

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc.

**Full Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday January 25, 2024 & Friday January 26, 2024
In-Person
Florida Hotel and Conference Center, Orlando, Florida**

Thursday January 25, 2024

Council Members Present: Eddie Hall, Acting Chair; Elly Hagen; Dr. Dennis Hart; Yolanda Herrera; Dr. Jean Sherman; Carla Mercer; Lauren Modawell; Danielle McGill; Arizona Jenkins; Michael Sayih; Charlotte Temple; Denise Anderson; Enrique Escallon; Christina Cordova; Kira Houge; Susan Nipper; Caitlyn Clibbon; Mirna Diaz; Jennifer Duggar; and Sarah Goldman (via ZOOM).

Council Members Absent: Victoria Zepp, Kali Wilson, Catherine McGrath, Andrea Gary, and Dr. Beth Boone.

Staff Present: Valerie Breen, Executive Director; Jamie Mayersohn; Dr. Susan Kabot; Kristin Vandagriff; Jan Pearce; Lisa Taylor; Sheila Gritz-Swift; Margaret Hooper; and Monica Moye.

Breen conducted roll call and quorum was established. Hall called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Hall welcomed all Council members. He recognized the new Council members who were appointed in December 2023. He asked everyone to introduce themselves.

I. Approval of September 2023 Minutes

Action Taken: Escallon made a motion to approve the September 21, 2023, Council meeting minutes as presented. Hart seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Escallon offered a point of information on the bylaws. He noted that the Vice Chair carries out duties of the Chair if that role has been vacated. He wanted clarification on the timeframe for the next Chair election. Breen reported that she received an interpretation from the FDDC attorney regarding the FDDC bylaws and Chair election. She reported that a special election will be held at the May Council meeting.

In addition, Escallon brought up Page 7, Article 7, Roberts Rules of Order noting that members joining online do not count towards quorum. This was noted for future reference.

Escallon also noted that the agenda needs to be adopted before moving to the first item on the agenda. This was noted for future reference.

II. Vice Chair Report

Hall stated that his report was brief. He thanked members for attending and pledged to do his utmost in his role as Acting Chair. He stated that should he become Chair, he is committed to ensuring that self-advocates lead the Council. He stated that self-advocates are extremely important to why the Councils exist.

III. Executive Director Report

Breen welcomed the new Council members appointed in December and thanked everyone for the prompt responses to orientation and onboarding for the Council. Breen explained what the Information and Technical Assistance Center (ITACC) provides, and she directed Council members to the website to sign up for free training at www.itacchelp.org. She also informed the Council that we will begin our process for developing the next state plan starting later in 2024. The new plan is due August 15, 2026, and will cover Fiscal Years 2027-2031. Breen recognized the departure of Ms. Sheila Gritz-Swift as Senior Director of State Plan and Evaluation after 12 years of service to the Council. Gritz-Swift is moving permanently to North Carolina. Gritz-Swift will serve in a consultant capacity working with FDDC staff to complete federal reporting requirements required from the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

IV. Stakeholder Task Force on Managed Care Report

Goldman directed members to the yellow section of the book with minutes from the Dec. 7, 2023, Stakeholder Task Force on Managed Care meeting. The Council hired a research consultant, Lu Marie Polivka-West, to conduct research and provide support to staff. Mathematica will be researching and providing findings on quality case management for persons with I/DD and managed care to support the Council's work with managed care. Temple asked if the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid had approved the pilot waiver. No approval had been received nor has the provider been selected as of the date of this meeting. Clibbon asked about the second county location and timeframes. Hooper reported that the Governor put forward funding for Miami-Dade and funding for Hillsborough and surrounding counties. Herrera asked for clarification on the number served for Miami-Dade. Sherman clarified 600 slots for Miami-Dade and 300 slots for Hillsborough and the surrounding region. Goldman denoted the opportunity for Council members to join this task force. Herrera, McGill, Escallon, Temple, Clibbon, and Jenkins indicated an interest. The task force hasn't scheduled its next meeting but will meet after the Mathematica research and assessment is complete. Dr. Kabot denoted that Mathematica is in the process of scheduling three state-level managed care interviews. Breen reported that the end of March or April would likely serve as the next meeting timeframe for the Task Force.

V. Highlights from State Plan Outcomes

Dr. Kabot reported on 2022-2023 outcomes. The presentation covered all goal project activities. She shared highlights of resource products and training that was developed and provided.

- Goal 1:
 - Access to Services Through Knowledge (ASK) Research Project: Final Research Study Findings Report was discussed and published on the FDDC website.

