



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary – January 10, 2022**

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

Attendees: Betty Bahadori; Larry Bram; Odile Brunetto; Rosemary DiPietro; Onesta Duke; Carly Fratangelo; Simone Geness; Shakeela Gray; Susan Hartung; Marie Parker Harvey; Lisa Hazell; Susan Ingram; Carmen Izurieta; Julia Jensen; Annette Jolles; Kim Khan; Shawn Lattanzio; Lisa Lorraine; Jenn Lynn; Laurie Lyons; Kim Mayo; Linda McMillan; Seth Morgan; Karen Morgret; Sara O'Neil; Margie Parrott; Becky Rosenberg; Beth Shuman; Susan Smith; Jamila Sobratti; Raychon Stroman; Eldora Taylor; Alexa Warrington; Lynn Watts

Staff: Betsy Luecking; Carly Clem

Approval of the December 2021 Meeting Summary Minutes

A motion was made to approve the December 2021 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the December 2021 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ddac.

Overview of Virtual Family Visits with TY22 Students – Carly Fratangelo, Transition Specialist, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Transition Services Unit (TSU)

Presentation: <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/DDAC/DDACPresentationTY22AgencyVisits.pdf>

When MCPS transitioned to remote learning in 2020, TSU recognized they needed to still provide services to TY families to help them with the process.

- Margie Parrott met with CCS agency supervisors.
- Fall 2020 Carly began coordinating virtual visits for families to make agency connections.
 - Successful – held in Fall 2021 and will continue this year.
- Partnered with Nicole Sheppard, Transitioning Youth, DDA, and several CCS agencies and held exit meetings in June 2020 and June 2021 – plan on holding an exit meeting this June 2022.
 - Exit meeting helps families know what to expect.

There are 137 TY22s.

View presentation for an overview of the virtual family visit process with TY22 students.

- Slide 9 – Information cut off: TLC Outcomes Additional Tours had 10 registered participants and 10 attendees.
- Approximately 80% of TY families attended at least one virtual tour.

Feedback received from agencies overall was great.

- Agencies who presented were excited to have the virtual platform.
- Agencies trying to balance a hybrid format and interested in finding a way to connect and present information to families.
- Karen Morgret, TLC, said their virtual tour went well.
 - Increased referrals from the first two tours.
 - Some in person tours are being provided individually.
 - TLC will most likely continue to hold virtual tours in the future as well as in person tours when it is safe.

- Susan Ingram, Community Support Services (CSS), said CSS holds monthly virtual tours and does not know if CSS was part of TSU's virtual tours.
 - Virtual tours can be convenient for families.
 - Some in person tours are being provided individually.
 - CSS will also continue to hold virtual tours as well as in person tours when it is safe.
- Lynn Watts, Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA), said the experience was positive and JSSA received many calls from families after their virtual tour.
- Agencies that provided a virtual tour last year provided a virtual tour this year.
- Agencies that did not respond last year also did not respond this year.
- Larger interest from families to attend this year's virtual tour.
- Families were more comfortable with Zoom technology and could access the platform through their student's chromebook if needed.
- Students have responded positively to the virtual tour format.
 - Meaningful way to engage families who may not be able to do an in-person visit.

Margie reached out agencies via email first about the virtual tour.

- Agency tours specifically target current year TY families.
- Carly reached out to agencies multiple times.
- Some agencies may not have attended due to having staffing turnovers and uncertainty about the future.
 - Some agencies are still completely virtual, some offer hybrid services, some agencies have employees telework from home while others have employees working in office.
- Hope to expand the number of participating agencies.
- Margie noted that they have the same issues with agencies attending the Adult Services nights.
 - Adult Services agency parent night is open to grade 6 and up so families have the opportunity to hear information more than once.

Susan Hartung asked if agencies could make videos with quick snapshots of their services and facilities that could be made available for families.

- Could be used by families to help narrow down their selections.
- Becky Rosenberg offered to help agencies create brief two-minute videos.
- Simone will take this suggestion into consideration.
 - She asked Susan Ingram and Karen to discuss this with agencies.
 - Information from agencies is shared with families as well as school-based transition support teachers.
 - Videos could be posted on MCPS's website.
 - During the virtual TY fair last year one agency had a live walk through tour of their agency that was two minutes.
- Susan Ingram invited Carly to present at a future InterACC/DD meeting to discuss this with providers.
- Margie has asked agencies to provide videos for Adult Services night.
 - Those videos are then made available for families.
- Carly provided families with a list of all agencies and the type of service(s) they provide so at minimum families can review agencies based on services needed.
- Karen added that videos would need to be updated frequently now due to DDA's ongoing transformation and the continued changes with Appendix K.
- Prior to the pandemic Claire Funkhouser had been working with a TY Workgroup to discuss developing informational content for families and CCS agencies to help them understand the entire purvey of adult services agencies that serve Montgomery County.
 - Unmet need – training for families to better understand the system.
 - System is constantly changing – hard for CCS agencies to manage as well.
 - Also need to increase outreach to underserved populations.
- Simone noted that prior to the 2019 TY Fair MCPS held a TY Fair for Spanish speaking families.
 - Working with Lisa Lorraine to provide another TY Fair for Spanish speaking families this year.
 - MCPS always trying to reach under-served populations – critical to reach those families.
 - Provide interpreters during parent information session.

