



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities  
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes – May 10th, 2021**

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

**Attendees:** Betty Bahadori; Larry Bram; Odile Brunetto; Rosemary DiPietro; Onesta Duke; Claire Funkhouser; Susan Hartung; Marie Parker Harvey; Lisa Hazell; Sari Hornstein; Susan Ingram; Jenn Lynn; Laurie Lyons; Jennifer Mizrahi; Seth Morgan; Karen Morgret; Sara O’Neil; Gloria Odongo; Beth Shuman; Susan Smith; Elaine Sorensen  
**Staff:** Betsy Luecking; Carly Clem

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

A motion was made to approve the April 2021 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the April 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.

**Social and Racial Equity Considerations in Access to Services for People with IDD of All Ages**

Jennifer Mizrahi, Co-Founder/President, RespectAbility, shared testimony that was given to the Office of Disability Employment Policy at the U.S. Department of Labor’s online dialogue to solicit ideas, insights, and innovations from the disability community about advancing racial and social equity: <https://www.respectability.org/2021/05/odep-racial-equity-testimony/>.

Testimony includes ideas for:

- Focusing on Better Metrics to Improve Racial Equity in Employment
- Focusing on Closing Gaps in High School Graduation Rates for BIPOC Students with Disabilities
  - Jennifer suggested pulling data to view the racial disparities for children with and without disabilities.
- Establishing a Chief Accessibility Officer of the United States
- Developing and Distributing Local Resources Guides Through Multiple Channels to Reach Underserved Communities
- Using Community Meetings and Online Dialogue to Drive Policy Innovation and Systems Change Advocacy
- Equity Webinars that Connect Disability History, Civil Rights Struggles, and Advancing Inclusion
  - Many webinars and toolkits on racial equity and social justice exist already that can be used to create curriculum.
- Advancing Equity through Caring Economy Jobs for Diverse Youth with I/DD
  - The Biden Administration has set aside \$400 billion in the budget for the caring economy.
  - Project SEARCH could be a vehicle for training people with development disabilities to work in the caring economy.
  - Jennifer spoke with the head of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management about restarting federal government apprenticeship programs and schedule A jobs (opportunities for persons with disabilities)
- Supporting Virtual Cohort Based Models for Diverse, Young Professionals with Disabilities
  - RespectAbility has been running a cohort-based model for helping persons with disabilities get jobs with much success.
  - Services are virtual and different from the usual vocational rehabilitation model of one counselor per one job seeker.
  - Services are provided similar to Project Search with one job coach per 10 to 12 job seekers.
  - Job seekers work together as well as hold individual meetings with the job coach.

- Focusing on Encouraging and Diversifying Disability Owned Businesses
- Leveraging Community College Resources to Improve Employment Outcomes for Students with Disabilities
- Fighting Stigmas by Embracing the Power of Story Telling and Role Models
  - Important to have positive role models of persons with disabilities with diverse racial backgrounds
- Breaking Down Silos under WIOA and Enforcing Accessibility
- A 13th Year to Close the Educational Gap Left by the Pandemic
  - Suggesting entire school systems offer a whole additional year of school for students who are aging out and participated in virtual learning this past year.
  - They need to obtain more skills.
  - As long as the student passes English, math and other core requirements they will have to leave school.
  - Montgomery County Public Schools is currently planning on having students return full-time in person in the fall.
  - Potential challenges and concerns about students readjusting to learning in a post-pandemic world.

Betsy said the Health & Human Services (HHS) Aging & Disability Services (ADS) Leadership Team will be developing a strategic plan on social justice and racial equity. She asked this Committee for input.

- This has not been discussed by this Committee before and is the beginning of a bigger conversation.
- Need to determine what inequities do exist and develop a plan to correct it
- Jennifer suggested including more people of diverse community on this Committee as well as English Language Learners (ELL). Note: Meetings are open to the public. The only appointed people are members of the Commission on People with Disabilities.
  - There are many ELLs with disabilities in the school system and in the County.

Montgomery County Public Schools											
Students with Disabilities By Race Compared with General Education Students By Race - Ages 3 to 21											
SWD = Students with Disabilities / GE = General Education (includes students with disabilities)											
	Grand Total	Asian		Black or African American		White		Hispanic		Two or More Races	
		Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
<b>SWD</b>	20,511	1,568	7.6%	5,365	26.2%	5,345	26.1%	7,295	35.6%	887	4.3%
<b>GE</b>	165,267	23,369	14.1%	35,391	21.4%	44,436	26.9%	53,586	32.4%	8,054	4.9%

Source: Maryland State Department of Education - Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data 10/2019

Data above was shared to show what will most likely be coming into the system over the next several years and to show how population has changed overall.

