

DAIL Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2022

Microsoft Teams Phone/Video Conference

ATTENDEES

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

Guests: Marie Lallier, Stephanie Parker, Kaili Kulper, Alexander Bobella,

State Employees: Monica White, Megan Tierney-Ward, Liz Perreault, Wendy Trafton, Angela McMann, Jennifer Garabedian, Ashley Berliner, Jessica Bernard, Angela Smith-Dieng, Conor O’Dea, Susan Aranoff, Hibbard Doe

Motion to Approve Minutes: April 14, 2022, minutes: Move to Approve: Steve Pouliot
Seconded: Mike Gruteke

Abstained: Jeanne Hutchins

Joe Greenwald moved to make the following addition to the minutes under the presentation from Jennifer Garabedian, Developmental Disabilities Services Director.

“Ms. Garabedian promised that as soon as the 500 test cases for the SIS-A were finished, she would return to the Board with an evaluation and summary of the efficacy. She also promised to report on the new SIS iteration and how this would be used.” The updated paragraph is on page 4, first paragraph and reads: “Once the 500 test cases for the SIS-A are finished, Director Garabedian will return to the Board with an evaluation and summary of the efficacy. She will also report on the new SIS iteration and how it will be used.”

Minutes are approved as updated.

DAIL Updates:

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

- Brian Guy has been hired as the new Director of Operations. He comes to us from HireAbility and starts on May 23.
- Liz Perreault has accepted a position in Adult Protective Services as a Project Manager and will begin her new role on May 23. Her Administrative Assistant position has been posted.
- Legislative bills that DAIL has been watching closely:
 - H.266 – a bill for commercial insurance to cover hearing aids.
 - H.720 – a bill relating to the system of care for individuals with developmental disabilities.

- An overview of bills passed that affect the communities that DAIL works with will be brought to a future meeting.
- Gerontology Symposium was held on May 9 at the DoubleTree in Burlington.
- May is Mental Health Awareness Month – A focus on older adults will be highlighted next week.
- On April 26, the Tri-State Learning Collaborative Time to Care Summit will be happening.
- On 4/25 the Vermont Action Plan for Aging Well held a Financial Security meeting.
- Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) is holding forums re: System Of Care Plan.
- DDSD Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center contract is intended to provide targeted medical advisement.
- On 4/30 there was a Deaf, DeafBlind, Hearing Inclusive Community Day at the Vermont Technical College in Randolph Center, Vermont.
- The Division for Blind and Visually Impaired is Gearing up for the summer LEAP (Learn, Earn, And Prosper) sessions.
- There is an Agency focus on preventing suicide and drug overdoses in Vermont. There has been a significant increase in cases.
- SNF Medicaid Rate Analysis for SFY22 and SFY23 (Act 83)
 - After an industry-wide analysis of contracted nursing staff, the Department of Vermont Health Access' Division of Rate Setting confirmed that current nursing care costs exceed the nursing care component of the Medicaid rate and will retroactively increase the nursing care Medicaid inflationary factor by approximately 9% for claims starting 7/1/21 through 6/30/22. All Medicaid claims will be adjusted accordingly. Our goal is for claims adjustments to be completed through Gainwell by 6/30/22.
 - In addition to SFY2022 adjustments, the state is also working on a plan to address the high cost of contracted nursing staff in SFY2023.

1115 Waiver Renewal & HCBS FMAP Update- with a focus on HCBS FMAP funded activity called Workforce and Recruitment:

Ashley Berliner, Director of Medicaid Policy, and Wendy Trafton, DVHA Deputy Director of Payment Reform

The Global Commitment to Health 1115 Demonstration Waiver:

The Federal government can “waive” many, but not all, of the laws governing Medicaid, including eligible people and services. The Section 1115 waiver authority is intended to encourage state innovation in the Medicaid program. Often, states identify ways to save Medicaid funds and are permitted to use the savings to expand coverage. The federal government approves Section 1115 Demonstrations for five-year terms, but Demonstrations can be extended. Vermont’s Section 1115 Demonstration Waiver is up for renewal.

Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan: State Proposal to Enhance, Expand or Strengthen HCBS under the Medicaid Program:

Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act provides states with a 10% federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) increase for Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS) for activities to

enhance, expand, or strengthen HCBS. HCBS is defined broadly within Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Guidance. Estimated projections indicate Vermont will claim over \$67M in funds attributable to the increase in FMAP which will be employed as the state share to implement approved activities valued at \$149.5M.

Time periods:

- Increased FMAP is for expenditures occurring between 4/1/21 and 3/31/22.
- Funding may be used through 3/31/24.

To view the presentation in it's entirety, please go to the DAIL website:

<https://dail.vermont.gov/resources/advisory-board/dail-advisory-board-2022-agendas-handouts-minutes>.

