



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities  
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary – October 18, 2021**

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

**Attendees:** Betty Bahadori; Larry Bram; Odile Brunetto; Eric Cole; Rosemary DiPietro; Onesta Duke; Shakeelah Gray; Cynthia Grissom; Susan Hartung; Marie Parker Harvey; Lisa Hazell; Julia Jensen; Shawn Lattanzio; Lisa Lorraine; Jenn Lynn; Kim Mayo; Linda McMillan; Karen Morgret; Sara O'Neil; Becky Rosenberg; Patricia Sastoque; Beth Shuman; Susan Smith; Jeneva Stone; Kathleen Walker; L. Watts

**Staff:** Betsy Luecking; Carly Clem

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

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

**Discussion on Self-Directed Services**

Karen Morgret said providers are seeing more individuals switching from traditional services to self-directed services (SDS).

- Providers want to be proactive - how can they get more information and be more involved with on SDS?
- TLC has been helpful in assisting families going into SDS but has recently received several letters from DDA that an individual TLC serves is ending traditional services effective that day with no notification or indication given prior to the service termination letter.
- Questions about the process – how the provider can be notified earlier?

Sara O'Neil, MMARS, said there has been a big push to SDS because of the pandemic.

- Many families are now home with their loved ones and family members can get paid through SDS.
- A change from traditional to SDS should not take place prior to a revised Person-Centered Plan (PCP) meeting with the individual and the provider.
- Providers should be participating in the discharge of that individual from traditional services while the CCS and the individual are working to change to a SDS model.

Shakeelah Gray, Service Coordination Inc (SCI), said if the individual has already made the decision to change to SDS then it is not necessary to include the provider at the PCP meeting.

- It is the CCS's responsibility to notify the provider in advance of the changes.

Rosemary DiPietro, Community Support Network (CSN) said providers should be notified if an individual is leaving their services for any reason.

- The provider agency needs to know that funding will no longer be coming into that agency from this individual.

Onesta said ideally the provider would participate in the discussion with the individual although some individuals are not comfortable having certain providers participating in their meetings.

- There still needs to be some form of communication that indicates to the provider that an individual is no longer interested in receiving services.
- A month ago, DDA implemented a new process to ensure providers are being notified when an individual has chosen to transition to SDS.

- An email is sent that notifies the provider that DDA is processing a reduction in services with an effective date.
- There may have been some instances of overlapping or duplication of services where traditional providers are continuing to provide services while SDS staff are also providing services.
  - DDA is working to put steps in place to prevent this from happening.
- In the system the traditional provider has to accept that services are being reduced.
  - This information may not be trickling down to the necessary staff that need to have this information.
  - DDA is working to incorporate extra steps on the back end at the regional offices to help minimize confusion.

**Update on Employment - Kathleen Walker Director of Employment and Family Supports, Developmental Disabilities Administration, Eastern Shore Regional Office**

DDA hosted a webinar today for [National Disability Employment Awareness Month titled “America’s Recovery: Powered by Inclusion”](#).

- Webinar highlights employment videos of individuals with disabilities who are competitively integrated and employed in the community.
- John Butterworth, PhD, Senior Research Fellow, Director for Employment Systems Change and Evaluation Institute for Community Inclusion UMASS Boston, assists Maryland with employment data collection and provides technical assistance to providers regarding organizational transformation opportunities.
- John presented the national perspective versus state employment data and trends in the webinar.
- Increase in community participation from October 2020 to May 2021
- Continues to increase as vaccinations increase and the community opens back up allowing for people to return to an inclusive community setting.
- Continuing to track outcomes as they influence where more supports may need to be provided.
- Pandemic has impacted employment not only in Maryland but nationally.
  - In Maryland, 65% of people retained employment.
  - Nationally, 30% maintaining employment.
  - Positive outcomes for people with disabilities as there are more incentives for return to work efforts and higher pay.
  - 3% increase in employment from the last employment data collection.
- Future of employment – continue to support a hybrid model of supports (virtual and in-person) and focus on flexible return to work efforts.
  - Staff training and development supports the hybrid model moving forward.
- Center for Medicaid Services has stated that when the emergency ruling and Appendix K flexibility ends that the virtual service provided cannot compromise the entirety of services provided to ensure individuals are connected and not isolated.
- Maryland wants to continue to be an Employment First state and support employment outcomes.
- Policies are accessible online - <https://dhmh.policystat.com/>.
  - Click on Policy Area and then click on the available options to filter through policies.
  - Policies may have reference materials for further guidance.
  - Guidance documents are person-centered, family-friendly and easier to understand.
  - Example: Meaningful Day Services now includes [visual scenarios on transportation services](#)

