



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities  
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary – April 11, 2022**

**Larry Bram, Co-Chair • Karen Morgret, Co-Chair**

**Attendees:** Betty Bahadori; Odile Brunetto; Onesta Duke; Scottie Holton; Sari Hornstein; Julia Jensen; Jenn Lynn; Laurie Lyons; Kim Mayo; Seth Morgan; Karen Morgret; Beth Shuman; Susan Smith; Jamila Michael-Sobratti; Jeneva Stone; Raychon Stroman; Virginia Thorogood

**Staff:** Betsy Luecking; Carly Clem

**Approval of the March 2022 Meeting Summary Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the March 2022 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the March 2022 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ddac](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ddac).

**DDA Updates – Onesta Duke, Regional Director, Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO), Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA)**

Onesta does not have the Transitioning Youth (TY) data for this month yet.

Waiting List for Montgomery County - 910 individuals

- 9 in crisis resolution
  - Coordinators of Community Service (CCS) are working with these individuals to access waiver enrollment and services
- 46 in crisis prevention
- 855 in current request
  - Individuals in all three categories are assigned to a CCS that is working with them to identify DDA services or community-based resources to meet their current needs.

Regional offices continue to work with providers that are interested in transitioning into LTSSMaryland.

- A group of providers from SMRO are transitioning this spring between April and June.
- A group of 8 to 9 providers from SMRO are transitioning this summer.
- Current priority is to guide these providers through the process as well as provide overall guidance to agencies that are interested in transitioning later this year.
  - No set dates for fall transition at this time.
  - DDA may send out another provider interest survey for the fall transition.
- It has been a good collaborative effort between DDA and the providers as they transition.
- Agencies are encouraged to review the LTSSMaryland playbook that details the transition process: <https://health.maryland.gov/mmcp/longtermcare/Pages/LTSSTraining-LTSS.aspx>
  - All agencies will have to make the transition eventually.
  - Preparation will allow the providers a smoother transition.
- Continue to work with CCS agencies to submit Person-Centered Plans (PCP) for approval.
- Providers that have questions or concerns can reach out to their regional Provider Services liaison.
  - SMRO - Director of Provider Services: Kianna Blakeney  
[kianna.blakeney@maryland.gov](mailto:kianna.blakeney@maryland.gov), 301-362-5123 (Office), 410-726-2782 (Cell)

Housing Support Services (HSS)

- New DDA waiver service - time-limited supports to help participants navigate housing opportunities, address or overcome barriers to housing and secure and retain their own home.
- Services include housing information and assistance; housing transition services; and housing tenancy sustaining services.

- Agencies with DDA authorization provide HSS.
  - Agencies must have experience/expertise in housing opportunities for people with disabilities.
  - Agency staff providing HSS must have completed training as required by DDA.
  - CCSs do not provide HSS.
  - Maryland Inclusive Housing (MIH) is one of the primary providers of HSS.
  - MIH's website offers many resources: <https://mih-inc.org/>
  - They are exploring various housing options including waiting lists.
  - Rental subsidy opens May 1.
- DDA has completed two webinars regarding HSS.
  - Overview of HSS Webinar held April 7: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-D9Lk2b9QJM&feature=youtu.be>
  - HSS and the Role of the Coordinator of Community Services Webinar held April 11: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vf8dzjbCzYg>
- Many people are taking advantage of HSS at the SMRO.
- Number of individuals who want to reside on their own – not in a group home setting or with family.
- Several individuals are unable to access independent housing or waiting lists due to criminal charges.
  - SMRO working with those individuals to identify exceptions or accommodations.
- Betty Bahadori, Parent, said individuals with developmental disabilities are typically on a lower fixed income.
  - HSS is able to assist individuals with low or no income as well as average income.

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) has confirmed that all Appendix K flexibilities, scheduled to end on March 31, 2022, will extend through June 30, 2022. Reference:

- [Appendix K and Executive Orders Flexibilities - March 14, 2022](#)
- [DDA Appendix K At-A-Glance Document and Topic Specific Guidance](#)
- Biggest challenge is the phased approach for Meaningful Day flexibilities – providers were previously able to provide one hour of support and bill for the entire day. Providers must now provide three hours of support in order to bill for the entire day.
- Some providers have expressed challengings with providing three hours of support. DDA is encouraging agencies to work with their regional office to identify more creative ways to provide those supports.
- Virtual supports should not comprise the entirety of the service but should compliment in-person supports – it should be a hybrid approach to make up the hours to bill for services.
- Providers can reach out to their regional office if they have questions.

