

DAIL Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2020
Microsoft Teams Video Conference Call

ATTENDEES

Board Members: Ruby Baker, Nancy Breiden, Avril Cochran, Kim Fitzgerald, Joseph Greenwald, Jeanne Hutchins, Frances Keeler, Nick McCardle, Michelle Monroe, Delaina Norton, Diane Novak, Steven Pouliot, Christine Scott, Beth Stern, Cathy Swain, Lorraine Wargo, Marie Zura

Guests: Susan Aranoff, Lucy Garand, Christopher Davey, Sean Londergan, and Lynne Cardozo

State Employees: Monica Hutt, Liz Perreault, Megan Tierney Ward, Kirsten Murphy, Bard Hill

Motion to Approve Minutes: April 9, 2020: Move to Approve: Nick McCardle
Seconded: Diane Novak
Abstained: Avril Cochran, Joe Greenwald, and Cathy Swain

Minutes are approved as written.

DAIL welcomes Cathy Swain and Avril Cochran as our new Advisory Board members!

DAIL COVID Updates:

Monica Hutt, Commissioner and Megan Tierney-Ward, Deputy Commissioner

- DAIL has continuously followed the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Vermont Department of Health (VDH) guidelines as work continues through the state of emergency due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This guidance is constantly changing and how DAIL does business reflect the changes in guidance.
- DAIL has been manning a Long-Term Care (LTC) call line for families and providers to find answers to questions they have. There are 6-8 DAIL staff members monitoring the phones throughout the day. This call center was established when the VDH call center was inundated with calls that were specific to LTC.
- Division Directors have been holding regular calls with providers; AAA, Adult Day Centers, Senior Centers, Home Health, and others. A comprehensive list of activities that DAIL has done during the state of emergency is attached to these minutes.
- Providers have continued services to some level using telephonic and telehealth options. Meals on Wheels has also continued.
- Start-up will be much harder than when everything shut down. There will be more potential for spreading the virus the more we come into contact. It will be vital to find and hold the balance between providing services and keeping people as safe as possible.

DAIL Legislative and Budget Updates:

Monica Hutt, Commissioner

The legislature continues to meet remotely. The bills that are moving are:

- S.346, the Essential Persons bill- This bill proposes to create the 7 Essential Employees Hazard Grant Program for the payment of grants to 8 employees performing essential work that exposes them to an increased risk of 9 contracting COVID-19.
- H. 635, Long-term care facilities; receivership- This bill proposes to make modifications to the laws regarding the State's regulation of long-term care facilities by: (1) authorizing the Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living to take immediate enforcement action to eliminate a condition that can be reasonably expected to cause mental harm to residents or staff; (2) adding a definition of "insolvent" to be applied in the context of the regulation of long-term care facilities; and (3) prohibiting any actions taken by a court-appointed temporary receiver from being used by a long-term care facility in support of its opposition to the Department's request for a receivership.
- H.950, Health care; advance directives; remote witnesses- This bill proposes to allow for 6 remote witnessing of advance directives for a limited period in 7 response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We have not heard anything at this time about the Older Vermonters Act bill.

The 2021 budget, which begins on July 1, will consist of 23% of the 2020 budget for the first quarter from July 1 through the end of September. DAIL is required to have a FY2021 budget prepared by mid-August that will carry the department through the rest of the year, beginning October 1.

The State of Vermont is expecting money from the federal government, the Corona Virus Relief Fund, that will help support DAIL providers and families. This fund is different from the CARES Act that provides economic assistance for workers, families, and small businesses.

The Joint Fiscal Committee, and the legislature as a whole, has been very supportive in allowing the Agency of Human Services spend money to provide economic support to workers, providers and families without having to go through the usual process. Now that the crisis has slowed, the legislature will once again require that spending be approved prior to dispersal of funds.

DAIL Q and A with Advisory Board:

How do independent care providers get access to Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)? Intendent Direct Support Workers and their employers were informed via ARIS, of the State PPE application. Providers who need technical support may contact Melanie Feddersen who is coordinating distribution of PPE. (melanie.feddersen@vermont.gov)

What, if any, gathering can older Vermonters do and still observe the CDC and VDH guidelines? Will there be any specific guidance for the different sectors? There is a template on the website to help

providers create a plan and a place to ask for guidance. Megan will look into it more and report back to the board with more information. All sector plans to reopen will be vetted by VDH.

What will the new normal look like and what has the department learned? DAIL has learned that while Choices for Care managers have had to do more telephonic check-ins, the client satisfaction is through the roof! There has been savings in travel time and expenditures which is one of many unexpected positive outcomes. It is difficult to know what the new normal is going to look like. Once things open more the department will have a better sense on what that might look like.

With the Howard Center furloughing staff, what impact has that had on clients and their families?

The staff that were furloughed continued to be employees of the Howard Center. They were staff that could not fill a need in the agency during the pandemic and their anticipated return to work is June 28. VCP is helping the agencies develop a unified strategy to reopening. There will be some differences from agency to agency due to unique situations.

There is an Adult Day closing in Central Vermont (CV). How is that gap going to be filled? Generally speaking, communities usually identify their unmet need for adult day services in their region. In this case, DAIL is communicating with parties who have expressed interest in providing that service for the CV area.

How are other Adult Day programs doing? There is a Medicaid retainer application that is intended to help fill the financial gap during the closing of programs through June. The State is still considering how to financially support programs beyond June.

There is concern that Moderate Needs people will lose services with the programs closed. Will that happen? At this point, the proposed budget supports the continuation of services through the first quarter of SFY21. AHS will be creating a full budget in August for submission in September. If agencies need technical assistance on how to manage Moderate Needs services through the first quarter, please contact Angela McMann at the Adult Services Division.

Vermont Developmental Services are not experiencing the illnesses and deaths that are happening across the nation because we are more community based, is there a way to quantify those numbers? Population density is a key factor in rate of infection but there is not a state that is tracking this population. What is being tracked is age, race, and gender.

DAIL Advisory Board COVID-19 and Other Updates:

Ruby Baker- COVE is publishing a resource guide that will be out on June 30. Also, the COVE Policy Committee is working on high level brainstorming and is looking for thoughts and ideas. Ruby will send a link for ideas to the board.

Cathy Swain- With summer approaching, people from out of state are coming to stay in their summer homes. That may have some negative implications with the virus spiking, or it could help the Vermont economy.

Kristen Murphy- Hello Neighbor newspaper will insert 76,000 copies of best practices for people with a developmental disability.

Future Meetings- Format and Topics:

Megan Tierney-Ward

Ideas for topics: COVID updates, Older Vermonters Act and master plan on aging

Please send Megan any other ideas you may have. (megan.tierney-ward@vermont.gov)

Meeting was adjourned – 11:51

DRAFT