



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities  
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary – September 13, 2021**

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

**Attendees:** Betty Bahadori; Larry Bram; Odile Brunetto; Eric Cole; Rosemary DiPietro; Onesta Duke; Susan Hartung; Lisa Hazell; Sara Hornstein; Susan Ingram; Annette Jolles; Julia Jensen; Shawn Lattanzio; Lisa Lorraine; Jenn Lynn; Laurie Lyons; Kim Mayo; Karen Morgret; Sara O’Neil; Beth Shuman; Susan Smith; Jeneva Stone  
**Staff:** Betsy Luecking; Carly Clem

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

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

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

- Direct Support Professional Recognition Week is September 12 through September 18. DDA accepted nominations made by providers and those acknowledgements will be occurring throughout this week as well as in the upcoming newsletter.
- DDA issued a memo on August 13, 2021 regarding [Appendix K and Executive Orders Flexibilities](#).
  - Memo includes a table when specific flexibilities will expire.
  - Appendix K / Emergency Regulations will expire December 31, 2021.
  - Waiver Amendment #3 and/or Senate Bill #3 and Regulations have no termination date and have been retained permanently.
  - SMRO continues to provide information and assistance to providers regarding the flexibilities.

**COVID-19 Updates – As of September 12, 2021**

- Total SMRO Region
  - 641 participants tested positive.
  - 246 participants tested negative.
  - 26 participants passed away.
  - 427 staff tested positive.
  - 5 staff passed away.
- Montgomery County
  - 304 participants tested positive.
  - 97 participants tested negative.
  - 11 participants passed away.
  - 229 staff tested positive.
  - 2 staff passed away.
- Statewide Vaccinations
  - Of the 17,274 participants that the agencies reported intending to have vaccinated, 13,641 (79%) have been vaccinated.
  - 3,633 (21%) have not received a vaccine.
  - There have been 137 vaccination clinics held by the provider agencies. There are no upcoming clinics scheduled.

- Others vaccinated include: 1,489 family members, 2,537 administrative staff, 10,198 Direct Support Staff, and 1,130 self-directed participants
- SMRO Region Vaccinations
  - Of the 5,610 participants in this region, 4,165 participants have been reported as being vaccinated.
    - This number includes individuals in the traditional service delivery model as well as people in the self-directed service delivery model.
- Since June 2021, there has only been an increase of 8 participants testing positive for SMRO.
- Continue to monitor reports from providers and data is shared during Deputy Secretary Simons webinars.

Montgomery County Waiting List - 862 people total

- 18 in crisis resolution
- 31 in crisis prevention
- 813 in current request

Montgomery County TY20/FY21 – 164 people total [Graduated June 2020]

- 89 have been placed
- 75 have not been placed
- 9 people declined services
- 1 waiver denied due to citizenship concerns
- 7 waivers pending
- 36 waivers approved but providers need to be identified
- Reason for low placement numbers could be due to current public health emergency and provider capacity issues. Some family members are not ready for in-person services while other families are not interested in virtual supports which many more providers are offering versus in-person. Some families are not responsive.
- There are no extensions at this time for TYs to find placement. FY21 TYs have until their 22nd birthday. Exceptions were reported to CCS agencies. Onesta will get clarification on this timeframe.

Montgomery County TY21/FY22 – 186 people total [Graduated June 2021]

- 23 have been placed
- A number of waivers are still pending
- 3 people declined services
- 26 waivers pending
- 36 waivers approved but providers need to be identified
- 97 have CCSs working to complete waiver paperwork and locate providers

TY coordinators continue to meet regularly/monthly with CCS agencies

- Headquarters collecting data regarding barriers to TYs being connected to services in a timely manner.
- Concerns about the number of TY21s not placed and upcoming TY22s that will graduate June 2022.
- Susan Ingram said some providers are not willing to take on new clients when they are having difficulty hiring new staff. Individuals have the option to remain within the Autism Waiver under their Appendix K application. Some are opting to remain under that Waiver as long as possible before transitioning into DDA services as they are also experiencing issues in identifying an appropriate provider.
- DDA and the Autism Waiver are collaborating to ensure that All TY's are able to access needed services in a timely manner.
- If the Transitioning Youth's and their family's decision is to remain in the Autism Waiver and their DDA Waiver application has already been approved for a July 1st date, the decision was communicated to their CCS no later than June 16, 2021 so that the DDA can advise the Department's Eligibility Determination Division (EDD) to not disenroll the person from the Autism Waiver at this time.
- Autism Waiver participants that have not completed the DDA Waiver application process will remain in the Autism Waiver.
- Remaining in the Autism Waiver during this state of emergency will not jeopardize the opportunity to apply for the DDA TY services.

- Onesta clarified TY20/FY21 had until July 30 to get on the waiver. If the paperwork was not submitted then those TYs missed their deadline to access TY services. If paperwork was submitted prior to their deadline date and are enrolled in the waiver without a provider, they should be okay with accessing services.
- Susan Ingram suggested CCSs speak with InterACC about these issues. Individuals only have to receive one service per month to stay in service. If families at least were enrolled in services they wouldn't lose their opportunity and then have to go on the waiting list.

