom to get the process started if you have someone in mind.

Regional Updates: Amy Nazaire

- Our first self-direction conference was a success and thank you to the committee, keynote speaker, and individuals.
- Self-direction continues to grow, and we currently have around 2,500 individuals self-directing their services.

Independent Facilitator: Robin Foley

- This is part of the Real Lives Law and self-direction regulations.
- The Independent Facilitator (IF) will help individuals with person centered planning, teach the employer of record how to perform employer duties, and will hopefully fade at some point.
- We're hoping to have a cadre of individuals to provide this service.
- The subcommittee meets monthly and right now we are focusing on the training for the IF. We have some trainings that may be done live. We have some existing trainings and will need to develop some as well. We will use the existing fraud waste and abuse trainings and incorporate information from the Participant Toolbox. It's important that training happens but we don't want it to be a burden either.
- We have a job description for the IF role and a RFQ has been written and is in the review phase. We will post the RFQ once it's approved, and it will be a rolling RFQ. People can apply at any time.

Questions/Comments

Q: Will the training topics be brought back to SDAB?

A: Yes, we can share it as it becomes available. We are open to suggestions if people feel strongly about something.

FMS Update: Jaclyn Grant

- Acumen is offering training for individuals, families, and their provider on how to enter their time in DCI in a few weeks.
- The area offices in addition to Acumen continue to reach out to those who have not submitted a transition packet.

The Path Forward: Liz Sandblom

- We are in the process for getting 6 more assessors on board. 4 have passed and 2 are on track to pass their training next week. Trainer from AAIDD was able to join us yesterday and complemented the team and her experiences training nationwide and how professional our 2 assessor groups were.
- We get reports from HSRI monthly and based on the last report in October we had completed 270 of the 500.
- After working with MORE we have noticed a significant bump in participation over the past few weeks. We are also working with HSRI on pulling together a 2nd sample of 500 from people who are in similar living situations and are actively enrolled in similar DDS services to provide a comparable sample of those in traditional services.
- Hoping to get the numbers we need by the end of this fiscal year and begin the discussion about the support level framework.
- We are in the process of changing the SIS-A website with help from MORE. We have interviewed some people, and it has gone well. We're integrating some of the feedback they received into their materials and are working on a video of people who participate.

Questions/Comments

Robin Foley: I was so impressed with the thoughtfulness of the assessment, and it made us think of things in a different way than we had before. I applaud the patience, time, and professionalism of the assessors. It was a conversation and can't think of a better way to assess someone's need.

Q: Is there a particular background that makes the assessors successful?

A: We have offered this as promotional opportunity and all the assessor who were hired have been a service coordinator at some point. Some things we look for are a strong clinical background, strong communication skills, ability to reframe things, and professional writing skills.

Robin: It's important for assessors to be people who have experience working with people who receive DDS services because they have experience.

Liz Sandblom: Our next challenge is getting our providers up to speed of the SIS. Going into this next phase we are going to be working with folks who receive traditional services. We realize asking a provider staff to sit through a 3-hour assessment is really challenging. First, we need to start exposing providers with assistance from MORE.

Q: With the new sample where do the providers fit in that discussion?

A: It's the same process where we reach out to the individual and ask for respondents. If there is a provider involved, we are encouraging the provider staff to attend.

Q: Will the next sample cover the lifespan to include older folks? Can other family members join the assessment?

A: We're using similar stratifiers for both samples. Age was not factored in either sample but the way the samples are set up, we have a wide range of ages captured. Maybe demographics (i.e. age) is something that we can work with PR firm to incorporate into their materials. Having this as a tool to use in the future, aging caregivers and participants is an important piece.

Q: It sounds like you're learning a lot about what the ideal staff person is for the assessor position. How are you systematically collecting information on people you may want to be in these roles?

A: As we open it up, we will not be able to do Q&As which will be a challenge. We will have to work closely with HR if we open it up to external applicants. We may look at a larger pool of applications in case some are not able to pass the training.

Nancy Alterio: At the Real Lives Conference they hosted a table. As they were sharing their stories about assessments their excitement, passion, interest, desire to do the assessments really showed in how they talk about it. Very invested in what they are doing.

Liz Sandblom: I will send out the link to the new website once it is live.

Public Comment

Karen Gregory: It doesn't seem like there is enough time to get things up and running if the trainings start next week and the go live date is December 22nd.

Ed Underwood: There was a great discussion about having the independent facilitator start even before someone has decided to use self-direction and possibly funding it through family support. I'm not sure how we got where we are and then only helping with payroll. People need help from an IF way before they are at the point

Robin Foley: Yes. The description I gave earlier was very brief, but the role is not limited to payroll. There are many different tasks that they can help with.

Liz Sandblom: The definition is much broader, and I think the gap is the pre work. We as a group can do some more work with our transition coordinators and support brokers. We recognize that there are variations from office to office and we need to work on this. We're working on getting more information to family support centers to make sure they have the information to have a conversation with the family about self-directed services.

Ed Underwood: I was optimistic, and I feel like the vision of the independent facilitator in the Real Lives law is not coming to fruition.

Barbara Pandolfi: I would like to underscore the value of starting earlier. We have a group self-direction meeting, and the majority of folks are younger and don't know what to do.

Ed Underwood: Independent facilitators can be hired privately by families to access it before they turn 22.

Liz Sandblom: My concern with that is equity.

Michelle Goody: Is the goal to have transitioning folks be assessed using the SIS-A? How long? It sounds like the discussion in the SIS A will help people understand the services available as well.

Liz: Yes. it's probably a few years out. We need to get the budget allocation information first.

Nancy Alterio asked for a motion to adjourn

First Motion: Robin Foley

Second Motion: Liz Fahey

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaclyn Grant