



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary – December 14th, 2020**

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

Attendees: Betty Bahadori; Larry Bram; Odile Brunetto; Carly Clem; Rosemary DiPietro; Onesta Duke; Claire Funkhouser; Marie Parker Harvey; Susan Hartung; Betsy Luecking; Jenn Lynn; Laurie Lyons; Kim Mayo; Karen Morgret; Sara O'Neil; Gloria Odongo; Beth Shuman; Jeneva Stone

Approval of the November 2020 Meeting Summary Minutes

A motion was made to approve the November 2020 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the November 2020 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved as written. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cpwd - click on the tab Developmental Disability Advisory Committee.

Bill 46-20, Police - School Resource Officers – Prohibited

https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/cclims/DownloadFilePage?FileName=2684_1_12063_Bill_46-2020_Introduction_20201117.pdf

The Commission on People with Disabilities discussed Bill 46-20 at their November 2020 meeting. Their discussion can be found in the minutes: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CPWD/CPWDNovember2020MtgSummMins.pdf>

Jenn Lynn, Member of the Policing Advisory Commission (PAC), reported the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) recently released their own report on School Resource Officers (SRO) that includes statistics. The report indicates that MCPD does not want to eliminate SROs as they are important and critical to many students. For some, it is the only positive interaction they have during the day as their home life may not good. Many students establish trusting relationships with SROs who are usually the first to recognize problems at home and can identify child abuse, drug addiction, bullying and threats. In schools where there are Autism programs, some SROs have developed relationships with those students and are the first line of defense when bullying occurs. All SRO's are trained by Officer Laurie Reyes and the Autism/IDD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) and Alzheimers Outreach Program. The report does acknowledge that more counselors need to be in the schools. There has been strong pushback that SROs are a pipeline to prison. There has been discussion on making SROs unarmed. The PAC will be meeting tonight and Jenn Lynn will send this Committee her notes.

Beth Shuman, Senior Legislative Aide, Councilmember Gabe Albornoz, reported the Council is waiting for the Board of Education (BOE) report to be released in January. Beth said it's mandated that the BOE present their report to the Council as well as the Education Committee. The BOE has gathered focus groups and has been reviewing best practices across the country. There has been some false narrative that Councilmembers are looking to remove all or keep all SROs. No decision has been made yet.

Betsy Luecking, Staff, said she was asked to comment on Bill 46-20 on behalf of the Commission on People with Disabilities. She asked if anyone on this Committee had an opinion.

Susan Hartung, Parent, said she works at Walter Johnson High School which has 3,000 students and six special education programs. The school has a caseload of 300 students to one counselor. The school also has one psychologist for all 3,000 students. Susan said more counselors are needed. She added that schools have not been

in session since the racial issues and protests were heightened earlier this year and she does not know how that may affect students.

Jenn Lynn reported statistics show Maryland is failing at the ratio of school counselors and guidance counselors to students in every single school. If the ratio were to improve, it may take some of the pressure off SROs. Schools need more mental health and supportive resources.

Policing Advisory Commission (PAC) Update – Jenn Lynn, PAC Commissioner

PAC is currently evaluating responses from the [Reimagining Public Safety community input survey](#) that was conducted by the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force.

All PAC members must attend the citizen's police academy which has been condensed into five 2 ½ hour classes on Zoom. Jenn Lynn took the class in-person and completed the academy last night after use-of-force training. She noted that she is not police force material.

Jenn Lynn is Chair of the Emergency Response and Mental Health Resources Committee which has been tasked with evaluating response options as well as improving response to individuals with Autism and mental health challenges, increasing training and adding more crisis teams if possible. Jenn Lynn is currently discussing with the Call Center the possibility of having a specified response to a call if it seems like it involves a person with Autism or mental health challenges. She will also be contacting Susan Smith, Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), as Susan is on the Mental Health Advisory Committee's subcommittee that is working on recommendations for mobile treatment. The Hiring and Discipline Committee has been asked by the Council to review and provide comments on [Bill 34-20 - Police - Disciplinary Procedures - Police Labor Relations - Duty to Bargain – Amendments](#). The SRO Committee is reviewing statistics and fact sheets provided by MCPD regarding demographics, types of arrests, and types of interactions. The Discretionary Policing Committee is reviewing all other issues including traffic enforcement and marijuana arrests.

