

**State Program Standing Committee Meeting
February 18, 2016
Comfort Inn, Berlin**

Attendees:

Committee Members: Emily Anderson, Rachel Colby, Anne Bakeman, Susan Yuan, Bethany Drum, Edwin Place, Nicole LeBlanc, Greg Mairs, Barb Prine

Visitors: Mark Utter, Kirsten Murphy (VTDDC), Kara Artus (Transition II), Ashley Querubin (Transition II), Shelley Martin (Transition II), Cathy Hull (UVS), Marlys Waller (VCP), Ellen Malone (RMHS/CAP), Dick Courcelle (RMHS/CAP), Karen Noone (GMSA), Michel Kersten (RMHS/CAP), Barbara Weintraub (RMHS/CAP), Ron Holm (RMHS/CAP), Ted Earle (RMHS/CAP), Lisa Lynch (RMHS/CAP), Dustin Redlein (RMHS/CAP), June Ward (RMHS/CAP), Janet Durkee (RMHS/CAP)

State Employees: Chris O'Neill, Joy Barrett, Melanie Feddersen, Roy Gerstenberger, Lisa Parro

Introductions, Review Agenda, and Approval of Minutes

Introductions were made.

Review of the Agenda

Theresa Wood is on the agenda to give an update on the letter she was going to write on behalf of the SPSC, as discussed in December. This letter was in regards to services for children, specifically services for children with autism. Theresa stated in an e-mail that someone else may want to take on writing this letter. Kirsten Murphy said she would be willing to assist with the letter; however, she is not a SPSC member. Susan will collaborate with Theresa and Kirsten to get the letter completed.

The meeting minutes were reviewed

Linda Berger and Kirsten Murphy's names need to be corrected. Nicole made a motion to accept the meeting minutes with these changes, Rachel seconded the motion. The meeting minutes for January were approved.

Status of New Member Recruitment – Barb Prine

Barb, Connie and Max are on the SPSC Nominating Committee. There is currently one vacant slot on the SPSC. The Committee members contacted the three individuals who applied to be members on the SPSC. One applicant withdrew their application due to a change in their job. The Committee does not have a unanimous recommendation about the two remaining applicants as they both offer representation for different groups: one individual uses facilitated

communication, which is an important issue and currently under scrutiny; the other individual represents a parent of a child with a disability.

After a discussion, a written ballot determined that the SPSC would recommend Mark Utter to the DAIL Commissioner for appointment to the SPSC.

DDSD Updates:

Comparison of VT Regulations to new HCBS Rules – Summary Documents

Vermont DDSD rules that govern how services operate have been compared to the new HCBS Rules and a draft summary has been created that shows where they either align, are “silent” on the issue or where they partially address the new provisions of HCBS rules. This is not an official release of Vermont’s transition plan. Once a transition plan has been completed it will be distributed for comment. Roy will send the draft summary to the SPSC. A certain number of hard copies were distributed at the meeting.

A transition advisory group is being formed to assist in designing a transition plan for Vermont in order to come into alignment with the new HCBS rule. This group will meet once a month for 10 months. Roy asked for volunteers from the SPSC to be a part of this group. Rachel Colby, Bethany Drum, Barb Prine, Kara Artus, Shelley Martin, Kirsten Murphy volunteered to be on the transition advisory group.

After assessing where we stand with regard to rules, a second step in creating a transition plan is to collect information about what is happening now in terms of the real experiences of people as they access services. Agencies that provide services will conduct a self-assessment survey. There will also be a voluntary survey for people receiving services. This is important because the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare has emphasized that the new HCBS rules represent a focus on outcomes (experiences) rather than just descriptions of how a community-based services looks like or is designed. Vermont has always had a person-centered focus and to continue our tradition it is important that the tools that we use to find out about service experience are built around person-centered approaches as well. Mr. Gerstenberger distributed a summary of Personal Outcome Measures that have been created by the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL). They’ve been in use across the country and explore how people who receive services are supported in meeting their goals around “My Life”, “My World” and “My Dreams”. These questions have been carefully designed and might inform how we design our survey. To learn more about them we have invited the director and staff of CQL to Vermont. Their presentation will be held on March 23rd at 10:00 at the Waterbury State Office Complex. The SPSC members are invited to come to this session, and a signup sheet was passed around for those interested in attending. It was noted that this is the same day as Disability Awareness Day, and an invite to the Disability Awareness Day activities should be extended to the Council on Quality and Leadership presenters. Committee members commented that a location in Montpelier might make it easier for people to access the presentation and also participate in the Awareness Day events. The division will explore alternative locations and keep everyone informed.