- Goal 2:
 - Competencies for Case Management Professionals Supporting People with I/DD: Results of an Environmental Scan for the FDDC and developed tools were discussed. Advisory group opportunities were noted to encourage Council member participation.
 - Researching Provider Solutions for People with I/DD: Results of an Environmental Scan for the FDDC was discussed. It was noted that this report is published on the FDDC website.
 - Measuring Service Quality: Final Environmental Scan Report was covered with pilot testing beginning with the residential tool as the next step.
 - Understanding the Behavior Therapist Shortage in Florida: Final Research Study Report was covered and is published on the FDDC website.
 - Dual Diagnosis Basics will be covered in-depth in Friday's meeting with a presentation on the training from the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD).
 - Addressing Policy and Public Safety: Autism & I/DD Data Report. It was denoted that a presentation on this training series will also be covered in-depth on Friday. FDDC is currently exploring the best "home" for this training over the long-term.
 - Legislative outcomes around this goal were briefly discussed related to the Governor's budget rate increase and work regarding the mobile crisis unit.
- Goal 3:
 - Both the AGEDD project and Strive to Thrive were discussed. Thus far, 10 individuals have received referrals due to these efforts. The Strive to Thrive Environmental Scan Report was completed, and it is published on the FDDC website. A mixed methods research study will be a future focus which includes surveys and interviews.
- Goal 4:
 - The Fellows Leadership Program, Partners in Policymaking (PIP), and the PIP Curriculum Strand were discussed. The Fellows' training and support of FL SAND was reported. The Partners in Policymaking current class is completing Session 5 and working on mock testimony presentations. FDDC continues to support PIP Alumni with training and technical assistance. Due to the important impacts of Partners in Policymaking, FDDC desired to have a curriculum that was accessible to all people with I/DD. The FDDC is working with Autistic Self Advocates Network (ASAN) to translate the PIP curriculum to an Easy Read format. Advisory committee meetings have been held and reviewers have been selected. ASAN staff is passively observing the current PIP class and has reviewed Minnesota's PIP and Florida's PIP curriculum elements. Four sessions of content have been drafted thus far.
- Goal 5:
 - Dr. Kabot discussed activities around transportation, employment, and housing. While funding has ended, the Council continues to monitor these areas for sustainability and future outcomes. The Black Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) project outcomes and published reports were also noted.

Previously completed research report links were also provided. Hall added that he and Jenkins were part of the initial Fellows cohort. He stated that the program helped them be better self-advocates and inspired them to start their own nonprofits. Gritz-Swift denoted the impact of Route to Self-Determination training and its important impact on self-advocates' lives.

VI. Public Input/Adjournment

There was no public input.

Hall adjourned the meeting at 4:31 p.m.

Friday January 26, 2024

Council Members Present: Eddie Hall, Acting Chair; Elly Hagen; Dr. Dennis Hart; Yolanda Herrera; Dr. Jean Sherman; Carla Mercer; Lauren Modawell; Danielle McGill; Arizona Jenkins; Michael Sayih; Charlotte Temple; Denise Anderson; Enrique Escallon; Christina Cordova; Kira Houge; Susan Nipper; Caitlyn Clibbon; Mirna Diaz; Jennifer Duggar; and Sarah Goldman (via ZOOM).

Council Members Absent: Victoria Zepp, Kali Wilson, Catherine McGrath, Andrea Gary, and Dr. Beth Boone.

Staff Present: Valerie Breen, Executive Director; Jamie Mayersohn; Dr. Susan Kabot; Kristin Vandagriff; Jan Pearce; Lisa Taylor; Sheila Gritz-Swift; Margaret Hooper; and Monica Moyer.

Guests Present: Torica Exume (pre-recorded presentation), and Jeanne Farr (in person).

Breen conducted roll call and quorum was established. Hall called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Action Taken: Escallon made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. Dr. Hart seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

I. Presentations on Training Products

Training First Responders: Emergency Medical Services Course and Law Enforcement Course were presented in a pre-recorded presentation by Torica Exume, PhD, from Florida Atlantic University. The background on co-occurring autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and mental health diagnoses was provided. Four pilot training courses were conducted. Findings were discussed and major project activities were reviewed. Community participation strategies were also discussed. Ninety (90) autism sensory kits were provided as part of this project. Pilot training objectives were reviewed. An example of the pilot trainer manual was briefly demonstrated to show the step-by-step instructions to review critical training components. An example of the pilot participant handbook was also demonstrated. An example of an instructional video was played. The curriculum instructor guide, trainer manual, and a revised participant handbook were noted to be the current project efforts that are in progress. There will be a course

overview to describe the instructor's purpose as well as a robust table of contents. An example of future training was also provided. Role playing components of the training were discussed. Dr. Kabot noted the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) is interested in these training courses. She stated that the Council will need an entity to step up and house the training to make it widely available.

Dual Diagnosis Training was presented by Jeanne Farr, MA, National Association for the Dually Diagnosed. She provided an overview of the partnerships, the overarching goals of the project, summary of activities, lessons learned and success factors. The project focused on learning about the needs of the dually diagnosed population in Florida and how best to address those needed. The project's process was noted to be iterative, collaborative and evidence-based. She reported that the first year focused on conducting a large research study, looking into barriers to service. The second year of the project focused on policy and procedure review related to dual diagnosis in Florida and looking at available resources with pilot training initiated. The third year of the project will focus on conducting a national research study on existing best practices for crisis prevention, crisis intervention, and post-crisis engagement. These strategies will be used to inform pilot training in Florida through both in-person and virtual training. She stated that policy refinement and state systems collaboration will be key to effective systems change in this area.

