Self-Direction Advisory Board

12.02.20

Committee members attending: Jane Ryder, Nancy Alterio, Liz Sandblom, Rich Santucci, Jeffrey Paquette, Anne Fracht, Val Bradley, Margaret Abrams, Andrea Lunden, Robin Foley, Lindsey Foley, Julie Westwater, Julie Flaherty, Leo Sarkissian, Barbara Pandolfi, Leslie Kinney, Karla Murphy

Committee members absent: Carol Bird, Jeff Keilson, John Nadworny, Kimberly Truong

DDS staff attending: Jennifer Benoit, Beverly McGovern, Ed Wilson, Pamela Hickey, Anne Maris Stanton, Laney Bruner-Canhoto, Teryl Smith, Victor Hernandez, Elizabeth Morse, Tim Cahill, Chris Thompson, Gail Gillespie, Ingrid Flory

Opening Comments and Roll Call

Nancy Alterio welcomed the committee meeting on the Webex platform. A role call was completed.

Review and Approval of September 2, 2020 Minutes

Nancy asked for approval of the minutes. Robin Foley motioned that they be accepted. Rich Santucci seconded the motion.

In discussion of the minutes, Julie Flaherty made two points:

* The question regarding testing caregivers on page 4 should be attributed to Julie Flaherty.
* In the future agenda items section, an agenda item, “discussion of the HSRI recommendations around data collection” was omitted.

The minutes will be amended; and a vote will be taken at the next meeting on the changes.

DDS/ Commissioner’s Update

Jane Ryder welcomed everyone and updated the committee on DDS’ response to the pandemic and anticipated surge. In the provider and state-operated community, aggressive surveillance testing is in place. If there is one person testing positive in a group home, everyone is tested. DDS has recently forged a partnership with Commonwealth Medicine. Commonwealth Medicine designed a self- assessment tool for agencies to complete on their congregate care sites around infection control. Commonwealth Medicine will provide follow-up and technical assistance after a review of the self-assessment. Liz Sandblom Is the DDS contact person for that initiative.

The Commissioner talked about the activities of the Service Coordinators Service Coordinators are reaching out to individuals to check on their needs and safety.

 During the pandemic, DDS has seen a rise in requests for self-direction both in PDP and Agency with Choice.

Commissioner Ryder thanked staff particularly direct care staff for their work at this time and is optimistic about the news of vaccines.

Questions

Nancy Alterio asked if our individuals will be prioritized for the vaccine. Commissioner Ryder reported that the Center for Disease Control will come out with recommendations very soon. Governor Baker will communicate those recommendations next week.

Self- Direction Updates

Liz Sandblom reported that enrollment in self- direction programs has steadily increased since March by about 1.5% per month. There has been an 11% increase overall and (159) new enrollments. Most of the enrollments were in individual day supports and individual home supports.

The self-direction managers have offered more training opportunities to families and staff. The managers are in the process of updating their work plan with Liz. Monthly internal leadership meetings have resumed with the support of the commissioner.

Robin Foley has been working with Victor Hernandez on recommendations to improve the self-direction section of DDS’ website to make it more user-friendly. Additional input from the committee is welcome.

Liz held several sessions with the area directors to elicit feedback on PDP and AWC. The area directors relayed many positive experiences with self-direction and had many ideas and recommendations that Liz will follow up on.

Liz reported that the Agency with Choice Manual is almost complete.

Liz is collaborating with ArcMass on the production of mini videos, several of which will feature self-direction.

Questions

Leo Sarkissian asked about the make-up of the new (159) participants. Are they all of transition age? Liz will get that information to the committee. Pam Hickey thought that most of the new participants were from the turning 22/ transitioning group.

Liz premiered the new “Preventing Fraud and Abuse” video. There were many positive comments about the video. Rich Santucci thought the video could be a tool for individuals and will talk with the managers about how it could be used. He is starting something similar with the PCA program. He talked briefly about the fraud hotline and how he receives allegations of financial abuse. All of these allegations also are reported to DPPC.

