



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities  
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary – March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

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

**Attendees:** Betty Bahadori; Larry Bram; Crystel Britto; Odile Brunetto; Carly Clem; Christine Dagostino; Benjamin Doughan; Claire Funkhouser; Shakeela Gray; Susan Hartung; Sari Hornstein; Kim Khan; Shawn Lattanzio; Linda McMillan; Kim Mayo; Karen Morgret; Sara O’Neil; Gloria Odongo; Reda Sheinberg; Beth Shuman  
Staff: Betsy Luecking

**Approval of the February 2021 Meeting Summary Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the February 2021 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the February 2021 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd) - click on the tab Developmental Disability Advisory Committee.

**COVID-19 Vaccination Update/Changes – Beth Shuman, LCSW-C, Senior Legislative Aide Office of Council Vice President, Gabe Albornoz, Montgomery County Council**

- Public Health has begun to pull individuals with I/DD from the County’s pre-registration lists
  - These individuals will be served at County clinics
  - Montgomery County Public Health and Dr. Michael Greenberg are working on a response for those individuals who are not able to come to a clinic
  - Other issue – want the direct service provider (DSP), family members or individual who brings the individual w I/DD to a clinic to also be vaccinated
  - Ongoing discussion to allow this exception
  
- Beth Shuman asked for vaccination experiences from Committee members.
  - Larry Bram’s daughter received her shots from SEEC. Larry could not receive a vaccination from SEEC at the same time.
    - His daughter was contacted recently by the County to let her know she was eligible but told them she already received the vaccine
  - Betty Bahadori is still seeing vaccine hesitancy
    - She is unable to find out which of her son’s DSPs have chosen to get the vaccine
    - Some individuals may be waiting for a particular or newst vaccine or waiting to see the side effects
    - Beth said Dr. Greenberg is meeting with as many DSPs, organizations and entities as possible
    - County will be launching media campaigns dealing with vaccine hesitancy
    - Need to clarify and communicate this to the I/DD community, their families and the DSPs
    - Vaccine groups can come back and get vaccinated as other groups are moved forward
    - Susan noted some group homes are not requiring DSPs to wear masks inside the home after they have been fully vaccinated.
    - CSS began doing this a few weeks ago and it increased the number of DSPs willing to get the vaccine.
    - CDC issued new guidelines today for individuals who have been fully vaccinated:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html#:~:text=Fully%20vaccinated%20residents%>
  - Reda Sheinberg’s son received his vaccine through a pilot program at The Arc Prince George’s County.
    - Pilot program was through DDA.
    - DDA is evaluating if they can offer this program in other places.
    - Montgomery County is discussing how to serve people in non-traditional clinics.

- County Clinics are currently in Phase 1C Tier 1 which is residents 65 to 74 years old and essential workers
  - Mass vaccination sites and CVS and Giant are providing vaccines to all of 1A, 1B, and 1C.
- Larry said Easterseals is using a peer encouragement campaign to encourage staff to get the vaccine.
- Kim Mayo said she will be meeting with Dr. Greenberg and Beth later this week to discuss the I/DD vaccine roll out in more detail and she will provide updates to this Committee
- Odile Brunetto said Independence Now has shared barriers their individuals have encountered in the disability community
  - Barriers include transportation, communication and access to vaccines
    - County is working with them on these issues
  - Independence Now is advocating for persons with mental disabilities that are not connected to the DDA
- Susan Hartung reported Travis Gayles was featured on 60 Minutes last week.
- Maryland Department of Health has received numerous complaints that Montgomery County is not receiving enough vaccines in comparison to population numbers.

**COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in the Maryland Southern Region – Onesta Duke, Regional Director, Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO)**

SMRO covers Montgomery, Prince George’s, Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s Counties. COVID-19 data for SMRO from the beginning of the pandemic until now:

- 554 participants tested positive
  - 270 from Montgomery County
- 211 participants tested negative
- 9 participants are awaiting test results
- 25 participants died
- 392 staff tested positive
  - 216 from Montgomery County
- 5 staff died
- Working with local health departments to assist people with I/DD access vaccinations.
- Also collaborating with providers that are interested in hosting clinics.
  - Clinics would be set up in collaboration with Giant pharmacy.
  - Providers would not need a nurse on staff.
  - Interested providers can reach out to Onesta.
  - This initiative is different from working with local health departments
- Karen Morgret noted it has been difficult for day providers to get the vaccine.
  - Very few staff at TLC have been able to get the vaccine.

