

DAIL Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2021

Microsoft Teams/WSOC Red Maple

ATTENDEES

Board Members: Ruby Baker, Lynne Cardozo, Jane Catton, Kim Fitzgerald, Joseph Greenwald, Michael Gruteke, Jeanne Hutchins, Laura McDonald, Nick McCardle, Michelle Monroe, Delaina Norton, Steven Pouliot, Marie Zura

Guests: Howard Goodrow, Alexander Bobella, Meg Polyte, Pam Zagorski, Sean Londergan, Marie Lallier, Dan Norris, Lucie Garand

State Employees: Monica White, Megan Tierney-Ward, Liz Perreault, Kirsten Murphy, Will Fritch, Angela McMann, Fred Jones, Joe Nusbaum, Jessica Bernard, Jeffery Nunemaker

Motion to Approve Minutes: November 4, 2021, minutes: Move to Approve: Mike Gruteke
Seconded: Steve Pouliot

Minutes are approved as written.

DAIL Updates:

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

1. Hospital beds – Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) project. Last month DAIL reported that CRF is paying the extraordinary costs to staff three facilities (Burlington Health & Rehab, St. Albans Health & Rehab, Mt. View) to reopen up to 80 beds at \$1.4M. DAIL has granted CRF to two more facilities (Green Mt. & Rutland Health & Rehab) with the potential of up to three more (Centers for Living & Rehab, Newport Health Care, Woodridge). DAIL working with AHS business office to identify funding beyond 12/31/21 which is the deadline for spending COVID Relief Funds. The Adult Services Division (ASD) team continues to provide transition support to people with complex needs and people who wish to return to the community after a SNF stay.
2. Assistive Community Care Services (ACCS)/Enhanced Residential Care (ERC) rate study moving along. DVHA and DAIL met with VT Healthcare Association stakeholders to review draft assumptions that will be used to build a rate. Received very positive feedback along with next steps to obtain further input from facility stakeholders before finalizing the proposed model in January. At this point there is not an appropriation identified for a rate increase, which would need to be addressed after the rate model is finalized.
3. Upcoming project: DAIL's Operations Team is leading a new project to improve recruitment and retention of quality employees through an evidence-based competency model called Korn Ferry Competency Framework, that includes Diversity/Equity/Inclusion elements as well. The goal is to roll out a plan early 2022 to develop a core set of competencies that will be used to recruit quality candidates and guide employees in their performance and career development. Once the plan is finalized, we'll bring it to the DAIL advisory board.

4. Adult Days: Act 74 appropriated \$5M in State Fiscal Recovery (SFR) ARPA funds to support financial stability of Vermont's eleven Adult Day Centers. All centers are currently open and serving Vermonters using recommended COVID precautions. Recently, the VT Association of Adult Day Services (VAADS) notified DAIL that the industry is expecting they may need additional funds to support them through the remainder of the fiscal year. When VAADS made the original request to the legislature of \$5 million for the fiscal year, they anticipated opening at a higher capacity than they are now, resulting in lower-than-expected revenue to support financial stability/infrastructure. Lower census is due to the continued COVID pandemic, space restrictions and statewide workforce shortages. VAADS will likely ask the Legislature for additional assistance in Budget Adjustment to support their financial stability throughout the fiscal year.

Additionally, DAIL has had conversations with interested parties regarding opening up new adult day centers in the three regions that closed during the pandemic, however, interested parties are in early planning phases and are not ready to open adult day centers at this point in the pandemic.

DAIL Operations Team Updates:
Will Fritch, Director of Operations

The operations team consists of Will Fritch, Director of Operations and Hope Smith, Operations Administrator and Public Records Officer. The current department wide priorities for the team are:

- Workforce development and competencies.
- Staff hiring, recruitment, and evaluations.
- Accessibility issues.
- Records management.
- Safety and security at DAIL worksites.
- Building space/office spaces.
- Media, communications, press releases.
- COVID response, rapid response team.

The COVID rapid response team that Will is a member of responds to any case that is found in a facility to avoid an outbreak. If there are three or more linked cases in a facility, that is considered an outbreak. The use of monoclonal antibodies is part of the strategy to minimize hospitalizations but are not being as widely used.

Will has been working with hospitals, facilities, and the Vermont Health Care Association to find beds for people who are hospitalized but can be treated in a nursing home versus the hospital. The purpose of moving people to a facility is to alleviate the pressures in the hospitals.

Work to find funding that will pay for limited-service staff has been happening with Vermont Department of Health (VDH). This additional staff would allow for regular DAIL staff to go back to their regular duties and the COVID work would be done by the limited-service staff.