II. State and Sister Agency Reports

Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)

Nipper reported on legislative updates and highlighted several Governor's recommendations. APD is seeking funding for pre-enrollment categories 1-3 to enable them to live in community settings. To support Direct Support Providers, APD is seeking funding for a workforce apprenticeship program to professionalize the role within the system of care. To support rural regions, APD is seeking support for a fiscal analysis to support funding needed for a rate differential for rural areas. The Governor's recommended budget includes rate increases: 10% increase for supported living; 10% increase for therapeutic services OT, PT, speech, mental health, and dietitian; 5% increase for all levels of life skills services such as companion, supported employment and vocational services; 5% increase for residential habilitation services; and 9% increase for private duty nursing to ensure competitive rates. APD is requesting funds for an actuarial analysis for an adult pathways waiver to address immediate needs during transition to adulthood. APD is looking to continue to support the managed care pilot with enrollment for up to 600 individuals. Hope Florida was discussed. APD has hired 13 Hope navigators with training from the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)

Catherine McGrath could not attend the meeting due to the agency being in the blackout period for the managed care pilot.

Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA)

Houge reported that the legislative session is the core focus with a continued ask for funding to support clients and increase enrollment in general revenue programs. This week DOEA participated in the state improvement plan, and it was noted that there is a goal for Alzheimer's and related disorders. DOEA continues to be active with the State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) and offering fall prevention classes statewide.

Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Diaz reported that there were staffing changes within VR leadership. With respect to supported employment, VR continues to offer services to those with the most significant disabilities. She reported that 1,249 individuals were supported in finding employment over the past year and VR continues to work closely with other state agencies. The 2023 annual report is being finalized. The legacy system was replaced with the AWARE system and launched August 2023. Regarding Adult Project SEARCH, 28 interns graduated from the 4 sites and 20 interns have reported being employed. Regarding the ARTSY federally funded grant, VR is addressing subminimum wage in the state of Florida and supports Floridians' competitive integrated employment outcomes.

Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES)

Duggar reported that graduation rates have increased significantly, with an increase of 4.9% for students with disabilities. She stated that strong training has supported these increases. The Visions conference is in the planning process for April 9-11, 2024, at the Florida Hotel. Herrera asked if Discovery is still being used for students with the most significant disabilities. Diaz noted that VR offers Discovery through VR for students with disabilities. This service choice is made based on working with individual counselors. Temple noted that students with intellectual disabilities are getting lost regarding data since special diplomas are not reported anymore and asked for data for students graduating on Access Points. Duggar noted that data is being pulled for federal reporting in the next few weeks. Gritz-Swift stated that data on outcomes for youth using Access Points would be useful moving forward.

Florida Department of Health, Division of Children's Medical Services

Breen reported that Gary was unable to attend this Council meeting and provide a report. However, she continues to be involved with the Council's Mathematica project initiatives.

University of Miami Mailman Center

Dr. Sherman reported that training with high school students who are coming in for regular weekly sessions has been a successful peer training. She stated that it has enabled siblings or people who are interested in a disability field to pursue a career. Hall reported that the Mailman Center's Self Advocate Leadership Training (SALT) program is an excellent program, and that he

benefited greatly from the training experience. Gritz-Swift provided context on the SALT program stating that it was originally funded by FDDC and is now sustained by the Mailman Center.

University of South Florida Center, Florida Center for Inclusive Communities (FCIC)

Breen reported that Dr. Boone was unable to attend the Council meeting and provide a report.

Disability Right Florida (DRF)

Clibbon reported that supported decision making, provider rate increases and the “APD bill” are their major focus this legislative session. They are continuing to receive funding for the voting rights project. DRF teams continue to do investigations and individual advocacy regarding abuse and rights violations. She reported that DRF runs the Client Assistance Program related to VR services. She also reported that monitoring is being increased for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) and group homes. DRF staff are being trained to ensure that voters’ rights training will comply with the new rules related to voters’ rights organizations.

III. Committee Reports/Discussion

State Plan Committee Report

Dr. Sherman provided the report to the Council.

Action Taken: Jenkins made a motion to accept the report. Escallon seconded. No discussion ensued. Motion passed unanimously.

Finance Committee Report

Dr. Hart provided the report to the Council.

Action Taken: Jenkins made a motion to accept the report as presented. Temple seconded. No discussion ensued. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Policy Committee Report

Goldman provided the report to the Council.

Action Taken: Escallon made a motion to accept the report as presented. Hart seconded. No discussion ensued. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Committee Report

Hall provided the report to the Council.

Action Taken: Jenkins made a motion to accept the report as presented. Hart seconded. No discussion ensued. Motion passed unanimously.

Hall reminded Council members that the Developmental Disability Awareness dinner will be on February 6, 2024 in Tallahassee and that Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day will be at the Capitol the next day on February 7, 2024. Breen reported that a survey would be distributed to everyone sometime in March so that they could indicate their interest in standing committees and task forces.

There was no public comment.

Hall adjourned the meeting at 12:51 p.m.