- Margie starts working with transition support teachers a year and a half ahead of time to identify the TYs and compile a comprehensive list of the families.
- Responsible for helping families make connections with CCS agencies.

Betsy asked if students are screened for their eligibility to enroll in Medicaid Waiver programs when they become an adult.

- If they are not eligible, other agencies should be involved – such as WorkSource Montgomery.
 - MCPS directly partners with Cynthia Grissom at WorkSource Montgomery.
 - MCPS held a virtual field trip/apprenticeship fair and invited MCPS students – WorkSource Montgomery invited other agencies to attend.
 - Apprenticeship Maryland and various employers presented on apprenticeship opportunities.
 - April 2021 MCPS partnered with DORS and TransCen, Inc. to present a three-part series for parents that included employment readiness skills and employment strategies. Self-advocates presented as well as to how they navigated self-employment.
- MCPS starts working with families as early as 9th grade.
- Diane Flood is a liaison that assists middle school families.
- Help families apply for Medicaid for their child once they turn 18.

MCPS has been able to reach more families using a virtual platform for parent information sessions.

- Sessions will continue to be offered virtually.
- Families who have students enrolled in non-public placement are sent flyers at the beginning of each school year with save-the-date information.
- Informational flyers are also shared with placement specialists who oversee and case management students in non-public placements.
- Margie has relationships with transition liaisons at some of the non-public schools.
- Large attendance from non-public families at transition planning parent workshops.

Update from DDA on Appendix K, Data and other Important Issues - Onesta Duke, Regional Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), Maryland Department of Health (MDH), Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO)

Deputy Secretary Bernie Simon's December 17, 2021 Webinar Presentation:

<https://health.maryland.gov/dda/Documents/COVID%2019%20Documents/FINAL%20Deputy%20Secretary%20Webinar%2012.13.21.pdf>

Appendix K Extension

- Those flexibilities scheduled to terminate December 31, 2021 will be extended to March 31, 2022.
- These include flexibilities such as:
 - Telephonic/Remote supports [behavioral support services; case management; nursing services]
 - Hiring/Onboarding
 - Staff Training [abbreviated criminal background check; waiving all training requirements other than essential training; training provided in an expedited format; waiver of high school or GED requirements]
 - Settings
 - Isolation Rate [Providers can request isolation days above the 21 days on a case-by-case basis.]
 - Meaningful Day Services – providers must deliver at least one hour of service either in person or virtually in order to bill for the full day of services through PCIS2.
 - Staffing ratio exceptions – if a provider is unable to accommodate one-on-one or two-on-one direct supports, they can continue to request staffing ratio exceptions.
 - Employment/Supported Employment/CDS/Day Habilitation/BSS/Family and Peer Mentoring/Personal Supports/Respite can take place in a variety of settings, instead of the community, including but not limited to the participant's home; family and friend's homes; residential settings; or other community settings
- A number of providers continue to experience staffing constraints throughout the pandemic.

- Current guidance for these flexibilities will be updated as well as the Appendix K chart by termination date: https://health.maryland.gov/dda/Pages/DDA_Appendix_K.aspx
- March 31, 2022 extension date chosen after discussions with DDA senior leadership and MDH leadership.

Maryland Department of Health (MDH) experienced a service disruption on December 4 as a result of a network security incident.

- While the investigation is ongoing - and is occurring on a parallel track to our restoration efforts - MDH can confirm that the incident was the result of a ransomware attack.
- Incident updates: <https://health.maryland.gov/incidentupdate/Pages/default.aspx>
- The service disruption is currently impacting DDA's ability to access PCIS2.
 - Once the service disruption is resolved providers will be able to resume receiving authorizations in PCIS2 for shared residential hours.
- DDA has processes in place to keep things going as efficiently as possible.
- Deputy Simons has been sharing regular updates regarding the incident.
- DDA has shared guidance with providers.

DDA has a limited support of COVID-19 testing kits which were dispersed to each of the regional offices.