Kathleen can be contacted at [Kathleen.Walker1@maryland.gov](mailto:Kathleen.Walker1@maryland.gov).

The floor was opened to questions.

How does Maryland differentiate employment versus under-employment? For example, someone that may have a job where they may not be demonstrating their abilities or skills at a higher level.

- Employment outcome data collection does not indicate different categories of employment or the type of technological or advancement degrees or skills needed to obtain certain types of positions.
- Kathleen will bring this question back to John Butterworth to see if it can be tracked.
- First employment opportunities tend to focus on “food, filth and flowers” – food industry, cleaning, and landscaping.

- Want to expand inclusion in post-secondary education opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to increase their employment and advancement opportunities.

The Federal government is proposing all Ability One contracts pay at least minimum wage throughout the country. How will this impact DDA?

- Maryland does not allow anyone to be paid subminimum wage regardless if they work under an Ability One contract or have a 14(c) certificate.
- Offering employment and community options to support individuals who is working under one of those contracts that is no longer available in Maryland.
- Continue to have conversations with providers that start serving in Maryland but that work under the subminimum wage model.

Does DDA have new rates?

- Current rates are posted on the DDA website and there have been no changes.

Are there new service definitions for employment?

- Employment definitions have not been changed in three years.
- Kathleen noted that there is an Employment Lead located within each regional office that can provide technical assistance regarding service definitions or scopes.

Is there support available for persons with disabilities who want to start their own business?

- Maryland continues to learn and research how to support self-employment which is ever evolving.
  - Need clear definitions so staff can support the individual who is managing their own business but not providing support for the business.
- Different in sustainability between self-employment and hobby-employment.
- DORS is the appropriate first referral for anyone seeking to be self-employed.
  - The RISE (Reach Independence through Self Employment) program helps people explore the idea of self-employment, develop a business plan, research funding sources, and marketing ideas.
- Webinar: [MD Community of Practice for Supporting Families Webinar Series on self-employment facilitated by Mary Anne Kane-Breschi, Director, Family Supports, featuring Mara Clawson, Artist & Business Owner](#)
  - Mara and her mother Michele Marks discuss how they started their own self-employment business, the types of grants they applied for and the system itself.
- Maryland is looking to start a separate self-employment workgroup in the near future to work on expanding self-employment supports.
- Corey Smith is a subject matter expert on self-employment (wage-work) and can answer targeted questions, knows how to navigate the business aspect and who to contact.

Jeneva's son who is medically complex transitioned out of school in 2019. She stated the following:

- He left the school system without being able to read or write due to his communication issues.
- He could not apply to the DORS RISE Program due to their requirements.
- Complicated figuring out how to maintain DDA eligibility while moving into self-employment opportunities.
  - Had to create an ABLE account before her son could launch his website to sell artwork.
  - Cannot have more than \$2,000 in assets at any given time.
- Should be considered when DDA works on how to promote and support self-employment.
- Self-employment is not an easy option in terms of operating a business, understanding taxes and legalities.

Does DDA work with WorkSource Montgomery?

- Kathleen does not as she is the Eastern Shore Regional Employment Director and Lead.
- Someone at the SMRO or DDA Headquarters may work with WorkSource Montgomery.
- Kathleen does communicate often with Beth Lash from DORS.