**Update from Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) – Onesta Duke, Regional Director, SMRO**

Data as of today – March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021:

- 859 people on the waiting list from the County
  - 15 in crisis resolution – working to identify services immediately
    - Increase from last month due to a number of people being hospitalized and are now seeking residential services - some were COVID related and some were not.
  - 34 in crisis
  - 810 in current request
- TY20 / FY21 - 167 total
  - 79 placed

- 88 not placed
  - 7 people declined
  - 1 waiver denied
  - 11 waivers currently pending
  - 25 waivers approved but no provider identified
  - 7 waivers approved
  - 37 with no waiver and no provider identified
- TY19 / FY20 – 150 total
  - 123 placed
  - 27 not placed
    - 9 people declined
    - 1 waiver denied
    - 4 waivers pending
    - 10 waivers approved and need provider
    - 3 no waiver and no provider
- DDA is holding a provider meeting tomorrow to provide updates on Amendment 3 and updated policies.
- Claire asked, given the new CDC guidelines, if DDA is allowing agencies/providers to develop their own policies/restrictions once clients have been vaccinated.
  - Further clarification will be given at DDA's March 19<sup>th</sup> webinar by Deputy Secretary Bernie Simons
  - Ultimately it will be up to the providers to develop their own visitation policies
- Betty asked if there is still hesitancy for providers to take on new clients.
  - There are providers accepting clients into the residential program now that the vaccine is accessible.
  - Provider hesitancy could be they were not able to meet the person's needs.
  - Hesitancy is not all COVID related.

## Coordination of Community Services (CCS) Updates

### Service Coordination Inc. (SCI)

Shakeela Gray, Supervisor, reported

- 439 total people served in Montgomery County
- 6 are Comprehensive Assessment
- 8 are Crisis Prevention
- 6 are Crisis Resolution
- 47 people are TY21/FY22
- 48 people who self-direct now (at least 10 TY who are planning to self-direct)
- Actively expanding their Montgomery County team and have been approved to hire new service coordinators.
- Referrals keep increasing in MC and need to keep up on the demand.

### Total Care

Gloria Odongo, Director of Quality Enhancement, reported

#### **Montgomery County Roster**

- Total Care Services currently serves **811** people in Montgomery county
- In services – **664** people
- Waiting List: **147** people (of the 147, **[7]** are crisis prevention and **[3]** are in crisis resolution)
- Self-Direct – **37** people.
- Comprehensive Assessments – **(4)**
- Since the last meeting we have had **(3)** people transfer in and **(6)** people transfer out.

### **Transitioning Youth**

**TY20 – Total of 19 students**

- (8) Students have been approved for the CPW waiver.
- (2) Students (Self-Direct) – (1) PCP is currently in progress and Coordinator is working on revising the budget and service authorization. She is also waiting on the family to make a final decision on a vendor and hiring of staff. (1) PCP approved and family needs to complete the waiver application.
- (2) Students – need waivers but are currently difficult to reach.
- (1) student – Waiver is currently pending approval.
- (1) student – Coordinator is working with the provider to re-do the intake process, as the provider reported that previous staff who initially completed the intake is no longer there
- (2) Students have selected Rock Creek.
- (3) students- Referrals have been sent and intake is currently in process with other providers. One of the barriers is some families not staying consistent with the follow-up.

### **TY21 – Total of 16 students**

- PCP meetings are being scheduled, however DDA is behind with matrix scores so PCPs will be on hold until matrix scores are received from DDA.
- Of the (16) students (4) matrix scores have been submitted.
- (5) Students are already in the waiver (1) CPW and (4) FSW. The Coordinators will have to complete a revised PCP to update services and change the waiver type for those who are currently in the FSW.

### **Wellness Checks**

- Coordinators are still completing wellness checks on an ongoing basis and taking into account the person and family’s preference as it pertains to the frequency of contact.
- No new positive cases.
- Not as many people saying that they’re depressed or exhibiting as symptoms of depression or isolation.

### **New Hires**

- Hired (2) additional Coordinators since the last DDAC meeting.

### **Training**

- In the process of updating training practices to make the training more hands-on.
- Updated their review and submission PCP process to ensure PCPs are being scheduled and held in a timely manner.

### **MMARS**

Sara O’Neil, DDA QE Analyst II, reported

- 1,462 active cases
  - 1,148 in services
  - 314 waiting list
    - 297 Current Request
    - 12 Crisis Prevention
    - 5 Crisis Resolution
- No new crisis resolution upgrades since the last meeting
- We have placed 2 crisis resolution cases into services since the last meeting
- 83 Individuals are Self-Directing their services.
- 52 TY’20s
  - 39 are still actively looking for providers.
- 55 TY’21s
  - The TY process is underway with PCP and waiver meetings.