Jenn Lynn said there are no members from any police department on the Commission except for Officer Cate Brewer, Fraternal Order of the Police, or her designee and Police Chief Marcus Jones or his designee who are both Ex-Officio Members. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings. Agendas and minutes can be found on their website: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/PoliceAC/index.html>.

Jenn Lynn said due to the current situation, many officers are not initiating many arrests. Many officers are also leaving the police force or retiring. Due to COVID-19, the jails have been releasing some inmates back into the community.

PAC will be meeting tonight and all subcommittees will submit their updates. PAC is still awaiting a request from MCPD on traffic enforcement data. PAC will also be reviewing [Bill 45-20 – Police – Community Policing – Data](#) which would require MCPD to make certain reports and post certain datasets on Data Montgomery. Jenn Lynn will send this Committee notes from tonight's meeting.

Betty Bahadori, Parent, attended a meeting today where it was noted that the County's Crisis Center is not served by public transportation. Dr. Raymond Crowel, Director, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), was in the meeting as well and he was receptive to the idea of working with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to increase public transportation and access.

Jenn Lynn said the MCPD Crisis Teams are located at the Crisis Center. She is proposing that a Crisis Team be placed in each district to help spread service across the County and to ensure every district is served. She also suggested having a staffperson trained in mental health that answers 911 calls that can channel requests to the Crisis Team when the caller mentions Autism or mental health issues or a situation that needs to be de-escalated. However, there are many times when a Crisis Team would not be able to handle the situation because it is too volatile. It is a very fine line determining how to handle 911 calls. Jenn Lynn is trying to connect with the County's Emergency Communications Center to discuss these issues.

Susan reported 60 Minutes featured a segment last night on the increase use of ketamine, a powerful chemical restraint, by paramedics on suspects exhibiting wild behavior and extreme strength. Ketamine is potentially fatal. She added that it is hard to diagnosis a situation over the phone.

Jenn Lynn said officers do not want to have a crisis team person involved in a dangerous situation as it just one more person they have to take care of. It is complicated to find a middle ground. She noted that there is funding available for six new social workers.

Gloria Odongo, Total Care Services, asked if MCPD had considered certifying officers in Mental Health First Aid. Jenn Lynn said MCPD has a Crisis Intervention Team, but she does not know if officers are trained in Mental Health First Aid. She will check. She did note that MCPD officers receive twice the amount of training than any other police force.

Update from Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) – Onesta Duke, Regional Director, Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO)

Onesta reported the data for Montgomery County:

Waiting List - 824 people total

- 10 people are in Crisis Resolution
- 32 people are in Crisis Preention
- 782 people are in Current Request

TY19s for FY20 – 150 Total

- 120 have been placed
- 30 have not been placed
 - 6 declined services
 - 2 have had their waivers denied
 - 14 have approved waivers but do not have a provider identified
 - 5 have waivers pending
 - 3 have no waiver or provider identified

TY20s for FY21 – 167 Total

- 68 are currently placed
- 99 have not been placed
 - 6 declined services
 - 11 have waivers pending
 - 23 have approved waivers but do not have a provider identified
 - 59 have no waiver or provider identified

Some barriers for TYs include the current situation with the pandemic and families being able to access certain services. Some families want more than virtual support services and are opting to wait until after the pandemic. Some providers are not returning inquiries. When that happens, DDA works with Provider Relations to follow-up with those providers.

DDA held their quarterly provider meeting last week where they provided a general COVID-19 update and encouraged providers to use the Appendix K flexibility in order to help with the surge that many providers are currently experiencing.

Onesta reported that DDA 99% of individuals in Personal Supports have transitioned to EVV and are ready for the January 1st, 2021 launch date.

