



**Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary – June 12th, 2017**

Sue Hartung, Co-Chair • Larry Bram, Co-Chair

Present

Parents: Susan Hartung (Co-Chair); Larry Bram (Co-Chair), Easter Seals; Kathy Perlman; Claire Funkhouser; Reda Sheinberg; Katie Larkin; Betty Bahadori; Cami Fawzy

Organizations: Karen Morgret – Treatment & Learning Center; Sara O’Neill - MMARS; Judith Pattik - DDA; Eldora Taylor – Community Support Network (CSN); John Whittle – Service Coordination, Inc.; David Cross – retired MCPS; Rosemary DiPietro – CSN; Shawn Lattanzio, Core Service Agency (CSA); Melissa Bell, Inwood House; Christina Thomas – Total Care; Penny Veerhoff – Down Syndrome Network; John Kenney, DHHS; Susan Ingram, Community Support Services; Susan Smith, HOC; Tom Liniak, JSSA

Staff: Betsy Luecking

Welcome and Introductions

Susan Hartung, Co-Chair, convened the meeting and introductions were made.

Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) – Specialized Employment Program – Tom Liniak, Director of Specialized Employment Services

Website: www.jssa.org/get-help/specialized-employment/

PowerPoint:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/DDAC/DDAFamilySupportsMay2017.pdf

Videos: www.youtube.com/watch?v=KADHTT_D0FI; www.youtube.com/watch?v=ds2rOq0bZ3M

Employment Workshop Flyer:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/DDAC/JSSAEmploymentWorkshop.pdf

The JSSA Specialized Employment Services program has a focus of early intervention employment skills. Some program participants are as young as 10 and 12 years olds. Employment skills are taught via practical steps using interactive and visual methods. For example, employers have been assisting to build a database of base interviews. Participants can practice the interview process. Learning by doing is the best method.

Tom was given the opportunity to organize his staff in any model of his choice. He went with a full-team model and that ensures that every participant knows at least three staff members. Staff includes individuals who have worked in disability employment, who were recruiters and HR specialists, who worked in employment agencies, and who owned their own business. Staff spend as much time out with businesses as they spend with clients. It is important to have a knowledge of the business, their needs, and their trends.

JSSA thinks in terms of career instead of job. The likelihood that a person is in the same job with the same company for their entire career is slim. JSSA focuses on training participants in purposeful skills and locating emerging areas to train people for longer term success.

When JSSA meets with an employer, they spend a day or two with them to fully understand their needs, the culture of the workplace, and solve their problems such as retention. Program participants tend to stay in their positions longer and have a higher rate of retention.

JSSA is working on a national level with SAP, a multinational software corporation, to implement their Autism and other disability programs. Companies are beginning to recognize that it is good business to hire people with disabilities and are beginning to invest their own money in the program. This is the first year where companies have asked JSSA to assist in training their existing employees and supervisors.

Over the course of three years, yearly placements have increased five-fold and placements have been made at over 170 new employers. The program has had over 100 job placements in the past year. Almost 50% of all placements are non-traditional positions meaning they are not custodial, retail, or food service based. Starting salaries are up almost 30%. Tom noted that one individual was placed at almost \$90,000 last year. 30% of placements are full-time. JSSA has customized training programs for individuals with disabilities. This includes persons on the Autism Spectrum, for individuals who are Deaf, for Spanish speakers, as well as pre-employment.

They are also working with a number of companies on a national and regional level. Allen & Overy LLC is a 2,800 member law firm with 32 offices around the world. JSSA is working with them to place individuals and so far have been very successful. Three other major law firms are interested in a similar placement program with JSSA. The American Bar Association is also interested in sharing the employment model if it continues to succeed.

Program fees can be paid privately or by appropriate state agencies.

Channel 7 will do a feature on the program that will air in the next several weeks. Tom was interviewed last month for NPR's Business Matters radio show about JSSA's CVS step-up program, which allows an individual to spend a period of time in one position before being promoted to a different position within the company. For example, one participant worked as a cashier for one year and then became a pharmacy tech.

The Society of HR Management reached out to JSSA last summer to discuss the possibility of joint programming to teach best practices and hands on implementation to their members, many of whom are working more with inclusion and diversity.

Most program participants have received their high school diploma. The ratio of diploma versus certificate is approximately 70 / 30.

It was noted that JSSA should connect with the school system and work with transitioning youth. Students ages 18 to 21 are typically placed in volunteer positions.