DBVI Division Updates and Technology Grant Project Update

Fred Jones, DBVI Division Director; Steve Pouliot, VABVI Executive Director; Dan Norris, VABVI Director of Adult Services

Dan Norris, Director of Adult Services for Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI) presented to the advisory board the first 2021 quarterly report for S.M.A.R.T. Services. The program served 208 clients who had an average of 4.87 individual goals. Of those goals set, the number of goals met per client was 4.16. There were also 50 clients participating in the virtual Peer Assisted Learning and Support Groups (PALS). To summarize, “ In the past quarter we have seen a major increase in the demand and need among our clients to address skills related to telecommunications and other assistive technology to reduce social isolation among those with vision loss. We have more than doubled the number of clients who received services this quarter when compared to the same time frame last year. A year ago, Vermonters were just coming out of the lockdown restrictions imposed by COVID-19. Today, clients are more open to receiving services in their homes, with proper masking precautions in effect. Likewise, as we helped hundreds of clients last year with these skills, they have told their friends, and we are receiving requests to come and serve clients specifically to help them learn how to reduce their social isolation through gaining access to telecommunications and other assistive technology. This population, beginning to age into vision loss, is the baby boomer population. They used computers and other technologies in their careers prior to experiencing vision loss. This generation will be more open to learning new skills and staying in touch with their friends, children and grandchildren. Over the next decade we will see a sharp increase in the demand for vision services, including instruction in “smart devices.”

We continue to provide online support groups through zoom to Vermonters in hopes of reducing their isolation and promoting peer support. These Peer Assisted Learning and Support Groups (PALS) focus on topics related to vision loss and help walk clients through the adjustment process related to visual impairment, much like the five stages of grief when you’ve lost a loved one. Vision loss, is a disability of access. This is access to information, one’s environment, transportation and more. Many of our clients may be the only visually impaired person in their neighborhood, which is further emotionally isolating. During COVID-19, we had to pivot these groups from in person to online through zoom. We continue to offer this service online and teach clients how to access these groups. To date, 50 clients actively participate in these groups” (excerpt from report: to view entire report, please go to: <https://dail.vermont.gov/resources/advisory-board/dail-advisory-brd-2021-items>).

Adult Protective Services statute Review Status

Joe Nusbaum, Director of Licensing and Protection

Joe Nusbaum, Director of Licensing and Protection gave the advisory board an in-depth overview of the work being done to update Vermont’s APS statute. Joe also requested a DAIL Advisory Board (DAB) member to volunteer to participate in the Self-neglect Work Group. It is required by statute that the work group has a DAB member participate.

To view the report, please go to: <https://dail.vermont.gov/resources/advisory-board/dail-advisory-brd-2021-items>.

Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) Updates

Jessica Bernard, Interim DDSD Director and Jeffery Nunemaker, DDSD Assistant Director

Positions update:

- Jessica reported out on the staffing changes and new hires that have been happening in DDSD. Jeffery Nunemaker was introduced to the DAB. Jeff has worked in the division as the Quality Management Reviewer and moved into the Assistant Director role when Amy Roth retired.
- The Quality Management Review position has a potential new hire. An offer has been made.
- Jackie Rogers who is the Director of the Office of Public Guardian will retire in January 2022. Heather Allin has been hired to fill that position.
- Heather's position is being posted soon.
- Jessica Bernard will continue to act as Interim Director until the position is filled. Once the director position is filled, Jessica will go back to her role as Payment Reform Deputy Director.
- The vacancy for Children Services Specialist and the Public Safety Specialist both have offers made to applicants.

Conflict Free Case Management Update:

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is requiring Vermont to identify a separate case management service from the agencies that provide the services. Vermont was hoping to be able to give participants in the services a choice of having a separate case manager or to use the case management that is available through the designated agencies. However, that is not acceptable to CMS. Vermont is requesting a five-year implementation plan.

Supports Intensity Scale-Adult (SIS A) Update:

The State is working to improve and standardize the way people's needs are assessed for the Developmental Disabilities Services Home and Community-Based Services Program. A Needs Assessment is required for people to start getting services and it is reviewed every year and updated whenever a person's needs change. The State is implementing a new, standardized Needs Assessment and is working on a new process for completing Needs Assessments.

A new tool for completing the assessments will be used. This tool is called the Supports Intensity Scale-Adult Version (SIS-A™). The tool was developed by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) It is a well-researched, standardized tool used in multiple states and countries to measure the amount of support people with developmental disabilities need in their everyday lives. The SIS-A™ focuses on the strengths of people instead of their challenges. This assessment is consistent with the values of community including self-direction, individual choice/control, and person-centered services. The other change is that the State has hired an

independent organization, Public Consulting Group, (PCG), to complete the assessments. PCG is an organization that specializing in Medicaid and related health, human services, and education programs. They have experience in all 50 states and some other countries as well, including a focus on Home and Community-based Services for people with developmental disabilities.

There are ways for users of the SIS A to give feedback as the state begins to fully implement the use of this new assessment tool. Users can email or participate in ongoing Town Halls.

Long Term Care Ombudsman Project – Annual Conflict Free Letter
Sean Londergan, LTC Ombudsman Director

Sean Londergan, LTC Ombudsman Director, requested members of DAB to participate in a sub-committee to review program policies and statues to determine if the LTC Ombudsman Project is operating without conflict of interest. The volunteers are Ruby Baker, Mike Gruteke, and Lynne Cardozo. This group will meet and come back to the full board in January with their recommendations.

Advisory Board Challenges/Opportunities, and Updates

Ruby Baker- COVE will publish their annual 2022 resource guide in January. If you would like hard copies, please reach out to Ruby.

COVE has created a Long-Term Care Crisis Coalition that will look at funding and workforce pressures, legislative initiatives and will work to find solutions. The coalition is meeting regularly and welcomes new members. Contact Ruby if you are interested.

Meeting was adjourned
12:43