Budget update

It is the beginning of the budget process with the legislature looking at the DAIL budget for the upcoming fiscal year. DAIL had submitted level funding and engagement with the legislature continues. Mr. Gerstenberger noted that he was present at a portion of the Commissioner's testimony and that it was very strong and appeared to include positive engagement with committee members. He also stated that going forward there is a heightened urgency to addressing the strength and capacity of our network of designated and specialty services agencies from a financial standpoint. The cost of any business operation rises over time and that means that continued level funding requires internal funding reductions to stay in operations. Wages to the people who spend the most time with those that are served have not kept up with other businesses and as these remain the same over time the ability to keep those employees over time erodes. This means that the agencies actually experience higher costs as they need to recruit and train more often and the people who receive services have to be introduced to new people in their lives repeatedly. Mr. Gerstenberger emphasized that making the case for cost of living increases takes a long time and beginning now for the next budget season is critical. It's also important to appreciate that our designated agencies and specialty services agencies are limited in advocating on this issue by risking an appearance of being self-serving and so a broad stakeholder approach is necessary.

Marlys stated that there is a press conference on the 25th at 11:00 about the need for improved funding in the system. Mark and Nicole are speaking at this, and Mark will be speaking to the Senate and House Appropriations on Monday. The VCP FY 2015 Outcomes Report is posted on the Vermont Care Partners website. <http://vermontcarepartners.org/library.php>

SPSC Meeting Location:

The WSOC is now available as a meeting location for the SPSC monthly meetings. The SPSC voted to have the March meeting at the Waterbury State Office complex (WSOC) to try this location and will make a decision after this meeting as to whether to hold future meetings in Berlin or at the WSOC.

Rutland Mental Health Services Update:

In June 2015, the SPSC recommended to the DAIL Commissioner that Rutland Mental Health Services (RMHS) receive a provisional designation, which was supported by DAIL, and which they received from the Department of Mental Health (DMH) also. A plan of correction was submitted and accepted by DAIL and by DMH last August, which included extensive detail of what needed to be addressed. Since that time, RMHS has gone through a significant amount of change within the organization, has hired and placed people in places to strengthen the organization, and has had bi-weekly calls or visits from DAIL, monthly meetings with the Commissioner of DAIL and DMH, and has worked regularly with DAIL staff for technical support. RMHS presented a summary of plan changes for the organization. Chris O'Neill, Quality Team Leader, stated that RMHS has met every plan of correction, and has done everything that has been asked of them.

There was a lengthy discussion about whether there has been enough time since the plan of correction was created, approved, and put in place to determine if RMHS has made the necessary

changes to be re-designated at this time, or whether they should be given a provisional designation, or to extend the re-designation time for an additional 6 months. The regulations do not support a provisional designation or a delayed designation.

The regulations do not have any formal voting process for the SPSC to present additional recommendations to the DAIL Commissioner about whether the re-designation should occur at this juncture; however, if the SPSC agreed, they could send the Commissioner their thoughts. (This is only the second time this situation has arisen, and parts of the regulation are not clear, so DAIL is following the same process they did when the first situation arose.) It was suggested that the regulations should be reviewed to clarify the process and to give the SPSC input on situations such as this. Roy stated the regulations will be reviewed as part of the System of Care Plan (SOCP) update.

The DAIL Commissioner needs to notify RMHS of a decision about their re-designation by February 26th and a decision by the DMH Commissioner by February 27th.

A designation review is completed every 4 years; however, a designation can be revisited at any time, if the Division Director and DAIL Commissioner feel it is necessary. In September, the Quality Team will be conducting a QA Service Review at RMHS, which does include reviewing some of the same areas, and this review will show if these areas have been sustained. (QA Service Reviews are completed every 2 years.)

Barb moved to 'Recommend to Commissioner Hutt that RMHS be provisionally re-designated with the intent to re-designate DD service within 60 - 180 days, with the timeline of the 60-180 days to be determined by the provider and DAIL. Emily Seconded. Discussion continued. Vote for this motion was 1 yes, 7 no, 1 abstention.

Greg moved to 'Support the re-designation for RMHS and have the QA Team report back to the SPSC in 6 months with the QA Service Review report, with request to open re-designation at that time, if needed. Nicole seconded. Discussions continued. Vote for this motion was 7 yes, 2 abstentions. Roy will inform Commissioner Hutt of this decision.

SPSC Updates and Announcements

Nicole met with Congressman Peter Welch this morning.

Greg made a motion to adjourn; Nicole seconded it.