Tom noted that this is the first year that JSSA is offering a summer jobs program. They have two employers with 36 jobs – 34 which are paid through DORS. There are already commitments from more employers for next summer. JSSA would potentially like to expand the program through the school year.

JSSA has received grant funding and is offering a joint social skills / life skills course geared towards employment readiness for people in Maryland and Virginia. Many participants are between the ages of 18 to 30

who are trying to fill a social, interactive piece with employers. JSSA can work with some employers and offer a work training internship to assist the individual in becoming employed.

It was asked if JSSA can assist individuals with self-employment. Tom reported that he is working with one individual who is an Apple licensed developer as well as with a group of parents who have invested into a business with their children. JSSA is helping the parent group with developing a business model and providing integrated business training as well. DORS offers the Reach Independence through Self-Employment (RISE) Program: <http://pdgrehab.com/rise/>.

Judy Pattik noted that a number of agencies around the state are working together to create a super Memorandum of Understanding that will help to create a seamless transition for 18 to 21 year olds. Agencies include DDA, DORS, and the Maryland State Department of Education. The group is in the early stages and the first two meetings identified gaps that currently exist.

It was asked if JSSA is working with any local healthcare entities. JSSA has had some good success with Shady Grove Hospital. They are currently talking to Suburban Hospital and Sibley Memorial Hospital.

It was asked how they train people who have no skills. Most training is on the soft skill side. They can assist in practicing hard skills either through software and linking the person with other resources that will offer services at low or no cost. Sometimes DORS funding is acquired to assist people with training courses.

Funding for the program is received through DORS, DDA, waivers, and private pay. If an individual is in Community Living Supports waiver, they typically are in a purposeful internship working towards a paid position. Some individuals choose not to be in a paid position as they enjoy their volunteer job. Private pay is typically for those who are on the DORS wait list, whose funding has expired, or the individual is looking to move from part-time to full-time or from their current full-time position to a better full-time position.

It was asked of changes to the Autism Waiver would prevent JSSA from providing services. Tom noted that at this point he does not see any barriers. There are a lot of funding possibilities through the Autism Waiver. JSSA has been looking at the flexibility of their program and possibly shifting different supports to different programs to maintain that flexibility. JSSA has advocated for going to an incentive-based system.

It was asked what JSSA's capacity is for the program. At this point they are still at capacity. In the first three years, over \$600,000 in new grants were awarded for the department. Some grants were traditional sources, some from technology sources, and the rest from other sources. Right now, the department is expected to grow at about 20% to 25% per year.

It was noted that the DDA model of "employment first" should be thought of as broader and part of family and person-centered first. Not everyone may be able to work but may still be able to have a meaningful day. JSSA takes all most all forms of insurance for mental health. Tom noted that many individuals in the disability employment programs are also accessing social skills from the mental health component at the same time. If a person is unemployed, they are highly likely to be depressed.

Update - Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) – Judy Pattik, Regional Director, Southern Maryland Regional Office (SMRO)

TY16s – 127 total. Of those, 108 have been placed, a number have declined services or have not been responsive. Of the 19 that have not been placed, a number are in client servicee, some are not eligible due to citizenship, and some may have too much money. Only 4 people on the waiver have not identified a provider. Those individuals have six months from the time they enter the waiver to get into services.

TY17s – There are 103 total. 10 are already in service, 31 have plans at the regional office, and 5 will go into self-directed services.

In September 2016, per the MC DD Advisory Council meeting notes, Montgomery County TY 16s not in service by July 1, 2016: 52

In June 2017, Montgomery County TY 17s without a July 1, 2107 start date: 57

Without question, the numbers are high but the difference between the 2 years is only 5 and it is hoped by September of 2017 these numbers will be below last year's number of 52. DDA has already started putting efforts in place to engage providers across the region.

Judy reported that since last April they have filled all vacant positions. There are now 32 staff members at the SMRO.

DDA will be hosting Family Supports Waiver forums next week. There will be a forum on June 19th in Columbia and a forum on June 20th in Bowie. For more info,

https://dda.health.maryland.gov/Pages/DDA_Family_Supports_Waiver_Public_Forums.aspx

Update – Autism Waiver (TY) – Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS): None.

Update - Coordination of Community Services (CCS):

Total Care

- TY16s – 44 total. Of those, 7 are not placed – one has immigrations issues, two have client services, three are no contacts, and one individual needs to come into the office.
- TY17s – 41 total. Of those, 36 waivers have been submitted to DDA; 6 service funding plans have been signed and submitted; 17 individuals have been placed; 2 will be self-directed; 2 have citizenship issues; 1 has had no contact.
- CCS – 807 ongoing cases; 2 in crisis resolution; 30 in crisis prevention; 304 individuals are current request; and 1 individual is in transition.