- Hispanic community has the largest population in special education in comparison of those in general education.
- May be great reluctance from some communities acknowledging disabilities, especially learning disabilities, in students.
- This data is for all disabilities and does not break down developmental disabilities.
  - May be too broad of a scope for this Committee but Commission would be advocating for all students with disabilities.
- TY numbers have grown over the last few years.
- Susan Hartung serves on DDA's Quality Assurance Committee.
- Data is shared but not broken out by racial communities.
- Susan Ingram said providers are not asked for that information at the county or state level.

It was asked if Onesta could provide race and ethnicity data for people currently served and for TYs.

- This data could then be compared to county populations and determine if there is inequity of services provided, which populations need more outreach.

- Some information regarding ethnicity and race is collected during the eligibility application process and would be available through the PCIS2 system.
- It is not known how that information is viewed within LTSS.
- It would be helpful if it was asked if the individual is an ELL.
- Onesta asked for Betsy to send her an email with the request.

In November 2019, Montgomery County Council unanimously passed a wide-ranging racial equity bill in an attempt to address racial and social equity.

- The legislation also created an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice and mandates that every bill considered by the council include an impact statement describing how it will affect equity among different groups.
- Budget now includes resources for language access and translation.
- Council worked with HHS, Public Health and Maryland Department of Health to gather ethnic and race data for residents who were COVID-19 positive and for vaccinations.
- Betsy suggested sending out criteria for the Committee to discuss prior to the next meeting.

Jennifer reported California conducted a study to determine the amount of money per person received for services broken down by the following racial backgrounds:

- White individuals from two-parent families who could afford lawyers received better IEPs and more services.
- Immigrant families, persons of color families, and single-parent families of individuals with the identical disability received different IEPs and services.
- Study indicated children of color received sixty cents on the dollar compared to white counterparts with identical disabilities.
- Need more advocacy training for parents of children with disabilities who were also students of color or are immigrants.
- Susan Ingram suggested asking MCPS for data.
- Betsy said this discussion needs to be had before the Commission on People with Disabilities as well to weigh in on other disability types include students who are deaf, blind or who have mental health issues.
- It will be hard to show with data the advocacy element which is key to so many individuals of color getting what they need out of any system.
  - There are hidden strengths behind success stories – either the parents, school system, DDA, case management, etc. worked to make it a success.
  - Sara O'Neil, MMARS, said there are more regulations now due to changes in DDA waiver definitions over the last ten years and that can make it harder to have these success stories.
  - Need to make sure services remain person-centered and CCSs remain fully engaged with their families and their individuals to advocate for their best means while also maintaining DDA regulations.
- Prior to the pandemic, the Committee's Transition Workgroup led by Claire Funkhouser was starting to identify individuals who were not being reached and developing videos.
- There could be a language barrier or cultural hesitancy for parents not sharing concerns or being more of an advocate.
- It was asked if data shows that TYs who are not picked up by providers are of particular races or ethnicities.
  - CCSs have said providers typically do not choose someone if they have intensive medical needs or challenging behaviors.
- It was suggested that language interpretation be available for when an individual visits a provider for a tour or language translation of materials.

A parent of an adult with a disability shared a family members experience receiving DDA Services. The parent shared that she believes that her adult child faced racial and ableism bias for several years. Concerns about some DDA residential services in Montgomery County occurred and an initial discussion about the lack of affordable and accessible housing for individuals with significant disabilities in Montgomery County began.

Historically, this committee has been supportive of individuals with developmental disabilities in the County but as with all County programs is developing a plan for racial and social equity in the delivery of services. We need to hear from individuals/families from all racial and ethnic groups who have had difficulty with becoming eligible or accessing

needed services. A comment was made that persons of color may need more support in accessing immediate quality assurance of existing IEP's for transitional youth as this is often lacking.

The committee understands the importance of community members of diverse backgrounds, race and ethnicities sharing their experience both positive and negative with receiving DDA services. Montgomery County Maryland wants to advance social justice and equity for all residents of the county.

- Every provider has quality assurance procedures that must be approved by DDA and OHCQ as part of the provider's license.
- Onesta suggested parent reach out the Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO).
- DDA's Provider Relations and Quality Enhancement departments that also play a role in monitoring quality.
- Parent was thanked for sharing her story as her voice is important to advancing racial equity in Montgomery County. She was encouraged to attend future meetings and continue to be a part of the conversation.