Another priority for SMRO is to resolve outstanding Person-Centered Plans (PCPs) outside of the Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) transition. They are working with coordination agencies to make sure PCP's are submitted in a timely manner. DDA Deputy Secretary Bernie Simons will be hosting a webinar this Friday with Kenneth A Feder, PhD, Epidemic Intelligence Service Officer for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Maryland Department

of Health (MDH) Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Outbreak Response Bureau, who will provide more information regarding the vaccination including updates, guidance received from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and information on how DDA license providers can handle visitation during the holidays. Deputy Secretary Simons will also discuss general Amendment 3 announcements, provide an EVV update, and any additional updates. ([View Webinar PowerPoint](#))

It was asked if the TY numbers had significantly increased from a few years ago. 120 has been the typically range, but these are extraordinary times so there may be extraordinary numbers.

Coordination of Community Services (CCS) Updates

Medical Management & Rehabilitation Services (MMARS): Sara O'Neil, DDA QE Analyst II, reported

Serving 1,470 individuals in MC

- 3 are Comprehensive Assessments
- 1,140 are In Services
- 327 are Waiting List
- 310 are Current Request
- 10 are Crisis Prevention
- 7 are Crisis Resolution: No new upgrades in the last month

TY Numbers:

52 TY20's remaining

- 8 either are unable to contact/or denied services
- 34 are either on the waiver, waiting for Service Funding Plan (SFP) approval/provider acceptance or are waiting for both waiver and SFP approval by DDA.

54 TY21's

- MMARS is in the process of requesting matrix scores/ and facilitating HRSTs and locating Providers. Matrix scores/HRSTs are currently halted in SMRO.

MMARS just promoted a staff person to a supervisory role bringing the total now to seen supervisors. This will provide support to the CCSs who have larger caseloads currently due to turnover as well as case demands increasing. MMARS continues to try to reduce caseloads. Management recently held a 3-day virtual hiring fair.

MMARS continues to provide wellness calls. HRST lists are run every week and individuals who fall within a certain parameter receive weekly phone calls unless the family communicates differently. DDA is requesting that these wellness calls take place and agencies must report to DDA their call ratio.

Total Care Services (TCS): Gloria Odongo, Director of Quality Enhancement, reported

Montgomery County Roster

- Total Care Services currently serves **818** people in Montgomery county
- In services – **670** people
- Waiting List: **148** people (of the 140, **[6]** are crisis prevention and **[2]** are in crisis resolution)
- Self-Direct – **38** people à Increase from 34 people last month.

Transitioning Youth

TY20 – 19 Transitioning Youth

- (4) pending waiver acceptance
- (4) waivers in progress
- (8) Community Pathways Waiver
- (1) Community Supports Waiver
- (1) Unable to contact

TY21 – 16 Transitioning Youth

There have been no changes as there is a current hold on submitting matrix scores.

- (11) in the process of obtaining matrix scores and scheduling PCP meetings
- (1) Community Pathways Waiver
- (4) Approved for Family Supports Waiver and will switch to Community Supports Waiver of Community Pathways Waiver next year.

Supervision

- Due to the evolving role of the CCS, our agency is working on reducing the scope of supervision. This will allow each supervisor to adequately support the needs of their Supervisee.
- Supervision ratio is currently 10 to 11.
- Our agency is also working on reducing the number of caseloads for each Coordinator. It is an ongoing process due to challenges with turnover.

Wellness Checks

- Still completing ongoing wellness checks.
- Frequency is based on the individual's or family's preference (weekly, biweekly, monthly).
- CCS agencies are required to submit monthly reports to DDA

Service Coordination, Inc. (SCI): Laurie Lyons, Program Manager, reported SCI is experiencing similar issues that Total Care and MMARS are experiencing. SCI is reviewing their recruitment process to make sure they are getting qualified candidates. SCI is increasing training for newer team members due to the number of TYs and the complexity with self-directed services.