MMARS

- 59 Total (TY' 16s and TY' 17s)
 - 13 TY' 16s
 - 46 TY' 17s
- 21 Accepted
- 25 Still Need Placement

Of the 13 TY' 16s, they only have 3 that have been denied from the waiver. One is due to financial issues, one is due to citizenship issues, and one is due to unknown reasons and they are working with the waiver unit to figure out what is going on. They have 3 TY' 16s that have not been accepted by a provider and 3 TY' 16s that have been accepted by a provider, but still need a Service Funding Plan to be submitted to SMRO. Lastly, they have 4 TY' 16s that have had a Service Funding Plan submitted to DDA and we are awaiting final approval.

Montgomery County DHHS

- TY16s – 1 started services towards the end of May. There are no outstanding TY16s.
- TY17s – 12 total. Of those, two are currently in services and transitioning to day services; 7 have submitted service funding plans; several have not connected to a provider yet; three have not submitted waiver applications.
- Concern about the approaching end of the school year. Has been a greater challenge this year for staff getting service funding plans in place.

- Providers may be at capacity or there is uncertainty regarding the waiver definitions and rates. All three CCS providers expressed concern about this.

It was asked what steps have been taken to find placements or for capacity temporarily. Judy noted that the issue is a challenge statewide.

The number of those not placed is higher this year due to many having immigration issues so do not qualify for Medicaid. To be eligible for Medicaid, the individual must be a resident for at least five years. Historically, there have always been those who were not able to receive DDA services due to citizenship, but it is increasing due to the current population. It was noted that Prince George's County Schools Next Steps offers their classes in Spanish. It was also noted that a higher percent of individuals are choosing self-directed services.

In May, the Committee sent a letter to Mr. Simons suggesting that the DDA focus on a family-based model vs employment first.

CCS are working with service providers that may only provide personal support services and may not be licensed for day or supported employment services. It can be a time-consuming effort for a CCS worker as TY's require intensive follow-up. There also may not be enough natural supports present to assist the family. There is concern from one parent whose daughter works at a business begun and operated by a provider, and run primarily by people with disabilities. It is in a commercial strip and serves the community but under the proposed regulations it would not be considered inclusive. Also concerns regarding Ability One contracts not being approved by DORS.

Providers may be at capacity or there is uncertainty regarding the waiver definitions and rates.

Concern from providers regarding the amendments and the uncertainty of services that they are not accepting placements.

At the last waiver discussion with DDA SMRO, DHHS went through a list of names to see if those waivers had been accepted or not. CCSs were then able to contact DDA to find out why those waivers were not accepted.

It was asked if DDA could send a message to providers that are sitting on service funding plans to help push placements.

Susan asked Judy to send her updates on the TY issue and she will share with the Committee. Susan Hartung expressed her concern for the safety of those exiting students and asked that this be reflected in the minutes. DDA is concerned with these numbers and will explore ways to make improvements, this summer is no different than last.

From Simone Geness, MCPS - MCPS meets with the DDA, CCS agencies, DORS, and SEEC on a bimonthly basis to discuss the status of the prior year and current year TY students. In addition, Margie Parrott serves on a DDA stakeholder TY group with representatives from Charles County, Montgomery County and Prince George's County. This work group consists of representatives from the three school systems, adult services provider agencies, parents, and CCS agencies. They are discussing ways to improve the current transitioning youth processes. It might be helpful to learn how many of the 9 students who are still not placed have been rejected by the adult services agencies, have immigration issues or they are non-responsive.

Chair and Vice-Chair Update:

There will be no meetings in July or August. Future presentations will include Charlie Butler, Department of Recreation, who would like to discuss increasing registration in their therapeutic recreation programs, and

Christiaan Blake, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), who will discuss about WMATA's new Ability-Rides program. The Committee will continue to follow the TY issue and may also want to discuss respite services. Ideas for presentations or goals can be sent to Susan or Larry.

New Business: None.

Announcements: None.

Next Meeting: Monday, September 11th, 2017 from 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Committee will be meeting at the Health & Human Services Building, 401 Hungerford Drive, 1st Floor 1A Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850

Respectfully Submitted,

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager

Commission on People with Disabilities