Self-Direction Advisory Board

03.02.22

Attendance

Board Members

Nancy Alterio, Jane Ryder, Barbara Pandolfi, Julie Flaherty, Jeff Keilson, Jeffrey Paquette, Jena Shea. Karla Murphy, Kimberly Truong, Leo Sarkissian, Liz Fahey, Margaret Abrams, Rich Santucci, Robin Foley, Julie Westwater

DDS Staff

Jen Benoit, Ed Wilson, Victor Hernandez, Gail Gillespie, Tim Cahill, Elizabeth Morse, Amy Nazaire, Laney Bruner-Canhoto, Anne Marie Stanton, Marianne Meacham, Terry O’Hare, Sarah Peterson, Kathleen Gallagher, Chris Klaskin

Guests

Val Bradley (HSRI), John Agosta (HSRI), Yoshi Kardell (HSRI)

Materials

Power Point/ Self Direction Regulation Description/ Marianne Meacham

Power Point/ HSRI/ Val Bradley, John Agosta

A role call was taken by Liz Sandblom. Nancy Alterio welcomed everyone and asked to approve the minutes from the last meeting (12.01.21).

First Motion to Accept: Robin Foley

Second Motion to Accept: Leo Sarkissian

No Discussion

Motion passed

Commissioner Update/ Jane Ryder

Jane said she was looking forward to the meeting and the opportunity meet new members. In looking back, she acknowledged the amount of work completed by since the Real Lives Law. In addition to a work plan to comply with the requirements of the legislation, there have been self-direction leads added to each region, many forums occurring across the state, and new systems established. There have been videos/ stories created for training use. Most importantly, the program continues to grow.

She talked about building on this foundation to go to the next level. There are four themes that reflect the two presentations today: 1) Transparency 2) Consistency 3) Clarity 4) Accountability.

Marianne Meacham, General Counsel for DDS will discuss the planning for self-direction regulations.

Val Bradley will review the three- year evaluation completed by HSRI and future planning.

Jane Ryder commented that she is looking forward to listening to the committee.

MASS Update/ Anne Fracht

Anne Fracht reported that MASS had their conference last week. There were at least (328) people attending; that number didn’t include groups watching together.

The workshops were wonderful as was the Commissioner’s presentation.

Anne Fracht hopes that next year the conference will be in person. She said that MASS is trying to get back in person slowly and cautiously.

New Members and Self-Direction Update/ Liz Sandblom

Liz Sandblom introduced two new members.

Jenna Shea said she is from Plymouth. She has a child who self-directs through an Agency with Choice. Jenna has had opportunities to meet with other families around self-direction. She wants to learn but will also provider her perspective.

Liz Fahey said she is from Wellesley and has a 26-year-old son who is self-directing. He was not happy with traditional day programs. Liz Fahey is working as a transition coach guiding families around the adult system. She is happy to be part of the committee and to lend her voice as part of the solution.

Liz Sandblom reminded the Board that there are two vacancies for self-advocates and/or family members. Please contact her is you know of someone who might be interested.

Liz Sandblom is working on filling vacancies for board members representing financial management services, representing taxpayers, and a professional with experience in working with non-profits.

Liz also announced that the Agency with Choice manual will soon be released. Her plan is to review the manual with the original committee and hopefully have it ready by the June meeting.

Regarding statistics in self-direction, there has been a 1.5% growth in the last quarter. For the period of 11.01.21 through 01.31.22, there were 1,828 individuals enrolled in self direction (1,067 in PDP, 761 in AWC).

(Later in the meeting, Liz Sandblom told the board that staff from TILL and Rewarding Work will attend the June meeting to discuss expansion of the website that is geared to recruit staff.)

Self-Direction Regulations/ Marianne Meacham

See power point.

Summary

Marianne Meacham reported that the regulations are not ready to go out for public comment. The legal department has worked with subject matter experts in DDS to develop them. Because self-direction is individualized, the regulations are “high level” but still provide a clear understanding of the program. Her presentation reviewed the components of the regulations. More specific guidance will come behind the regulations. That guidance will eventually include the work being done now on allocations.

Questions/ Comments

Robin Foley: Does the law require regulations in self-direction? Why is this coming up now?

Marianne Meacham: Regulations are required by the statute. The self-direction programs have been “outside” all the other programs. The regulations will provide more clarity.

Robin Foley expressed a concern about what the regulations would mean to families and is looking forward to reviewing them.

Barbara Pandolfi: Can you appeal a decision by DDS that self-direction is not appropriate for an individual?

Marianne Meacham: The individual does need to participate in the program with assistance. If denied, there could be an appeal. DDS must evaluate whether an individual can self-direct including any safety issues.

Leo Sarkissian: Where in your presentation do person-centered planning and budget authority come in?

Mariann Meacham: Person centered planning is a process in the regulations that is spelled out.

Kimberly Truong: Is there anything in the regulations about outreach to individuals who may not have assistance to self-direct?

Marianne Meacham: DDS does not expect everyone to have assistance self-directing.

Liz Fahey commented that it was great to see regulations coming. Families in informational sessions report conflict with the budget piece. They wonder if self-direction is for everyone.

Marianne Meacham: Individuals need to work within their budgets.

Jena Shea commented that her son is challenged and uses self-direction. She stated that service coordinators don’t always have the information. It is more than presenting a brochure. Self-direction may not be for everyone; but it needs to be taught and explained. Jena Shea also advocated for non-DDS supports, supports from the community.

Nancy Alterio thanked Marianne for her presentation and the board for such thoughtful feedback.

HSRI Consultation/ Val Bradley, John Agosta

See power point

Summary

Val Bradley commented that DDS has responded to many of the recommendation. Val Bradley discussed HSRI’s role and stated the agency was involved in other states and in Canada. She acknowledged that Massachusetts is unique and referenced the three-year evaluation completed by HSRI. Currently, HSRI is working in the “discovery phase.” John Agosta also presented and stated that HSRI staff would be attending future board meetings to update the board.

Val Bradley encouraged board member to contact HSRI to be interviewed.

Questions/ Comments

Robin Foley commented that she was very excited about the work and looked forward to future updates.

Regional Updates/ Self-Direction Managers

Ed Wilson discussed six modules of instruction created by the self-direction team to train or re-train support brokers. Support brokers could choose a topic or one module. The team has also upgraded the monthly sessions and added participation by a family member. The managers are working with PPL on a frequently asked questions document for families.

Jen Benoit told the group that the support broker toolbox has been re-worked and includes user friendly forms. In the forums, the managers are starting to use translators to reach out to different communities. Jen Benoit has been meeting with AWC providers and is working with area staff around introducing self-direction in a meaningful way to families.

Amy Nazaire reported that the Service Coordinator Institute presentation on self-direction has been re-booted to ensure that all service coordinators have a broad background in self-direction. Each region is offering a “DDS 101” forum that includes presentation of eligibility, children’s services, transition, and self-direction.

Nancy Alterio thanked the managers and acknowledged the work in the regions.

Public Comment

Leo Sarkissian pointed out that the meeting invitation link is not on the website.

Anne Fracht talked about a problem at her ISP around expenditures. DDS staff will follow up with her.

Jane Ryder thanked the board for their feedback and encouraged board members to contact HSRI around interviews.

Nancy Alterio called for a motion to adjourn. The next meeting will be on June 1.

First Motion to Adjourn: Rich Santucci

Second Motion to Adjourn: Leo Sarkissian

No Discussion

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail Gillespie