TYs

- SCI has 44 TYs this year with 3 staff overseeing those cases.
- SCI is working to provider resources and information to support those staff through the process and pulling tenured staff from other areas to provide support as well.

SCI currently has 13 CCSs and they are actively trying to recruit more staff. The CCS role has increased in complexity. There are coordinators who have been hired that have never met the people they support. SCI is focusing on refining skills and helping coordinators build those relationships so coordinators can get back into that relationship piece once services return to in-person.

Serving 376 in Montgomery County

134 are in services

11 are in crisis prevention

8 are in crisis resolution

223 are in current request

Montgomery County Health & Human Services (HHS) Community Support Network (CSN):

Rosemary DiPietro, Program Manager, agreed with Gloria and Sara on their assessment of the demands of the CCS role. Coordinators do need a higher level of expertise and experience as the scope of a CCS has increased. She encouraged Committee members to advocate that HHS add supervisor support to CSN. Rosemary currently supervises 14 people and one Quality Assurance (QA) staff person to assist her with technical administrative oversight of the program. Montgomery County does not experience the turnover the private agencies do and many coordinators have been in their roles for years.

CSN continues to provide wellness checks. DDA had relaxed the requirement for awhile but acknowledged several weeks ago that quarantine would continue through the holidays and collaborated with agencies to see what staff capacity was to continue with weekly checks with their participants to make sure everyone was healthy and safe. Rosemary appreciated that DDA was thinking ahead that the holidays would be hard not just for participants but also for their families and the providers.

Rosemary reported that since telework began many coordinators have grown closer with their participants and many participants and their families have become more empowered. CCSs had to pivot and focus on PCP's and transitioning to EVV. That has also provided an opportunity for CCSs and provide agencies to experience the new LTSS system as well as DDA accepting their limitations in the system as there were issues.

TY21s – 9 Total

- 1 has been out of school a number of years and CSN is working to get services for him
- Several are already in services
- TY21's need to have their HRST's updated
- CSN now has four TY coordinators as well as one lead TY coordinator

Susan suggested that HRSTs should not be completed until they can be done in-person. She has heard from several parents that have not had a good experience completing it virtually as they could not view some of the questions as the vendor said it was a privacy issue. Susan said DDA is agreeable to being flexible but it depends on how the parent address their concerns with DDA. Rosemary said there may not be as much flexibility if the individual is first coming into services versus someone who is having their five-year review.

Rosemary reported the TY Virtual Fair was held a few weeks ago. Claire Funkhouser, Parent, reported over 300 people had registered for the fair. While only 100 people were logged in, more could have been in attendance if there were multiple viewers. Feedback was very promising and there were some advantages to going virtual as viewers could log in and out over the course of the day. The spring 2021 TY fair will most likely also be held virtually and there is hope that the fall 2021 TY fair will be held in-person.

Claire said it must be hard for CCSs to be hired during the pandemic as it may be the first job for them or their first time working with people with disabilities, some with severe disabilities. It must also be difficult to interact with them virtually and to fully understand their needs. Claire suggested discussing this issue more in depth and to learn more of the challenges that CCSs are experiencing. Susan asked if assessments and IPs be reduced or those deadlines extended due to the current situation. Perhaps the flexibility would make it easier for CCSs as well.

Rosemary attended a Self-Directed Advocacy Network (SDAN) of Maryland meeting last week and she is impressed with how that group is getting themselves organized in a way that will legitimize their advocacy efforts with state legislatures. SDAN has also been advocating with DDA to make sure services are not lost during the transformation as well as during this pandemic.

Susan asked if anyone thinks providers will be willing to pick up new clients once the vaccine is rolled out to everyone. Gloria said they haven't had any providers in Montgomery County with vacancies, but she has had a few providers in Baltimore and Prince George's County reach out to Total Care that they had a few vacancies.