Julie Flaherty, who was involved in making the video at its inception, thought it was well done.

Questions

Robin Foley asked how the video would be distributed and requested that it be added to DDS’s website. She was wondering if participants in PDP and AWC would need to review it every year. Liz replied that the video would go on the website after it is formatted. She will work on an outreach plan for the video.

Regional Updates

Pam Hickey- Central West

In the past three months, Pam has provided many opportunities for virtual training including refresher sessions and opportunities for staff to touch base. She stressed the importance of providing as many education opportunities as possible.

Ed Wilson- Southeast

Ed has provided at least a dozen training sessions for families and has worked with family support centers in the region. He talked about a recent success of an individual on the Vineyard who was directing his services. The individual volunteers on a farm with his support worker and is very involved in community activities including a writing group. He has been able to continue these activities throughout the pandemic and has learned to like fresh vegetables because of his experience of working on a farm.

Bev McGovern- Northeast

Bev is seeing an increase in enrollment of individuals on the spectrum. She talked about a number of innovative virtual activities such as classes in robotics, poetry, and personal training.

Jen Benoit- Metro

Jen talked about standardizing tools such as the orientation tool and talked about her work with the transition coordinators.

Annual Report

Julie Westwater talked about an annual report that DPPC completes and submits the report to the state auditor. In the report, she summarizes the allegations of financial abuse involving participants in the PDP program. Each quarter DPPC sends DDS a report of all intakes of financial abuse. DDS then sorts the intakes and identifies the intakes related to self-direction in various categories.

Charting the Life Course Presentation

Ingrid Flory, Pam Hickey, Leo Sarkissian

(Please refer to the power point.)

Highlights of Ingrid’s Presentation

Charting the Life Course is a framework developed by families for families. It is a new value-based approach that looks at services differently.

The framework assists professionals in having productive, problem-solving conversations with families.

It offers simple tools that are not disability-specific that help look at the whole person.

Charting the Life Course pulls together person centered planning practices and is easy to use.

In the past two years, many organizations are using the materials and have integrated them into their work with individuals and families. The tools can be used for different stages of life and help plan for what is to come.

One tool is the “integrated support star” that includes all of the areas of one’s life such as technology, community, relationships, and services.

Leo Sarkissian commented that there is more to the tool than is being described today. He is thankful for the DDS partnership and encourages families to use it. He thinks that the process emphasizes family, the most important part of many individuals’ lives.

Story- Pam Hickey

Pam talked about an individual, Jacob, who had used the Charting the Life Course to help plan his life. Jacob always wanted to be a zoo keeper and through the process, identified activities he enjoyed and those he didn’t like. As a result, he volunteers in the community and makes and sells dog biscuits. He is supported in this work through the PDP program. Jacob’s support worker and his family (especially needed during the pandemic) help him be in charge of his life. Jacob and his supporters constantly review his plan that covers several domains and make frequent changes to it.

There were many positive comments about Jacob’s story and an interest in purchasing his dog biscuits. Robin Foley recommended checking out the Charting the Life Course Facebook page. It contains lots of good materials.

MASS Report

Anne Fracht reported that the MASS conference will be virtual this year and will be held the week of 02.13.21-02.20.21. She also said that their virtual walk in October went well.

Questions

Barbara Pandolfi asked why the conference spanned a week. Anne said that they are still working on that and commented the conference won’t be full days.

Future Agenda Items

Nancy asked about the frequency of meetings- three times a year or four times a year? She asked the committee to get back to her with feedback. Nancy and Jane will work on a schedule for next year.

Future agenda items include:

Agency with Choice Manual

Legislative Annual Report

Data Collection per HSRI Report Recommendations

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Closing Comments

Nancy closed the meeting with the hopes that everyone stays safe and hopes that we have access to vaccines soon.