

Division of Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council

Year End Report-2014

December 17, 2014

The Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council (DDAC) would like to express their appreciation for affording individuals, families and providers the opportunity to be a part of the continued efforts to improve service delivery to citizens with developmental disabilities in Georgia. This year, we have continued to focus our attention on areas in which we believe can improve the quality and efficiency of service delivery. The DDAC have tried to remain focused on matters that have the potential for wide-spread improvement for individuals, families, service providers, and other stakeholders within the DD system.

To date, we have worked diligently to represent the DD Community in a positive way while embracing objectivity and diversity. Having an opportunity for individuals, families, providers and advocacy agencies, to work together on the Advisory Council has helped to cultivate and strengthen needed partnerships across the service delivery system.

Here is a summary of the activities and progress made over the past year:

Partnership- We have continued to strengthen the collaboration within the DDAC, and embraced the use of stories to highlight the positive things happening for people who use services, families, and for those that support them. The DDAC utilized stories as a way to support their recommendations, and think creatively about needed enhancements for current and future services. Sharing experiences also cultivated mutual respect for a diverse group of people, who occasionally differed in perspectives, but who ultimately shared the same values and high expectations for service delivery.

Families-Families represented on the DDAC report that the office of DD is taking families into account with the entire process (which was not always the case). Families now have a voice that is heard and respected throughout the DD administration and Department of Community Health. Being involved with the Transition Plan, Medicaid Waiver re-write and other various committees has helped everyone understand families concerns and the impact waivers have on them.

There is still more work that needs to be accomplished for families to have a voice (like providers) and in all aspects of the DD system for both present and future services.

Policy Review Calendar-The DDAC continued to participate in a review process for new or revised policy changes. This process provided an opportunity for thorough review and comment by all stakeholders regarding the impact for proposed changes in DBHDD's Division of DD's policies and standards. The DDAC reviewed and provided feedback regarding a variety of policy changes and community standards revisions throughout the year.

Although progress has been made, there is still a need for continued work to ensure that this process is completed in a timely manner, and that affords the opportunity for follow up on DDAC recommendations.

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Communication-Consistent monthly updates from Dan Howell, Sara Case, and other DD staff have been a real asset to the enhancement of communication between the Division and stakeholders. This has also provided an opportunity for the Council to actively engage in dialogue with the Division, request progress reports, and provide insight regarding a variety of issues and topics. Council members who represent families, advocacy groups, and providers have been very consistent in providing feedback and facilitating opportunities for input from their respective stakeholder groups. Members have also been afforded the opportunity to meet with the DD Director on an individual basis to discuss challenges that may be more unique to the stakeholder group they represent.

The DDAC is unanimous that there is still much that needs to be accomplished pertaining to the work and information that is generated from the regional offices. Information that is consistent across regions, and that reflects accurate communication still remains a challenge. Needed improvements for access to services and for the time it takes to receive services once awarded a Waiver are also challenges identified by the DDAC. The DDAC has appreciated hearing directly from Ms. Fitzgerald about future plans that include a redesign of the regions.

Supported Employment Leadership Network (SELN)-Several Council members are actively engaged in the work of the SELN. During 2014 presentations were provided from advocacy organizations regarding the efforts that are being leveraged at both the state and national level to increase supported employment. DD division staff have provided regular updates regarding the recent implementation of the SE pilots, and the DDAC members participating in the pilots have also provided progress reports.

Ongoing work to be accomplished includes adequate resources for individuals that need more intensive support to work, provider capacity, and regional planning list that reflect accurate information.

Quality Management System- This was a priority that was identified during the early work of the DD advisory council. The DDAC was pleased that this year there was progress with the development of quality indicators, which includes all segments of the DD system. The DDAC along with other stakeholders and division staff worked in collaboration to develop the indicators and establish the data sources. The DDAC is especially pleased that the indicators incorporate the entire system and not just the provider network.

The DDAC is hopeful that this process will not create another layer of oversight, which would add to the multiple reviews that providers already encounter.

Support Coordination- In January, 2013, the DDAC identified priorities for needed improvement to the service delivery system; support coordination was rated as one of the highest. This year DDAC have been represented on the steering committee that have worked to establish the pioneer project. We are hopeful that the needed changes, once fully implemented, will result in positive outcomes for the people who utilize services. The DDAC represented on the steering committee are very encouraged that months of planning will be put into action in less than a week. DDAC members speak very positively about the teamwork, cooperation and trust that has been developed among all the participants - including staff from the state, Region 2 offices, Support Coordination, consultants and everyone

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involved in the planning process. The process has been ever changing and carefully recorded, so that it can be replicated in other Regions.

Medicaid Re-write-DDAC members along with other stakeholders have recently begun work on the re-write of the Medicaid Waiver. The DDAC feel they have much to contribute and are encouraged to be involved in the process.

To enhance the Advisory Council's work we embraced new and shared learning. During the past year, presentations to the Advisory Council have included the following topics and presenters:

- GCDD-Legislative Work-Supported Employment
- Micro Boards-Jillian Grable
- My Voice, My Participation, My Board Report-GSU-Nandi Isaac, Joseph Morman
- Role of the Quality Council-Delmarva-Marion Oliver
- National Trends-IDD-Diane McComb
- Final Rule-Covering Expectations for HCBS settings and Person Centered Planning, Mary Lou Bourne
- Facilitation of DDAC Planning and Evaluation meetings, SDA-Mary Lou Bourne

Respectfully,
Deborah Conway, DD Advisory Council Chair

Bruce Linderman, Estelle Duncan, Sheryl Arno, Eve Bogan, Lynette Bragg, June DiPolito, Charles Harper, Curt Harrison, Mitzi Proffitt, Nandi Isaac, Twana King, Bobby Holcomb, Heidi Moore, Mitzi Proffitt, Rita Young.