Rosemary said CSN has not experienced providers rejecting or declining to serve people. She acknowledged that it has been harder to find providers for CCS and TY participants and some services may not be as robust under normal circumstances. She also said it has been hard for providers to figure out how to bring on family members under the Appendix K allowances as there is such a fine line balancing roles and responsibilities. Appendix K gives DDA special permissions from the federal government to allow for relaxation of rules and for various adjustments as to how personal supports waiver services are delivered throughout the state. One of those exceptions makes it easier for provider agencies to hire family members as employees. This is a benefit to providers as they still receive revenue for delivering services. Rosemary said she knows of family members who would like to have that as an option but have been able to negotiate that service with the provider. She noted there are so individuals who are not receiving services because they do not want a provider coming into their home. People in self-directed services know how to navigate this as they have been allowed to hire family members as it is part of their plan.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

Larry Bram, Co-Chair, reported that the COVID-19 vaccine is now being administered to those on the highest priority list including health care professionals. It has been recommended that direct support professionals and people served by DDA should also be on the highest priority list. Susan said she received a letter from Governor Larry Hogan that noted that individuals in long term care facilities would be on the highest priority list. It was her understanding that

DDA recipients in residential services would qualify as well, but they are now being moved to the phase 2 vaccination priority list. Beth said Councilmember Alborniz raised this issue with County Executive Marc Elrich and with the Travis A. Gayles, M.D., Ph.D., County Health Officer. Dr. Michael Greenberg said direct support professionals are at high risk as they are out in the community. The County is supportive and pushing at the local level but there is very little flexibility as all guidance is coming from the federal government down to the states.

Onesta reported Deputy Secretary Simons spoke about the vaccination during the latest COVID-19 webinar. DDA is waiting for recommendations from the CDC as to who will be prioritized for the vaccine. She does not have any specific information at this time, but she noted there is advocacy happening behind the scenes to ensure the DDA population is prioritized. Governor Hogan stated he has a full plan on his website regarding distribution and DDA is waiting to see where they fall within that plan. Larry asked where people should be advocating. Onesta said folks have been advocating at the Governor's office.

Beth said group homes serving people with developmental disabilities are not categorized as congregate living sites nor are direct support professionals categorized as frontline essential workers. Claire noted that at the beginning of the pandemic DD group homes were categorized as congregate living which is why those group homes had restrictions on visitation. She said it is not fair that those group homes are not prioritized to receive the vaccine first. Claire said things may change once more vaccines become available.

Susan said the developmental disability population is twice as likely to die from COVID-19 than the general population. She also noted that her daughter's group home is currently going into lockdown for a third time due to staff testing positive. Susan reported MDH Secretary Robert Neall retired December 1st. Dennis Schrader is currently Acting Secretary. She shared an email with this Committee from the Arc of Maryland on their advocacy efforts and their informational bullet points that can be used by members to send letters to Governor Hogan.

Announcements

Claire asked the Committee if they would consider hosting the meeting earlier. Betsy suggested that the Committee meet from 3:30pm to 5pm for the January meeting. Depending on attendance and feedback, the Committee could consider meeting even earlier for future meetings. Onesta said she prefers a later time due to her schedule but would be willing to accommodate the Committees schedule in order to give her monthly reports. Larry suggested scheduling her report later on the agenda.

Beth announced Councilmember Albornoz was unanimously elected as County Council Vice-President on December 1st.

Beth reported the partnership with the Primary Care Coalition (PCC) was initiated using funding from the federal CARES Act. Dr. Michael Greenberg, Commissioner, has volunteered as a medical advisor to work with the DD group homes throughout the County. The initiative has been successful in providing training and disseminating information from the CDC and DDA to providers. Fit testing for PPE has all been provided. CARES Act funding is set to end on December 30th, 2020. With Councilmember Albornoz's and Dr. Greenberg's leadership, the County Council has approved additional funding to provide the PCC program through June 2021. The County will expand the scope of PCC to include vaccines as well as working with non-residential direct service providers such as personal supports, in-home supports, supported employment, and day services.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist
Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

Next Meeting

Monday, January 11th, 2021 from 3:30pm to 5:00pm – via Zoom

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

Instructions to attend will be included on the meeting agenda.