

# **DAIL Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

## **January 14, 2021**

### **Microsoft Teams Phone/Video Conference**

#### **ATTENDEES**

**Board Members:** Ruby Baker, Nancy Breiden, Avril Cochran, Jim Coutts, Kim Fitzgerald, Joseph Greenwald, Jeanne Hutchins, Frances Keeler, Laura McDonald, Nick McCardle, Michelle Monroe, Delaina Norton, Steven Pouliot, Cathy Swain, Marie Zura

**Guests:** Howard Goudro, Meg Bermister, Lynne Cardozo, Chris Davey, Virginia Renfrew, Janet Hunt, Sean Londergan, Lynne Cleveland Vitzhum, Melissa Morrison

**State Employees:** Monica Hutt, Liz Perreault, Megan Tierney-Ward, Kirsten Murphy, Angela McManm, Angela Smith-Dieng, Susan Aranoff

**Motion to Approve Minutes:** December 10, 2021 minutes: Move to Approve: Nick McCardle  
Seconded: Marie Zura

A move to correct the last name of the new chair of HHH that appears in the Board Updates from Paisley to Pacy.

Abstained: Nancy Breiden

**Minutes are approved with correction.**

#### **DAIL Updates/Time with the Commissioner Megan Tierney-Ward, Deputy Commissioner**

##### **Vaccination work:**

1. Though DAIL is not the lead in the vaccination plan, we do have a role in facilitating technical assistance and communication.
2. DAIL has facilitated technical assistance calls with VDH vaccination team and LTC facilities who are working with pharmacies to obtain vaccines. The goal is to have nursing facility vaccines done by the end of the month and RCH/ALR first shots done by the end of the month.
3. VDH published a HAN December 31 explaining that hospitals are the hub for vaccinating front line healthcare workers in their catchment areas (otherwise referred to as phase "1a"). HCBS providers that are considered front line healthcare workers were asked to contact their local hospitals if they had not heard from them by 1/11.
4. DAIL coordinated a communication with VDH to Independent Direct Support Workers informing them of their status as front-line healthcare workers to access vaccines through their local hospital.
5. State is using data to determine the best way to prioritize vaccines with the goal of preventing deaths. This is why you'll see the age approach targeting people 65+.

#### CRF:

1. DAIL distributed about \$7M CRF grants July through December.
  - a. Adult Day
  - b. AAA/Senior Meals
  - c. Eldercare Clinicians
  - d. DS – Family Support
  - e. RCH/ALR – Emergency COVID Outbreak support
  - f. BH&R Hospital Flow
  - g. VABVI – Technology training for Older Vermonters
2. Commissioner Hutt is testifying today about use of CRF funds to date and unmet needs.
3. The legislature is working to prioritize use of remaining CRF as of 12/31/20.
4. We do not yet know how the new federal stimulus package will affect DAIL.

#### DAIL ongoing Support to LTC Facilities:

1. The DAIL emergency fit testing team was deployed for the first time to fit staff for a small RCH.
2. DAIL is finalizing a plan for a new round of fit testing support through the State's ATC contract, to LTC facilities starting this month.
3. DAIL finalized a plan for getting needed PPE to Independent Direct Support Workers via local partners. The [process](#) is posted on the DAIL COVID [Caregiver Resources](#) web page and is being distributed to employers via ARIS.
4. DAIL continues to provide technical support with PPE and staffing to LTC facilities experiencing a "situation" or outbreak. Monica White will give more updates on the staffing pool model.

#### Positions:

1. DAIL received approval to hire for the APS supervisor position. Thank you Steve Pouliot, chair of the APS subcommittee, for providing a letter of support for the position.
2. Two positions were transferred from DCF to DAIL to support the Individual Career Advancement Network or ICAN. This program supports beneficiaries of the states 3Squares program overcome barriers to employment to get off of the food stamp benefits. Going through request to hire now.

#### Senator Leahy FY2022 Appropriations Request Worksheet:

1. DAIL submitted a request for \$3.6M for Older Americans Act Home Delivered Meals to support the cost of preparing and delivering additional home-delivered meals to qualifying older Vermonters age 60+. The additional funding will continue higher levels of pandemic/post-pandemic service through FFY2022.
2. DAIL also submitted a request for \$500K for Resilient Workplace Vermont Initiative to enable small businesses to participate in the Resilient Vermont Workplace Initiative, which will provide training to employers and support services to employees struggling with the stress of Covid-19 and other daily stressors, such as those involving mental health and substance use. The program will lead to more resilient workplaces throughout Vermont. More resilient workplaces lead to healthier workers and more productive and successful businesses.

#### Non-COVID Work

1. DAIL is working on the plan for the Older Vermonters Act (Act 156) plan and the Self-Neglect working group.
2. DAIL is initiating discussions with DVHA payment reform to look at Adult Day system of care.

3. The Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) commission is taking up the topic of racism by people with dementia against caregiver staff.
4. DAIL is participating in a project to evaluate how we handle out of state placements for Vermonters across the agency.

A question was raised if Therapeutic Community Residences (TCR) are the in the same classification as Nursing Home Facilities for vaccinations? Would people living in TCRs be eligible for the 1a group for vaccinations? Yes, they are included in this phase.