### **DDA Headquarters and SMRO Contacts**

Due to phone issues that arose from the state IT security incident that occurred last year, staff have included their work cell numbers in addition to their office numbers.

- DDA Headquarters: <https://health.maryland.gov/dda/Pages/Headquarters.aspx>
- SMRO: <https://health.maryland.gov/dda/Pages/smro.aspx>
  - CCS agency issues should be directed to Carol Bowman, Director of CCS [carol.bowman@maryland.gov](mailto:carol.bowman@maryland.gov), 301-362-5101 (Office), 301-523-5317 (Cell)
  - Provider issues should be directed to Kianna Blakeney, Director of Provider Services [kianna.blakeney@maryland.gov](mailto:kianna.blakeney@maryland.gov), 301-362-5123 (Office), 410-726-2782 (Cell)
  - PCP questions and issues should be directed to Supreme Green, Director of Program Services [supreme.green@maryland.gov](mailto:supreme.green@maryland.gov), 301-362-5100 (Office), 443-928-7329 (Cell)
  - Health and safety issues should be directed to Mark Celeste, Director of Quality Enhancement [mark.celeste@maryland.gov](mailto:mark.celeste@maryland.gov), 301-362-5113 (Office), 443-928-7329 (Cell)

### **Grievance and Complaint Process**

- CCS agencies are required to have a clear process for individuals and families to file grievances or complaints.
- Process/resolution should start with the CCS supervisor. However if the family or participant is unhappy with the outcome or has concerns they can reach out to the regional office.
- The County does not have enforcement or control over CCS agencies. DDA funds the CCS agencies and does have the responsibility to ensure compliance.
- DDA is ultimately responsible for the services of persons with developmental disabilities.

- There may be confusion as the County was the sole CCS provider for many years, but there are now six CCS agencies providing services in the County.
- The state determines how much funding should be allocated and Medicaid matches that funding.
- County has included \$20 million for the developmental disability supplement for FY23.
- Federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) issues regulations that the state then regulates and CCSs and providers must follow.

**Maryland Department of Health - Statewide Transition Plan for Compliance with Home and Community-Based Settings (HCBS) Requirements (Final Rule) Request for Public Comment by April 23, 2022**

State of Maryland Transition Plan (STP): <https://health.maryland.gov/mmcp/waiverprograms/pages/Community-Settings-Final-Rule.aspx>

- On March 17, 2014, CMS issued regulations that define the settings in which states can pay for Medicaid HCBS.
- The purpose of these regulations is to ensure that individuals receive Medicaid HCBS in settings that are integrated and that support full access to the greater community.
- This includes opportunities to seek employment and work in competitive and integrated settings, engage in community life, control personal resources, and receive services in the community to the same degree as individuals who do not receive HCBS.
- These changes will maximize the opportunities for participants in HCBS programs to have access to the benefits of community living and to receive services in the most integrated setting. States must ensure all home and community-based (HCB) settings comply with the new requirements by completing an assessment of existing state regulations, policies, licensing and other provider requirements to ensure settings comply with the HCB settings requirements. States must be in full compliance with the federal requirements by the time frame approved in the Statewide Transition Plan (STP), but no later than March 17, 2023
- Services provided in facilities, congregate settings, farmsteads, and/or services that have the effect of isolating individuals from the broader community are considered to have institutional qualities and therefore may not be in compliance.
- All states must be in full compliance with the community settings rule by March 17, 2023.
- DDA will be working to ensure all providers are in compliance.
- DDA is currently reviewing the state transition plan and they will make comments.
- Public comments can be made until April 23, 2022.
- Patricia Sastoque, Director of Programs, can attend a future DDAC meeting to discuss this further.

**DDA Webinars / Trainings**

DDA has hosted several webinars on Self-Directed Services (SDS).

- Updates have been made to the SDS budget sheet.
- Webinar last Friday discussed how individuals can allocate funding that has not yet been utilized: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK8-dgGpcag>.
- SDS model continues to rapidly grow - SMRO has over 500 individuals in SDS.
- Number of individuals transitioning from the traditional model to SDS for the flexibility.
- Questions or concerns can be directed to SMRO SDS Lead Tia Henry: [tia.henry2@maryland.gov](mailto:tia.henry2@maryland.gov), 301-362-5111 (Office), 443-680-7059 (Cell)
- [Join DDA's mailing list](#) to receive updates and webinar/training notices.
- [View DDA's Training Calendar](#) to register for upcoming trainings. Deputy Secretary Bernie Simon holds a monthly webinar that discusses updates that have occurred over the past few weeks.