Question: Has Money Follows the Person program been suspended.

- Onesta does not information at this time and will follow-up.

Question: Will DD population be prioritized to receive the booster?

- Executive order issued last week that developmental disability group homes will be prioritized. Information was shared with stakeholders.
- To receive boosters, those individuals need to reach out to their local pharmacies or primary care physicians. No mass clinics are scheduled at this time.
- Beth Shuman said a mechanism needs to be put in place for booster shots to be administered to the developmental disability population. This population needs dedicated resources and funding. It is not realistic for some individuals to go to a pharmacy to receive the booster shot.
  - Onesta said there is no plan in place currently for organizing clinics but there will be discussion occurring about the order that went out last week.

Question: Has it been mandated that staff be vaccinated in order to work with the developmental disability population.

- Staff that are working in state facilities, which are federally funded through Medicare and Medicaid, are mandated to be vaccinated, but there is no mandate for residential providers at this time.
- CDC has clarified that community-based services were exempt from the vaccine mandate.
- DDA continues to collect vaccine information and has set a survey to all agencies that will help design policy and determine next steps. Survey information will be shared with Medicaid and Maryland Health Department.
- Montgomery County has a high vaccination rate among provider staff. Several agencies made vaccinations mandatory with several more agencies moving towards that mandate as well.
- Easterseals will soon be mandating that all staff be vaccinated.
  - 3 staff that were initially hesitant have received their vaccinations in the last week.

Jenn Lynn asked for resources to provide a vaccine to a client who is unwillingly to leave their home.

- Odile asked Jenn Lynn to contact her directly.
- Susan Ingram noted that the County clinic was accommodating to clients who did not want to go inside. Vaccines were given while clients sat in their cars or on the sidewalk.
- PCR has lost one staffmember who refused to be vaccinated.

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

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

Rosemary DiPietro, Program Manager, reported

TYs have been gradually decreasing as CSN is capped to serve 500 people.

- CSN serves 7 TYs that all have had their initial person-centered-plans approved (either identified service providers or are self-directing services).
- 6 of those TYs have started waiver services.
- 1 person who is self-directing.

CSN is making progress with DDA's transformation and the PCP process.

Betty Bahadori asked if there have been further discussions on the need for another Program Manager. Rosemary said at this time the County has not allocated funding for another Program Manager.

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

Laurie Lyons, Program Manager, reported SCI is focusing on their reopening process.

- In-person visits have been offered as of September 1. Clients have the option to choose in-person or virtual. There is a lot of initial apprehension about returning to in-person visits, but those that have had in-person visits have reported enjoying the opportunity to see people again and fostering those relationships.
- Continuing to provide protocol to keep staff safe.
- No vaccination mandate as of yet.
- SCI is an early LTSS adopter.
- Over the summer resubmitted self-directed plans to include cost-of-living updates in plan budgets.
- Working with clients whose services may change due to Appendix K flexibility deadlines.
- Hired two more supervisors – now a total of five supervisors for the entire region.
- 21 CCSs serving Montgomery County.

SCI serves 469 people.

- 6 Comprehensive Assessments
- 204 CC – people in services
- 9 Waiting List – Crisis Resolution
- 9 Waiting List – Crisis Prevention
- 246 Waiting List -Current Request

Of the 469:

- TY21/FY22 – 52
  - Lot of people we get are referrals for people approaching that TY timeframe so appreciate very much with onesta and nicole and their support. Really working through that process.
- TY22/FY23 - 48

### **Total Care**

Julia Jensen, Director of Quality Enhancement, reported

Total Care Services currently serves 800 people in Montgomery County

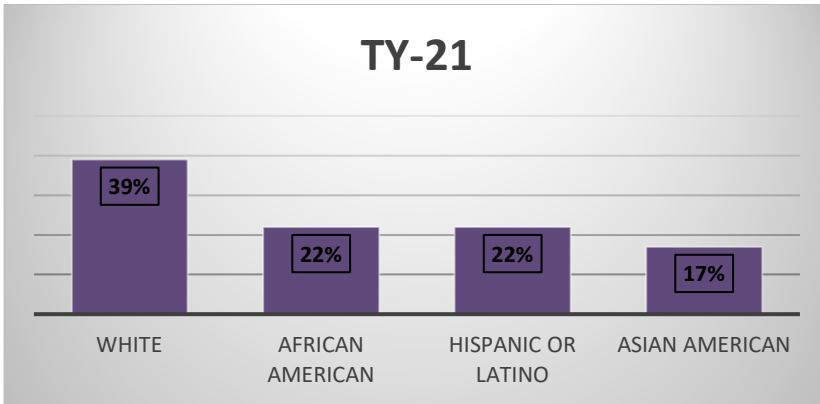
- In services – 647 people
- Waiting List: 146 people (of the 146, [8] are crisis prevention and [5] are in crisis resolution)
- Self-Direct – 41 people.
- Comprehensive Assessments – (3)
- Since the last meeting we have had (6) people transfer in and (0) people transfer out.