### **Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services/Community Support Network (CSN)**

Crystel Britto, Program Specialist II, reported

- TY20/FY21s – 7 total

- CCSs have held waiver meetings for 6
- 4 have Matrix scores
- DDA has had some difficulty processing Matrix scores
- Smooth process so far
- CCSs continue to attend DDA webinars to keep up with changes implement regarding self-directed services, Amendment 3, and Appendix K
- Almost half of all CCSs have received or are scheduled to receive their first COVID vaccine
  - CSN was notified about the Arc Prince George's vaccine clinic
  - CCSs are working hard to get their clients vaccine appointments

## Discussion of Issues

- It was noted that more individuals are going into self-directed services. It was asked if that is a trend that will continue to increase.
  - Shakeela said it has been a trend SCI is seeing for the past three years for their TYs.
  - Families like the freedom of developing a more personalized plan with self-directed services which one doesn't necessarily get with traditional.
  - Sara said COVID has expanded the way people think of services and they have to be more creative in this environment.
  - Parents are more open to self-directed services now than previously
- Larry was contacted by a mother who has a daughter with cerebral palsy who is currently self-directed and is on the Family Waiver. The daughter is going to turn 21 and will be attending college this year out of state, but will be home during the summer and holidays. He asked how the daughter can keep her services.
  - Shakeela suggested a self-directed plan as she would have flexibility to work within a year budget. She should identify the days that she will need services.
  - Services are based on necessity and she will need to provide supporting documentation to DDA for them to render a decision.
  - Shakeela also suggested she use a few days of respite to keep her on the waiver so her spot will be secured when she is ready to receive more services.
- Karen asked if there were any legislative items this Committee should be paying attention to.
  - Larry suggested reading The Arc Maryland's Weekly Legislative Updates
  - Arc Maryland's Bill Tracker: <https://files.constantcontact.com/d7eaa86b001/52f9038b-4e56-4f77-b821-348539a73116.pdf> - includes items that The Arc Maryland has taken a position on and other items that they are currently monitoring
- Betty asked for follow-up from February's discussion on CSN's need for additional supervisor positions.
  - The item was briefly discussed at the Commission on People with Disabilities February Steering Committee meeting.
  - Tim Wiens provided additional information for the Commission to discuss at their meeting this Wednesday
- Claire Funkhouser asked about continued retention issues for CCSs.
  - Sara said MMARS' Director met with many other CCS agencies who are having the same problem.
    - MMARS has maintained most of their seasoned CCSs – newer hires are leaving
    - Several CCSs left MMARS last month
    - Retention issues due to constant changes from DDA, complex case management demands, and frustrations with workload.
    - MMARS requires two case management experience for entry level positions
    - MMARS is in the process of hiring a talent acquisition specialist that will solely focus on hiring, marketing
    - Reviewed billing and have had to re-evaluate some CCSs based on their work
    - Sara noted turnover is typical for CCS position and is not specific to Montgomery County
    - Increased DDA webinars and trainings have taken time away from CCSs being able to serve clients

- All CCSs have the same caseload – due to virtual services CCSs can work on cases in regions where they do not live
  - Montgomery County experiences more referrals and referrals, cases are more complex and require more time from CCSs
  - Complex cases are factored into CCS caseloads
- Gloria said CCSs at Total Care are now staying
  - Have a staff person that focuses on hiring
  - Changed the hiring process to include writing samples during evaluation
  - CCSs are being let go for not doing their work
  - More supervisors offers a smaller span of supervision, more attention to CCSs
  - CEO meets with CCSs on a weekly basis to identify issues, discuss how to improve practices
  - Gloria noted she was in a meeting last week and the Western Region said they have had consistency and success with CCS retention
- Shakeela said SCI retention in the Western Region is a little more stable than in other regions – but the population is smaller.
  - SCI CCSs maintain the same ratio
- Larry reported an increase in stress for staff throughout all human services
  - Preschool teachers must manage social distancing with small children
  - Behavioral health providers have a huge increase in work
- Shawn Lattanzio report suicide attempts and completion are up across the board for all ages
  - County vaccination sites are handing out information on BeTheOne and Maryland suicide hotline as well as information on food banks
  - Larry reported the Easterseals Veterans Clinic has seen suicide ideation in Veterans increase by 30%
  - Karen reported TLC's social workers have increased calls to help clients
  - Confusion on how to get a vaccine has increased anxiety of many people as well as anxiety of being out in public
  - Need an easier way to register for the vaccine. Inconsistency of eligibility, varies from site to site.
- Susan reported Montgomery County Public Schools students in kindergarten through third grade will begin to return to buildings in phases starting March 15. Students with IEPs can return April 6.
  - Social experiences will be a challenge due to restrictions – kids cannot talk during lunch, six feet rule during recess.
  - Larry noted there are still risks – his nephew contract COVID-19 from attending school two days a week
- It was suggested that this Committee meet at 4pm in the future as the current meeting time conflicts with CSS's monthly townhall meetings.
  - Betsy Luecking will schedule the next meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup> from 4pm to 5:30pm

## **Announcements**

### **Respectfully Submitted,**

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

## **Next Meeting**

Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 4pm to 5:30pm – via Zoom

**\*\*Please note new meeting start time\*\***

Instructions to attend will be included on the meeting agenda.