

Conversation with the Commissioner

Megan Tierney-Ward, Deputy Commissioner and William Kelly, DAIL Director of Finance

Disability Awareness Day-

The next DAIL Advisory Board meeting is scheduled on the same day as the Disability Awareness Day at the state house. Deputy Commissioner Tierney-Ward proposed to the board that the meeting on March 12 take place in Montpelier at 133 State Street, in board room 4 from 10:00-11:00. After the abbreviated meeting, advisory board members are then encouraged to go to the state house for Disability Awareness day activities. DAIL will provide a voucher to use at the State House Café for lunch and will reimburse for parking expenses. This proposal was brought to a vote and the advisory decided to have the next meeting in Montpelier with 7 members voting yes, 2 abstaining and 0 nays.

Monica White would love to pull the DAIL Advisory Board together for a group picture at the state house. The Commissioner's office will coordinate that.

DAIL Budget-

William Kelly, DAIL Director of Finance and Deputy Commissioner Tierney-Ward reviewed the proposed DAIL SFY21 Budget. Please visit the DAIL website to see the full SFY21 Budget Testimony (<https://dail.vermont.gov/resources/legislative/legislative-testimony>).

DAIL was instructed to propose a level fund budget but the proposed budget is higher than last year to accommodate for some pressures like increased caseloads. Governor Scott presented his recommended budget to the legislature which included DAIL's proposed SFY21 Budget. After the legislature hears testimony from the State and advocates, the "big bill" will be created and voted on. That means the final DAIL budget could still change prior to final approval.

Annual Report-

Deputy Commissioner Tierney-Ward reviewed the DAIL Annual Report that contains information that the community and partners may find helpful. The report provides an overview of the work that had been done in 2019 and the work that the department is preparing for in 2020. See full report at: <https://dail.vermont.gov/resources/documents-reports/annual-reports>

Questions that were raised by advisory board members:

1. **With the Health Disparities grant that Vermont Department of Health (VDH) has had expiring, are there any strategies that DAIL is considering?** DAIL will bring VDH to a future DAIL Advisory Board meeting to discuss the grant and what DAIL and other partners are doing on the topic of Health Disparities.
2. **What is Hub and Spoke?** Hub and Spoke is a care model for addressing, in this case, Alzheimer's and dementia, quickly and efficiently for people. Liz Perreault will send out information that explains the model to the advisory board.

3. **How is the lack of workforce being addressed?** The Rural Health Task Force Report has some concrete ideas on how Vermont could address this statewide challenge. You can read the report here: <https://gmcboard.vermont.gov/content/rural-health-services-task-force>

APS Committee and DLP Annual Report

John Gordon, Director of Adult Protective Services (APS)

John Gordon, Director of Adult Protective Services (APS), came to the advisory board to present the Division of Licensing and Protection (DLP) piece of the DAIL annual report and to give an update on the APS Committee.

DLP is a division in DAIL. It houses both Survey and Certification (S&C) and APS. Vermont has chosen to have both of these units together because of the nature of the work creates some overlap. S&C oversees the safety and protection of vulnerable adults by making sure regulations are being followed by facilities and APS will investigate individuals who are suspected of abusing, neglecting or exploiting a vulnerable adult.

S&C is mostly paid by the Federal Government because the regulations that govern the nurse surveyor's work is from Centers for Medicaid and Medicare (CMS) which is a federal program. Nurse surveyors go into facilities and investigate when there are complaints. If there aren't complaints, they will visit a facility once every two years to make sure the facility is compliant with all regulations.

APS is working on rewriting the statute that guides the work of APS. When the current statute was written, it was at a time when the focus was to protect vulnerable adults who were living in facilities. With more people living in their own homes and the community longer, the need to investigate and hold people accountable are also in the community and not employed by a facility or provider. As the statute stands now, if a person is substantiated for abusing, neglecting or exploiting a vulnerable adult, they are placed on a registry that would prevent them from working with that population. However, most times, it isn't someone who does that type of work who is substantiated so being put on a registry isn't much of a consequence.

APS has received approval to accept the ACL Grant that will pilot a restorative justice program in Vermont. This program will be piloted in the north west part of the state. This program will work with the people who have been substantiated in an APS investigation. The goal will be to help the individuals involved get to a healthier place and to prevent future incidents.

The APS Committee is a subcommittee of the DAIL Advisory Board. The APS Committee includes DAIL Advisory Board member, APS staff and stakeholders. The purpose of the committee is to be a check and balance of the APS investigations. The members will do file reviews of investigations and screen outs. In the past, the legislature required an Annual APS report. That requirement has expired but APS continues to write the report and give it to the legislature. That report will be on the DAIL website soon.

Next week the committee is participating in an all-day retreat to look at the APS statute. It will be an opportunity to look at the best way to move the statute to meet the needs of today's vulnerable adults. Self-neglect is one topic that will likely be addressed in this process. Currently, Vermont doesn't have any clear interventions for those who may be unable to make fully informed decisions for themselves which leads to self-neglect. The committee will be looking at what other states do to glean processes and ideas.

DAB Member Updates

Kristen Murphy (guest) wanted to share that the Developmental Disabilities Council will be hosting a night of storytelling and pie at the state house on February 20, 2020 from 4:30-6:00.

Meeting was adjourned: 1:26