Transitioning Youth

- TY20 – Total of 19 students
  - (5) PCPs in progress or pending approval
  - (7) Students – need a providers
  - (4) students – Pending waiver acceptance
  - (3) Student unable to contact.
- TY21- Total of 17 students
  - (3) Students are unresponsive to CCS
  - (7) Students have been referred to Providers
  - (2) Students have Providers and have been placed
  - Student is undecided if they will move forward with services
  - (4) Students are in the FSW need to switch to CSW.

Demographic information for TY21

## TY-21



### New Hires

- Hired (5) additional Coordinators since the last DDAC meeting

### MMARS

Sara O'Neil, DDA QE Analyst II, reported

- 1468 Actively Served Individuals in Montgomery
  - 1158 In Services
    - 84 Individuals are Self-Directing their services
  - 310 Individuals on the Waiting List
    - 287 Current Request
    - 10 Crisis Prevention
    - 12 Crisis Resolution Cases
      - 3 Upgrades since the Last Meeting
- 55 TY'21s that are left to fully enroll into services [graduated in June 2021 that are not fully enrolled into services]
  - 29 are still seeking a Provider
- 50 TY'22s [graduating this coming year – June 2022]
  - Initial Meetings are being held now [facilitating the interviewing process]

### **Announcements**

Jeneva Stone is working with Little Lobbyists to advocate for Home-Community Based Services (HCBS) funding.

- Funding could be used to eliminate waiting lists, increase staff trainings, and raise staff wages.
- The Better Care, Better Jobs Act had proposed \$400 billion in funding as a minimum.
- The House Energy and Commerce Committee has proposed reducing that amount to \$190 billion.
- Advocates suggested \$250 billion at least needed in funding to create any real progress.
- If HCBS is not fully funded states may have to make difficult choices.
- Jeneva will be drafting an email template today with talking points that can be personalized and shared with your representatives.
- Over 800,000 people on HCBS waiting lists across the country with an average 14-year waiting period.
  - Number is most likely higher but people have not applied as they are discouraged by the wait period.
- Larry explained HCBS funding is competing with Medicare funding.
  - Argument that HCBS funding is Medicaid and could also be received from the states.
  - Easterseals will be having a social media campaign this week on this topic.

### **Discussion – Outcomes**

Betsy suggested that data from these meetings be compiled and analyzed in order to determine how many people are being served and evaluate what to do for those who are not and are in need of services. Information received during these meetings needs to be communicated to parents, providers, the community and elected officials. .

- Larry volunteered to compile the data.
- Need to determine what should be done locally from a County perspective.
- Concerns that TYs are not going to be served – 160 TYs have not been placed at this point.

- These individuals need services and could end up in dangerous situations.
- Susan Ingram said from a provider perspective they are sheltered because it is no longer the providers job to advocate or intervene – it is handled by the CCS. Providers just receive an electronic referral.
- Providers are not aware of the numbers of TYs needing placement.
- Providers currently figuring out how to keep clients occupied in construction ways as job opportunities have diminished and community resources are not available due to COVID-19.
- Providers also trying to figure out Appendix K flexibility deadlines and new amendments.
- Serious provider staffing shortage nationwide and Countywide.
- Susan Hartung suggested inviting MCPS Transition Services to these meetings.

The time during transition can be incredibly confusing and additional materials to help guide them would be helpful.

- Sari Hornstein shared an article: “After the school bus stops coming, it’s not as scary as you fear”  
<https://pathfindersforautism.org/articles/education/after-the-school-bus-stops-coming-its-not-as-scary-as-you-fear/>.

Question: CCS agencies handle paperwork but can they discuss the needs of the community?

- CCS agencies are heavily ruled by DDA and have been challenged by the transformation which has relied heavily on paperwork.
- Transformation changed person-centered plans and wrapped in funding and services which has create a lot of chaos and confusion at all levels for everyone involved – the parents, the individuals, the providers and the CCSs.
- The targeted case management system is not going away, but there are aspects that this Committee could work on.
- Sara O’Neil said CCSs are now able to create a comprehensive plan with the individual and submit that plan with the hope of having it funded more easily than in years past.
- CCSs do have the ability to advocate more now than before when CCSs were grant-based.

Employment First was introduced five years ago but the pandemic has wrought havoc on employment opportunities.

- The developmental disability population is also more vulnerable than other populations.
- Need to have an idea of what adult life will look like for those who cannot be employed or volunteer.
- Need to curate and shape a person’s day so they continue to grow and develop.
- How to design appropriate meaningful day services which encompasses employment, volunteerism, traditional day services, and community resources
  - It is the job of the CCS to figure out these services based on what the individual and the parent decide they want and get through the paperwork process so that it gets funded.
  - There’s a vision of what the plan could be but then there is the reality of the world we live in today with the pandemic.

Suggestions to target how to improve services for those who already have funding and how to identify and provide for people who are not getting funding.

- Concerns about quality assurance for clients who are already receiving services.
- What happens after services are funded and providers are identified.
- How is quality assurance managed by the CCS and reported back to DDA.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist  
 Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

**Next Meeting**

Monday, October 11, 2021 from 4pm to 5:30pm – via Zoom – changed to October 18 due to State holiday