- Regional offices are dispersing kits to providers and individuals in self-directed services who are in need due to limited access in their jurisdiction or county.
- Many providers are requesting kits in preparation for the possibility of an exposure or outbreak.
- Few providers are experiencing severe cases.
- Also offering providers N95 masks, gowns and face shields.
- Providers can email Onesta to make a request for kits and other items.
- Communication regarding testing kits was shared with all stakeholders, CCSs, providers, families and individuals who have signed up to receive DDA notifications.
- Staff have also been reaching out to providers via phone and are assisting self-directed families.

Providers Survey

- Will help DDA track the impact of the actions that MDH has taken and will take to assist providers to operate through the COVID19 pandemic.
- Survey should be completed twice a month by providers.
- The MDH, Maryland Department of Disabilities, and the DD Coalition wish to reiterate the importance of the need for all providers to complete the bi-monthly survey which will provide information needed for us to track the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the outcomes that waiver flexibilities, resources, and new funding has on the DSP workforce.

Provider Program Service Plan - Virtual Supports

- Current DDA Providers who plan to provide virtual supports as a service delivery model under Amendment #3 must submit an amendment to their current Program Service Plan to the DDA Regional Office Provider Relations liaison prior to implementing virtual supports outside of the current Appendix K authority
- DDA Providers shall update their Program Service Plan to include a virtual support service delivery model option:
 - As part of their annual re-licensure/recertification application; and
 - Prior the end of the Appendix K authority.

Waiver Amendment #3 provides new access to some supports when a person is in an acute care hospital. What needs to occur for individuals who may want to use these supports after Appendix K?

- Similar to virtual supports, which is a modality or way to receive an existing service, the same is true for supports during acute care hospital stays.
- Individuals should be updating their plans (as they occur) to reflect this interest at the service level and additionally this should be reflected in the SIP.
- Providers would also need to update their Program Service Plan (PSP) to add these modalities.

Onesta will be collecting and sending data regarding CCS agencies to Larry and Betsy once the system is back online.

Lynn Watts, JSSA, asked if DDA will be able to provide advance notice if the March 31, 2022 deadline will be extended.

- Providers will be given advance notification and any changes to the extension date will be shared as soon as possible with providers.

Updates on Important Issues from Coordination of Community Services (CCS) Agencies

Sara O'Neil, MMARS, said CCS agencies are keeping track of the March 31 extension and Appendix K flexibilities.

- Families can contact their CCS if they have questions.

Rosemary DiPietro, Community Support Network (CSN), Montgomery County HHS, reported concerns that MDH's Eligibility Determination Division (EDD) which is responsible for reviewing and determining Medicaid Waiver applications.

- Concerned EDD is affected by the data breach and that waiver applications for TYs are not being processed in time for those TYs to start services on July 1.
- Also having difficulty placing individuals with I/DD who also have behavioral challenges.

Laurie Lyons, Service Coordination Inc., reported SCI employees are back to providing virtual services only – nothing in person.

Alexa Warrington, Optimal Health Care (OHC), reported they have also seen an issue with TY applications not being reviewed by EDD in a timely manner.

- Still TYs across the state that may not have access to services yet even though they applied last year.
- OHC is working to stay on top of EDD applications.

Julia Jensen, Total Care, reported they have the same concerns EDD and the data breach.

- Main concern is compiling waiver packets and following the timeline.

General Updates and Discussion

Beth Shuman, Senior Legislative Aide, County Council President Gabe Albornoz, reported:

- County Executive Marc Elrich will be sending his plan on vaccine mandates to the County Council tomorrow for review.
 - Mandate would have vaccination requirements to enter bars, restaurants, fitness centers, and other covered establishments.
 - Concerns about how it would be implemented.
- County Council President Albornoz will be speaking to the Commission on People with Disabilities on January 12 to discuss the Commission's concerns and priorities.
- The Transportation & Engineering Committee and Health & Human Services (HHS) Committee will be holding a session on the Transportation Services Improvement Fund on February 14 at 9:30am.
- HHS Committee will be holding a session this Thursday to discuss hospital emergency department capacity and need for psychiatric bed resources.
- Concerns remain for adult medical day services.
 - Larry reported \$1.5 million in American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds were granted to adult medical day
 - Unknown when this funding will be distributed.
 - Medicaid administrative rate ended December 31.
 - Potential for adult day service providers to close without funding assistance.
 - Easterseals used to serve 70 people per day – now serving between 15 to 20 people.
 - Workforce issues continue to be an issue for the entire industry.

Larry reported Easterseals was the recipient of a \$5 million grant to serve seniors in Maryland.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

Next Meeting

Monday, February 14, 2022 from 4pm to 5:30pm – via Zoom
Instructions to attend will be included on the meeting agenda.