**Autism Waiver – Daniel Hammond, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)**

Daniel was unable to attend the meeting but sent the following update via email:

- Services continue to expand in the Autism Waiver program.
- The CMS Appendix K flexibilities remain in effect at this time.
- Participants have access to 40 hours per week of Intensive Individual Support Services (normally there is 25 hours per week).
- In addition, all providers are back to providing services in-person but still offer virtual options.

- Currently have 330 participants enrolled in the program.
- The past two years students who age out of the program were given the option to remain in the Autism Waiver; that flexibility is ending and all remaining 2020, 2021, and 2022 transitioning youth will be disenrolled this year on June 30th.
- The Autism Waiver program is also expanding to add an additional 100 students (totaling 1500 for the state). As a result they are processing a large number of applications at this time.
- Included in [Maryland Senate Bill SB0290 – Budget Bill](#) is funding that would expand the Autism Waiver program. The goal is to reduce the Autism Waiver Registry list by half; but implementation plans are unclear. The current wait time is 8.5 years.
  - SB0290 passed both chambers of the Maryland General Assembly and has been sent to Governor Hogan for signature.

### **Senate Bill 636 – Maryland Department of Health – Waiver Programs – Waitlist and Registry Reduction (End the Wait Act)**

Requires the Maryland Department of Health to develop a plan to reduce the waiting list for each of its seven waiver programs by 50%.

- The plan is due by January 2023.
- It also requires Governor Hogan to include enough funding in the Fiscal Year 2024 budget to reduce the waiting lists by 50%.
- SB0636 passed both chambers of the Maryland General Assembly and has been sent to Governor Hogan for signature.
- Scottie Holton, Parent, asked about the hiring of more direct support professionals to support the individuals that will be coming off of the waiting list and will be receiving services.
  - Staffing is an issue across the board for all industries.
  - Karen Morgret, Co-Chair, said the Treatment and Learning Center has had issues recruiting qualified individuals for their open positions.
  - Staff must pass initial background checks and references.
  - Need to trust staff to provide good, quality service to individuals.
  - Need competitive wages and benefits – DDA is responsible for the rates.
  - Onesta said providers are not receiving many applicants for open positions.
  - Training and supports are a big component.

### **Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) Update**

Susan Smith reported HOC was awarded 118 Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

- HOC is using these vouchers for individuals in permanent supportive housing (PSH) programs that are funded through the homeless system. At this time only 48 vouchers have been used.
- Approximately 200 individuals in the PSH program currently.
- Individuals with all disabilities are in the PSH program.
- PSH program pays the rent and the utilities and the client pays HOC for their rent.
- Participants also receive case management services.
- Goal is for individuals in other programs or in shelters or on the streets to take the PSH spots that are available when an individual uses the voucher.
- Voucher use may expire by August 31, 2022 (prior to end of federal fiscal year) – unused vouchers will be given back to HUD.
- HOC may need to re-evaluate how the vouchers are used in order to take advantage of them all.
- PSH programs are managed by several agencies including HOC, Catholic Charities, Interfaith Works and the County's Services to End and Prevent Homelessness .

### **Individuals with Medically Complex Needs**

Jeneva Stone, Parent, had previously raised the issue of transition of medically complex students from high school to adult services.

- Betsy had a discussion about this issue with Secretary Carol Beatty who then spoke with Deputy Secretary Simon.

- A Committee is being established comprised of staff from Rare and Expensive Case Management (REM), DDA and InterACC/DD to meet with providers and have a discussion with them about what is needed both in terms of policy, staffing required and wages.
- Essential to have REM involved as they provide skilled nursing care
- The state is taking the lead as it is their policies and decisions, who they serve and how they will be served.
- CCS agencies implement the policies set forth by DDA.
- Onesta said Secretary Beatty did reach out to her to schedule a discussion next week.
- Then they will move forward with next steps, determining who will be a part of the Committee.
- MCPS reported at a previous meeting that one-third of transitioning youth students that exit each year are medically complex – although all may not access REM or have unique needs.
- The terms ‘medically complex’ and ‘medically fragile’ are interchangeable, but the preferred term in the DD community is ‘medically complex’ as the term ‘medically fragile’ may infer that the individual is too compromised to participate in the community.
- Important to address the barriers to services as individuals who have more complex disabilities have different accommodation needs.
- Onesta said coordination meetings with REM, DDA and Community First Choice (CFC) will also be resuming.

### **Future Meetings**

The Committee will meet in May and June. No meetings will be held in July or August. The Committee will move to quarterly meetings starting in September. A list of scheduled dates will be shared then.

### **Respectfully Submitted,**

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

### **Next Meeting**

Monday, May 9, 2022

4pm to 5pm – via Zoom

Instructions to attend will be included on the meeting agenda.