Vermont State Plan on Aging (SPA) - DAIL Advisory Board's (DAB) written feedback:

DAB Subcommittee - Jane Catton, Ruby Baker, Marie Zura, Lynne Cardozo, Kim Fitzgerald and State Unit on Aging Director, Conor O'Dea

The DAB Subcommittee met and created a draft response to the SPA on behalf of the DAB full advisory board. Conor O'Dea joined them during these meetings to provide any clarifying information the subcommittee may need. The DAB subcommittee presented the draft response to the full advisory board and a vote was taken whether to adopt and submit the response.

Kim Fitzgerald moved that the DAIL Advisory Board accept the responses the subcommittee drafted. Jane Catton seconded the motion.

All Approved- the draft will become final and submitted as the DAIL Advisory Boards response to the State Plan on Aging.

To view the comments document, please go to the DAIL website:

<https://dail.vermont.gov/resources/advisory-board/dail-advisory-board-2022-agendas-handouts-minutes>.

Developmental Services:

Jessica Bernard, Deputy Director of Payment Reform

Director Bernard presented payment reform updates.

DDSD payment reform started in January 2018, paused during the beginning of the pandemic, and restarted in the fall 2020.

Goals of payment reform:

- Transparent: easily described and understood
- Effective: create a payment model that supports people getting appropriate services to meet their needs
- Equitable: resources made available in a similar way across the state
- Accountable: State can identify what services were delivered to people and relate that to payment for services
- Sustainable: Pay providers reasonable rates for delivering services

Independent Assessment of Need

Vermont is using the Supports Intensity Scale- Adult assessment (SIS-A)

- Current assessment tool is “home grown”, it is not standardized, does not lend itself to an objective, reliable way of measuring what people need, does not have a consistent way of being administered or translating information gathered into an individualized plan.
- CMS requires that we use an independently administered assessment tool to address conflict of interest in case management (the people who assess need can’t also deliver the services).
- DDS chose a standardized tool because it offers an independent assessment of a person’s support needs in a reliable, validated format, which will help reduce conflict of interest in services and provide an equitable approach to matching people to the services that fit their individual needs.

Public Consulting Group (PCG) has been contracted to conduct assessments

- PCG assessors undergo extensive training to become certified to administer the SIS A.
- The four assessors all live in VT, have experience working with the DS population, have college or Master’s level degrees, and many have worked for one of our Designated or Specialized Service Agencies.
- Assessors do not work for the agency providing services, which will help reduce conflict of interest in service delivery.
- Assessments started in the summer of 2021. Current results will not impact anyone’s current budget or services, assessments completed as part of the initial sample will only be used to help create a payment model.
- This is a big change and we’re getting a lot of feedback about improvements that have happened over the past year, areas that can still be improved, and the impact on providers.
- We just finished an engagement series with providers to help answer questions and ask for feedback, next we will schedule engagement sessions for individuals and families.
- Engagement sessions were offered at the roll out of the SIS A last summer and we think it’s important to continue to offer them.

Accountability

- Starting on July 1, 2021, service providers began entering information about the services they provide into the Medicaid Management Information System
 - This allows the state to see what services were delivered, if they match up to the assessed need, what’s stated in the person’s individualized plan, and the costs associated.
 - The data entered into the system is referred to as ‘encounter data’, because it captures the details of the encounters that happen in our system. It’s like a receipt for the service provided.

- Having access to this data makes service delivery and budget payments transparent and holds the providers and the State more accountable for the use of resources.
- Encounter data might be used to help create a future payment model, along with the SIS A information, but this hasn't been determined yet and DAIL will seek input.

To view the presentation in its entirety, please go to the DAIL website:

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HireAbility Updates:

Hibbard Doe, Field Services Manager

HireAbility is a rebranding of Vocational Rehabilitation and part of the rebranding process included the following tasks:

- Brand Focus Workshops with Core Team Members.
- Removed “Rehabilitation” from Brand Name.
- Looked at other Brand Names – Chose HireAbilityVT.
- Developed Marketing Materials for New Brand.
- Statewide Media Launch in March 2022.
- Broadcast Commercials on TV, YouTube, and Social Media.
- Focused ads based on internet searches.
- Future planning for radio spots across the state beginning in June.

To see more about HireAbility, go to their website: <https://www.hireabilityvt.com/>

Advisory Board Challenges/Opportunities and Updates:

DAIL Advisory Board Members

Jeanne Hutchins – UVM Center on Aging and Village to Village will be holding two statewide meetings in the coming year. Also, Mount Mansfield Villages received grants from Age Well and Central Vermont Council on Aging that will help fund an administrative position.

Jane Catton – Area Agencies on Aging created mini-grants and Age Well has distributed approximately 12 grants to various non-profits for up to \$5,000 each.

Meeting was adjourned