Cynthia Grissom, Director, Business Solutions, WorkSource Montgomery, would like more employment data.

- Maryland Workforce Exchange Database numbers do not accurately reflect as individuals have to self-disclose.

- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) includes funding for apprenticeships and employment training programs.
- Training is available for both the job seeker as well as the employer.
- Cynthia wants to work with disability organizations who could use this funding.
- Want to serve as many people in underserved population as possible.

85% of DORS' budget is set aside to serve TYs.

- Very limited resources to assist older persons.
- [Extensive waiting list for services](#) – over 700 individuals with a five to six year wait.
- DORS serves people with the most significant disabilities first.
- Not known if DORS automatically refers individuals on the waitlist to WorkSource Montgomery
- WorkSource Montgomery has an overall responsibility to assist people with disabilities who are seeking employment.

Montgomery County Government employs 44 persons with disabilities through AP-10 contracts.

### **Data Collection**

The Committee wants to develop a data tracking spreadsheet for CCS agencies to input their monthly data so it can be used to create charts to see trends.

- Also want to track waiting list, transitioning youth (TY) and COVID-19 vaccination data.
- Use data to see trends and identify what the challenges are and what additional supports are needed in order to better serve the community.
- Need to stay informed to educate ourselves as well as County staff and elected officials.

Lisa Lorraine said Breaking Barriers has a network of fourteen service providers.

- Access issues for traditionally underserved populations.
- Discussed with Marie Parker Harvey, UMD, about developing a resource or database.

DDA tracks data of persons in services including when the individual was enrolled; when they entered the waiver; when they began receiving services; how many people are pending; where the CCS is at with the PCP; if the PCP is approved; if the PCP is in clarification; if the PCP went into auto-extend; how many PCPs are coming up within the 30/60/90 days; and how many people are in the waiting list.

- All of this data can be pulled for Montgomery County.
- Send Onesta an email with the specific data that this Committee wants.
- All data shared will be de-identified.
- CCS agencies have access to this data as well through LTSS Maryland.
  - Sara noted that many CCS agencies also have an internal way to pull data.

Jenn Lynn reported Maryland Department of Disabilities through House Bill 847 created a State Coordinator for Autism Strategy position.

- Position will , in consultation with the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs, identify and evaluate existing public, private, and nonprofit services for individuals with autism and their families.

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

Montgomery County Waiting List – **853 people total**

- 12 in crisis resolution
  - Coordinators are engaged in waiver enrollment process as well as identifying immediate services
- 36 in crisis prevention
- 805 current request

Transitioning Youth (TY)

- When coordinators are engaging with the TY population they are informing them of both the traditional service delivery model as well as SDS.
- TYs and families are making decisions based on the information that is shared.

- Overall increase in TYs enter into SDS as they think it is the most appropriate service model that will meet their immediate needs.
- If a TY elects to transition into SDS, the TY is engaged with a CCS agency through the whole process.
- SDS Leads are available at each regional office to provide technical assistance.
- Do not anticipate TYs losing waiver slots because they are unable to identify a traditional provider.
- CCSs are engaged during the waiver enrollment process and are reaching out to different agencies for meaningful day services.
- If a meaningful day service is not immediately available, personal support services and other waiver options are explored in order to meet the needs of the TY.
- TYs have up to a year to enroll in the waiver and identify services.
- DDA does not anticipate any challenges or issues with TYs not receiving services.

At MCPS it is the Transition Support Teacher (TST) who coordinates the transition planning process.

- Susan Hartung asked if TSTs are advising parents on the current issues regarding access to services due to capacity issues or taking longer to identify providers.
- TY numbers in Montgomery County continue to increase each year.
- Susan will find out what TSTs are doing at the high school where she works.

Providers such as TLC receive referrals from CCS agencies.

