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DS State Program Standing Committee
Minutes
August 20, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT: Eric Bakeman; Max Barrows; Bethany Drum; Joe Greenwald; Dixie McFarland; Ed Place; Barbara Prine; Jessica Sanville; Connie Woodberry

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dawn Arsenault; Jean Danis; Dale Hindmarsh; Tracy Thresher; Alicia Weiss

STAFF and VISITORS: Rich Atkinson; Marlys Waller; Susan Yuan; Ginger Potwin; James Caffry; Jessica Sanville; Jeff Coy; Ellen Malone; Lanora Preedom; Karen Topper; Bob Turchin; Lorraine Wargo; Clare McFadden

Ed brought the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

Lorraine reviewed the minutes of May 21. Bethany made the motion to accept them as written, second by Connie. The vote was 8 to 1 – Joe Greenwald abstained.

Sterling Designation – Bob joined the meeting and explained the designation review process. He reviewed the report and explained that all areas reviewed met the standards.

Following is an overview of the questions and discussion:

- Susan asked if they could add a section regarding services provided to parents. Ellen said it would fall into a broader category in 4.7. Susan asked if it could be a sub-point making it consistent across all agencies.

- Joe asked why they didn't use the old Grievance procedures while waiting for new ones. Barbara suggested a letter to the agency indicating that it's not alright ("ok") to not have a procedure for 6 months. This letter would be separate from the designation. Marlys suggested they go back and find out exactly what they were doing and go on from there. Ellen suggested clarifying the word "suspended." Bob will get more information and report back to the committee.
- Ellen explained that she and Bob are taking over from Joe and asked patience if there are a few "bumps in the road" regarding the designation review process during this transition. One issue was that there was no designation review sub-committee for this review. Ellen asked if the committee is comfortable with the designation review sub-committee process. The Standing Committee members indicated that they want to continue sub-committee review process. Susan noted that at the beginning the sub-committee went to the agency. Bob clarified that this was back when they held public hearings. However, he noted that there is still opportunity for public input. Karen also noted that the small group presented the report to the full committee.

The ballots were passed out and Bob explained the voting procedure. The vote was 8 in favor of re-designation, one vote for re-designate minor. The vote passed to re-designate.

Bob noted that LCC (Lamoille Community Connections) will be coming up for re-designation in December and asked for volunteers for the designation review sub-committee to meet in November. Connie and Max volunteered. Lanora will call advocates to seek an additional volunteer.

Updates

Budget – Lorraine said the recent rescission impact on DS was minimal. There was a small reduction in PASARR funding (\$49,933). Ellen noted that this funding has historically been under utilized so it will not impact services. Janine continues to do the PASARR process.

Joe asked how the overall impact has been for DDAS. Lorraine said the past rescissions impacted all DDAS services. Joe asked if committee should write a

letter to the appropriate Legislators regarding the impact of the cuts. Eric made the motion that Joe will write a letter on behalf of the committee, second by Connie.

QM Review Process – there was lengthy discussion regarding the old process versus the new process. Bob indicated that for DS there are presently 3 reviewers who review each of the 16 agencies every two years. The new process has been used twice. Feedback from the agencies is that it feels “rushed.” Bob said that the questions and outcomes have been streamlined; they are not going out to people on the job or who receive community supports.

Connie is concerned that we are cutting too many corners. Ellen explained that we’re presently in an “evaluation” process and will discuss again in the next couple of weeks.

Susan noted that Adult Protective Services and guardians are also impacted – she is also concerned about the cumulative impact of the cuts.

The difference between quality review, which is done every 2 years and re-designation, which is done every 4 years was discussed. It was explained that re-designation is done during one of the quality reviews; there are additional questions and DDAS staff spend extra days at an agency during the re-designation process.

Heads up

- Background check policy was distributed and will be reviewed at the September meeting.
- Critical Incident Reporting process is still being redesigned and will be reviewed at a future meeting.

Best Practice Guidelines for Diagnosis of Pervasive Developmental Disorders – Clare joined the meeting and distributed the guidelines. She explained that these guidelines are in response to inconsistencies to evaluations from evaluators; especially around developmental services. Clare is looking for input. It doesn’t change the criteria for services but how to make/do an evaluation; i.e. how to conduct, what tests are given, process used, etc. It will also be used as a tool to train evaluators.

Concerns/Feedback:

- Could end up costing us more to have evaluations done because of the amount of information that we are asking to be reviewed and included.

- It may result in fewer evaluators having the proper credentials to do the evaluation and this resulting in longer timelines to get evaluations completed.
- Suggestion to get more people trained before requiring agencies to follow these guidelines.
- Suggestion to have talks with UVM about reviving their program in the psychology dept that focused on people with DD. This would get more psychologists trained in evaluation.
- A number of people applauded the effort to get consistency in the process.
- Pretty easy to read, not too technical or jargony.

Eric said the document looks good; the members agreed.

Training for Committee members – Training for new and other interested committee members regarding the operating procedures and designation process will be scheduled in the near future.

Lorraine asked if the committee would like some time set aside on future agendas for specific presentations; for example, highlight special efforts or initiatives from the DS Agencies. There was agreement on this idea.

Nominating Committee – it was reported that due to the resignation of Steve Neron the nominating committee needs another appointee from the Recipients. Ed Place volunteered. Eric made the motion to nominate Ed, second by Dixie and voted 8 to 1 (Ed abstained).

Other Business – Jessica reported a “Save the Date” – the Vermont Choices for Self-Advocacy are presenting a “Flame” concert on September 24 at Lyndon State College, Twilight Theater, from 4 – 7 p.m. – It’s open to the public and donations will go to the Newport National Guard.

They are also doing a lot of work around disability awareness.

She also reported that there will be a Global Campuses conference in Burlington, November 3 at the Davis Center. All campuses are doing presentations, and workshops highlighting what participants are doing.

Reorganization (DDAS) – during the last round of RIF’s (reduction in force) we lost a number of positions. One was the training coordinator position held by Jeff Coy – the division is working on a document to identify what training will be done and this will be brought to the committee in the near future.

Retirements – The division also has a few early retirements – Avi Freund, QM Reviewer; Gail Falk, Director, Office of Public Guardian; and Lorraine Wargo, Director, DDAS. There are two others that are not yet confirmed. Avi’s last day is August 28; Lorraine and Gail will leave on December 31.

Everyone thanked Lorraine for all she’s done.

Bethany made a motion to adjourn the meeting, second by Jessica. The meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.

Submitted,

Lanora Freedom
Staff Assistant