### **Electronic Visitation Verification**

#### **Bill Clark, Department of Health Access**

The electronic visitation verification (EVV) system has two tracks. One for consumer-directed Independent Direct Support Workers (IDSW) and their employers, and one for Home Health Agencies (HHA). The HHAs have been using a similar system and the State has created an interface for the two systems to communicate. There have been a few glitches, but they have been mostly resolved.

For consumer directed services, all IDSW and their employers are entered into Sandata EVV system by ARIS employees. On November 4, 2020, the EVV pilot for this group started. On November 16, 2020, a full roll out of the EVV system began. There have been eleven trainings for IDSW so far, with more coming in the future.

The Center of Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) considers the system to be compliant. There continues to be deeper, more thorough testing of the system as it is being used. A part of the validation was making sure services that were given were authorized services. DAIL staff will pull reports to see what has been authorized and compare it to the data to ensure continued compliance with CMS rules.

### **Request for DAIL Advisory Board Member's Legislative Priorities**

#### **Megan Tierney-Ward, Deputy Commissioner**

Kim Fitzgerald- SASH's priorities are increases in the Medicaid rate, affordable housing, and SASH funding.

Ruby Baker- COVE's main priorities are rewriting the APS statute, housing for older Vermonters, commercial insurance coverage for hearing aids.

Kirsten Murphy- The Developmental Disabilities Council's priorities are creating an advocacy office much like the Ombudsman Project, advocating for an independent cost analysis of the All-Payor Model before renewing the contract, and advocating for commercial coverage for hearing aids.

### **Conversation with the Commissioner**

#### **Monica Hutt, Commissioner**

- The SFY22 budget is not yet ready for public release but will be brought to the board in February.
- A working group is being formed for people with Autism transitioning from children's services to adult services. This working group will look at options to make that transition more successful and will make recommendations on how to do that.
- DAIL's work is still heavily submerged in responding to needs coming from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there is more of the "regular" work moving into our daily work lives, which is encouraging.

- DAIL sent out an employee survey to understand what is working well and what is not during remote work. It is important to catalogue what has gone well over the past eight months and try to implement what we have learned as we move forward.
- People who are paid through ARIS will soon receive a letter informing them that they qualify for the 1a band of people receiving vaccinations. They are considered home health workers and will be instructed to contact their local hospital to register for a vaccination.

A question was posed about people who have Down Syndrome, who are at a very high risk, and whether they will be put at the top of the list to be vaccinated? DAIL is not part of the policy conversation but those with Down Syndrome will be in the age group of 65 years of age and older. At that point, many who have comorbid conditions will also be in that group.

### **COVID-19 Staffing Pool and Vaccination Plan**

#### **Monica White, Director of Operations**

On December 11, 2020, the staffing pool became active. It coordinated TLC staff to fill in at 10 different facilities to fill staffing shortages. The Health Outbreak Priority Response (HOPR) team made up of VDH and DAIL staff, support facilities during outbreaks with staffing and coordinate fit testing for N95 masks.

The team has also worked with a Vermont communications firm to help promote recruitment for the staffing pool, which the firm has done pro bono. The team is clear that they do not want to take staffing from one agency or facility to put in another. The request is for people who want to use their flexible time.

Please contact Monica if you have any input to share. [Monica.white@vermont.gov](mailto:Monica.white@vermont.gov)

### **Collective Bargaining Agreements**

#### **Stuart Schurr, General Council and Bard Hill, Principal Assistant**

In 2013, Act 48 gave home care providers the right to have a labor organization and the State is used to negotiate compensation, benefits, and training. In 2014, the State and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), a collective bargaining union, began negotiations. Both DAIL and the Department of Health has worked with AFSCME to come up with an agreed minimum wage for Independent Direct Support Workers. ARIS monitors the pay rate to ensure that workers are being fairly compensated according to the contract.

In June of 2020, the contract expired, and the rate of pay has been a sticking point and is why the State and AFSCME had reached an agreement. Those differences have been addressed and the contract will be ready soon. This union includes approximately 8,500 home care workers in the state of Vermont.

### **Advisory Board Perspective**

#### **Michelle Monroe, Advisory Board Member**

Michelle shared with the board that she had been a registered nurse for 20 years and retired when her Multiple Sclerosis advanced to a stage that prevented her from working. She had worked at a nursing home in Middlebury then worked at Wake Robin in Shelburne. She also did home care for an older gentleman.

She currently lives in a community care home. Michelle shared that COVID-19 has been hard because she has become home bound, and it's affected her exercise routine. However, she has started using remote communication which has been good.

She is the proud mother of four children and is happy to be able to volunteer for the DAIL advisory board.

### **DAIL Advisory Board - Future Agenda Topics**

#### **Advisory Board Members**

- Self-neglect work group.
- SFY22 Budget.
- Member perspective: Marie Zura, Cathy Swain volunteered for upcoming months.
- Autism.
- Dementia and their caregivers.
- DDS update.
- White paper about DD in the workforce update (March or May).
- Results of the COVID survey of participants (February or March).

#### **DAIL Advisory Board Updates**

##### **Advisory Board**

No updates.

#### **Meeting was adjourned**

**Marie Zura moved to adjourned, Kim Fitzgerald second. 12:29**