- Some referrals are not appropriate for that particular organization.
- How can providers help CCS agencies better inform staff as well as individuals and families what is available?
- Can we develop a listing or brochure of all providers in Montgomery County that details the type of individuals served and the services offer?
- Some providers do not offer nursing services.
- Provider might have situations for meaningful day where services are delivered four persons to one staff.
  - This would indicate to a CCS that someone who needs one-to-one needs might not be an appropriate referral for that provider.

There are 58 residential providers in the Southern Maryland region and 51 meaningful day providers in Montgomery County.

- Patricia Sastoque, Director of Programs, said DDA has hired a contractor to develop a geomapping database of specific services by provider similar to Maryland Access Point.
- A person could enter a zip code to see the closest provider and services are offered and populations served (example: serve medically fragile individuals, serve people who are Deaf-Blind, provide use of REM, CFC, SDS, etc.)
- Geomapping database would replace what is currently available on DDA's website.
- Demo should be available by the end of the month.
- Geomapping database will eventually merge with Maryland Access Point.
- Once the template is ready, providers will be asked to complete and provide details about services offered.
- Open to feedback from the public.

Jeneva asked everyone to consider the following problem - if we are breaking down transitioning youth into categories, especially "functional" categories and/or the medically complex issue, there is the possibility that we are creating a bigger problem that will circumscribe educational opportunities for some people with disabilities.

- She stated that there is an artificial distinction throughout county and state services with a dividing line of individuals who are capable of living in their community and individuals who need a lot of medical care.
- Medically complex individuals face enormous barriers to community inclusion.
- Need to create welcoming adult services structure with multiple opportunities for a wide range of people with disabilities.
- Individuals with complex medical needs do not need to be segregated into nursing homes or medical day services.

- There are many individuals who are out in the community who use devices such as ventilators and gastrostomy tubes.
- If an individual has REM services then their private duty nurse can go with them to the provider for services.
- There should not be a functional metric that shuts people with medically complex issues out of services.
- As a parent you do not want to limit your child's ability to participate in programs because of their complexities.
- Larry Bram noted that Easterseals is one of two providers in DC that accepts medically fragile children.
- It's a real issue that starts as early as infancy.
- Agencies need to consider what they need to put in place to help an individual succeed rather than saying they won't take the individual.
- Jeneva would like to assist in any way to help change how individuals with complex medical needs are served.

### **General Discussion**

Larry Bram reported Easterseals held its National Policy Symposium two weeks ago.

- Much time and discussion spent on SDS and what that means moving forward for traditional providers and how traditional providers can meet the needs and challenges of SDS.
- SDS will only continue to increase.
- Onesta said there is still a place for traditional providers under SDS.
  - Many individuals have incorporated traditional providers into their plan and budget as vendors.
  - Traditional providers have to be open to learning more about the SDS process as well as billing.
  - SMRO has an SDS Lead that works with traditional providers to help them understand the process.

Betsy reported that Jeneva Stone is now a parent representative on the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities.

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

#### **Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services – Community Support Network**

No report submitted.

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

Shakeela Gray, Supervisor, reported

- Serve total of 475 people in Montgomery County
- 259 people are in services
  - Of the 259, 46 people self-direct services
- 8 = Comprehensive Assessments in progress
- 5 = WL-Crisis Prevention
- 5 = WL- Crisis Resolution
- 171 = WL- Current Request
- TY21/FY22 = 55

### **Total Care**

No report submitted.

### **MMARS**

- 1,475 Total Clients
  - 1,163 In Services
    - 84 Individuals in Self-Directed Services
  - 312 Individuals on the Waiting List
    - 291 Individuals in Current Request
    - 9 Individuals in Crisis Prevention
    - 12 Individuals in Crisis Resolution
      - No new updates since last meeting.

53 TY'21s that have until June 2022 to find placement.  
49 TY'22s that will be graduating in May 2022.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist  
Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

**Next Meeting**

Monday, November 8, 2021 from 4pm to 5:30pm – via Zoom  
Instructions to attend will be included on the meeting agenda.