**Update from Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) – Onesta Duke, Regional Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), Maryland Department of Health (MDH), Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO)**

Susan Ingram asked for clarification on age eligibility requirements for certain services as Amendment 3 included changes.

- There is a gap period for services if a student with a disability leaves school prior to age 21.
  - Onesta noted not many students transition out of school early.
- Students are eligible for Transitioning Youth (TY) services prior to their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.
- Community Supports (CS) and Community Pathways (CP) Waivers are available to individuals 18 and older.
  - CP Waiver is specific to those who need residential services.
- Family Supports (FS) Waiver is available to individuals up to age 21.
- Children under age 18 are not eligible for residential services but would be eligible for FS waiver or Behavior Supports.
- If a child under age 18 needed residential services, it would be handled by Child Welfare Services or the school system.
- There are not enough hospital beds to address the need for children's residential placements.
- Suggestion that this Committee discuss how to help and advise these families.
- Individuals under 21 who are approved for residential services could potentially be placed in a home that is licensed for 21 and older if the case goes through the waiver exception process and is approved by Deputy Secretary Simons.
  - Janet Furman, Director of Children's Services, works closely with specific requests.
- DDA has a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Social Services (DSS).
  - DDA ensures individuals under 21 that have a need for residential supports are able to obtain support through DSS.
  - DSS would be the funding source for residential services until age 21.
  - Individual would transition to DDA funded services at age 21.
- Onesta will provide more clarification at the next Committee meeting.

It was asked how a student who does not have legal status gets Medicaid or DDA-funded services.

- Some students in Special Education do not qualify for DDA.
- Under the Trump Administration, asking for services would make the whole family ineligible for citizenship.
- Biden Administration has not made any changes yet.
- When a person is not a US citizen, they are not eligible for Medicaid and therefore not eligible for waiver services.
- DDA has not been authorizing state-only funding for people who are not eligible for Medicaid funding.
- Onesta said this changed within the last few years and DDA is not approving anyone new that cannot substantiate their citizenship.
- Permanent residents who have been in the US at least five years can apply and access services.
- Undocumented individuals are not eligible to receive any services.
- Individuals currently in the system will maintain their state funding and services will not increase.

## **Coordination of Community Services (CCS) Updates**

### **Service Coordination Inc. (SCI)**

Laurie Lyons, Program Manager, reported

Total served in county: 461

- Comprehensive Assessments: 8
- Community Coordination: 153
- Waiting List – Crisis Resolution: 11 (some in this category may have moved into services and category has not been updated)
- Waiting List – Crisis Prevention: 10
- Waiting List – Current Request: 279
- TY21/FY22: 44

### **Total Care**

Gloria Odongo, Director of Quality Enhancement, reported

Total Care Services currently serves 804 people in Montgomery county

- In services – 651 people
- Waiting List: 143 people (of the 147, [7] are crisis prevention and [3] are in crisis resolution)
- Self-Direct – 35 people.
- Comprehensive Assessments – (3)
- Since the last meeting we have had (4) people transfer in and (3) person transfer out.

TY20 – Total of 19 students

- (12) Students have been approved for the CPW waiver.
- (3) Students – need a provider (1 student is already in the waiver and just needs a provider).
- student – Pending waiver acceptance
- Student unable to contact.
- students – Need waivers

TY21 – Total of 17 students

- Of the (17) students (6) matrix scores have been submitted.
- (2) Students are in the CPW
- (2) Students – Initial PCPs submitted and are pending regional staff review.
- Coordinators continue to schedule PCPs.

New Hires

- Have hired (8) additional Coordinators since the last DDAC meeting

Agency Updates

- Director of CCS completed her Ed. D in Community Care and Counseling.
- Director of Quality Assurance completes a M.A in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

### **MMARS**

Sara O'Neil, DDA QE Analyst II, reported

1,461 total cases in services in Montgomery County.

- 1148 Individuals in Services.
- 82 Individuals are Self-Directing.
- 313 Individuals on the Waiting List.

- 293 Individuals in Current Request.
- 13 Individuals in Crisis Prevention.
- 7 Individuals in Crisis Resolution.
- 1 Upgrade to Crisis Resolution since the last meeting.

55 TY'21s

The majority have had their waiver meetings done, but provider acceptances are low for this time of the year.

47 TY'20s left to finalize the TY process

- 25 Individual have located a provider and are almost complete with the process.
- 22 Individuals still need a Vocational Provider.

### **Announcements**

#### **Respectfully Submitted,**

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

### **Next Meeting**

Monday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 from 4pm to 5:30pm – via Zoom

Instructions to attend will be included on the meeting agenda.