

Self-Direction Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

June 4, 2025

Attendance: See attached

Materials: HSRI Presentation

Nancy Alterio called the meeting to order.

Colleen Mulligan read the roll call.

Nancy asked for a motion to accept the 3.5.25 minutes.

Ed Underwood wanted to note public comments from last meeting were not reflected. Colleen will check notes from March meeting for public comments to be included. The March meeting minutes will be taken up at the June meeting.

DDS Updates: Sarah Peterson

- Victor Hernandez retired from the Department in May.
- Announced her appointment to Commissioner.
- Spoke of importance of self-direction program and hope to grow and expand self-direction as we navigate challenges of fiscal landscape at the state and federal level.
- Spoke of establishment of the SDAB and about the role of SDAB members is to provide the perspective and knowledge they bring from their experiences. Highlighted the difference between advisory board and governance board. Urged advisory board to be deliberate in their contributions to help solve problems and hit the reset button to move forward self-direction programs collaboratively.

Questions/Comments

N/A

SDAB Membership Survey: Colleen Mulligan

There are now 2 open seats on SDAB. Self-advocate seat and family member seat. The remaining updates will be shared in September when Jaclyn is back for the September meeting.

Questions/Comments

N/A

The Path Forward (SIS-A) Update: Val Bradley & Colleen Kidney

HSRI conducted evaluation over a 3-year period of self-direction to get a comprehensive picture of self-direction.

Compared to other states, MA still has a small self-direction program. HSRI made many recommendations to DDS about how to improve their SD programs. Highlighted the importance of independent facilitators.

Other feedback included lack of transparency and consistency in the budget process. HSRI recommendation was that DDS needed a standardized and predictable way to allocate budgets.

Val then introduced Colleen Kidney to explain how HSRI is helping MA develop a budget framework that is consistent and equitable.

Please see attached presentation for further details.

Questions/Comments

Nancy thanked HSRI for an informative presentation

Q: Will the power point be shared?

A: Yes

Q: What about folks who are self-directing and using traditional services?

A: We will have more answers after digging into data. Not enough known at this phase and want to make sure we capture everyone.

Q: What do you mean when you mention “fairness” in framework. Hours? Or Money?

A: Thinking about it in terms of equivalent. That translates to hours, not dollars. Budget is one component of planning. Budget will be based strictly on need as assessed on the SIS-A, then brought to a meeting to support the planning process.

Amendment 8/19/25: We have not yet determined the specific method for determining self-direction budgets in terms of equivalency between traditional and self-direction. This process will be guided by the data as well as requirements from the Real Lives Law.

Q: Are trends and support need different between self-direction and traditional services? Are people in self-direction more independent?

A: We need data to look at that. We’re interested in looking at how many hours, what kind, what are providers billing, and how much spending by support need. Verification process is important in filling in gaps of identifying support.

Acumen Update: Elizabeth Kiefer, Richard Ilges, and Andrew Coleman

Liz Kiefer introduced the MA Acumen Team

- Andrew Coleman: Regional VP for Great Lakes and Massachusetts
- Richard Ilges, Executive Director for Massachusetts: Oversees the local, in-state agents, works with regional managers, responsible for customer service.
- Amorissa McQuarters, MA Agent Supervisor

Ricky and Andrew spoke about changes to invoice process:

- Enhanced case worker profile. Will enable a more streamlined approach to invoicing, caseworkers can submit directly and track submission.
- Electronic Enrollment:

- Phase 1: Docusign
- Phase 2: Full process rollout
- Testing will occur over the next month. We anticipate a rollout on 7/2.

Questions/Comments

Q: Asked about the prewritten questions that were submitted. Acumen responded that they only had about 10 minutes or so in this meeting to present. They do not believe that would be enough time to thoroughly answer each question. They agreed to answer the questions in writing for the Committee.

Acumen highlighted the build out of client service agents. Acumen thanked the MA21 group for their time to present to them.

Acumen added that they will be focusing on training the brokers on the enhanced case worker system. They will offer more training in July and will solicit feedback from MA on what they would like for additional trainings.

Ed Underwood: Asked for clarification about email received by Acumen regarding statements.

Acumen explained that the activity on a statement reflects when the services are provided. Acumen would like to host training on how to read statements.

Ed stated that his online statements do not match what is charged to the budgets. Acumen responded by suggesting they connect outside of the meeting to go through specifics of his examples.

Q: What is needed to explore the possibilities of a demonstration of the system to answer questions on zoom, etc.?

A: Acumen responded that they could set this up. Acumen added they wanted to share a “tips and tricks” document that was created for MA21 group. Acumen shared they will be opening an office in Medford, MA. They want to be accessible to MA customers.

Q: Have the issues with delayed payments and employee enrollment been fixed?

A: We have worked through the phase of the initial data issues in transition. Acumen has enrolled 60 new clients in the last 2 months.

Public Comment

Robert Beckett: The Real Lives Law mandated the development of the Independent Facilitator (IF) position. This has been in development for a long time. The IF position requires the person to pass a course. As the course curriculum is not yet developed, he requested that the SDAB recommend DDS to bypass the required curriculum at this time and allow families to use this position. Once the curriculum is developed, then the IF can take the course.

Future Dates and Closing Comments:

Discussion about doing future meetings virtual every other meeting.

Nancy suggested that the next meeting in September be virtual. Jaclyn will post the link on the website.

Nancy Alterio asked for a motion to adjourn

First Motion: Colin Long

Second Motion: Catherine Burke

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly McCarthy