

Executive Director's Report

October 2021 Council Meeting

AoD

The Administration on Disabilities offered an opportunity for Grantee Networks (these include DD Councils) to participate in *Walking the Walk: Prioritizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Organizational Culture and Programming to Support People of Color with Disabilities*. This peer e-learning opportunity is 10 sessions long from September through December.

Federal Reporting

DD Councils were given the month of July to submit the FFY2020 Program Performance Report in the modified version that the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) requested. DD Councils were given the month of September to enter the 5 Year Plan (FFYs 2022-2026) and two years of Annual Work Plan (FFYs 2022 and 2023) into their newly developed reporting system. All reporting was submitted on time and LaDDC currently has Conditional Approval on our State Plan.

HCR 45 Workgroup

House Concurrent Resolution 45 was passed in the 2021 Regular Legislative Session. In summary, the resolution asked the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) to conduct a study concerning the feasibility and desirability of implementing a system for tracking the location of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The work done in the group so far consists of researching available tracking devices currently on the market and developing a survey to help determine desirability for that type of device.

Meetings Attended by Council Staff

Brenton Andrus:

July 14 - OCDD State Advisory Committee (SAC)

Attended the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) State Advisory Committee meeting on July 14, 2021. Multiple updates were shared from the Regional Advisory Committees and the department. Updates included information from the 2021 Regular Legislative Session and continued advocacy needs including:

- Dental for adults in DD waivers, how to expand the accessibility of dental services throughout the state and not just have a focus in the New Orleans area and ensure adults in Intermediate Care Facilities receive dental services
- A study on tracking individuals with DD (follow-up from HR45). The department is putting together research to see what other states are doing and will present to a stakeholder group.
- Ongoing COVID-19 affects on individuals in the DD waivers and their support staff. Advocacy shared around the need to get support staff vaccinated to protect those they serve and the ability for service recipients to decline support from unvaccinated individuals. Department is brainstorming ways to increase both participant and support staff participation since vaccination rates are low.
- New Opportunities Waiver renewal application, federal funding received from the American Rescue Plan, an update on Act 421 Children's Medicaid Option

program, and waiver rate increase discussed. Advocates requested the department continue to solicit stakeholder input on all updates, changes, etc.

Note all updates provided at this meeting were shared with the full Council during agency updates at its July quarterly meeting.

July 26-29 – **Governor’s Office on Disability Affairs Conference**

Attended the Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs (GODA) annual conference over a multi-day period. This year, the conference was held via Zoom and covered many topics related to the disability community. Sessions attended included:

- *Louisiana Department of Health Updates* where an overview of services and programs provided within the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, Office of Behavioral Health, Bureau of Family Health and Office of Aging and Adult Services were provided.
- *Interactions with Law Enforcement* where an overview of the work Interaction Advisory Group has collaborated with the Council on including trainings for first responders on how to interact with individuals with disabilities. Discussion also centered on what to expect from and how to interact with first responders as a person with a disability.
- *Disability History and Culture*
- *Empowerment, Independence and Self-Determination* where a panel of self-advocates answered questions from the public regarding their personal thoughts and ideas about their disability or disabilities in general and their life experiences.
- *Relationships & Intimacy: Overview of a collaborative effort in Louisiana to prevent abuse & exploitation:* Team Dynamics shared information about the partnership they have with the Council to bring trainings across the state for self-advocates and their caregivers regarding healthy and unhealthy relationships.
- *Youth Self-Advocacy* where a panel of young self-advocates shared their experiences and information about why it is important to begin advocacy at a young age. It was discussed how important it is to ensure youth are engaged in advocacy and the importance of youth understanding their rights, accesses to services and accommodations, strengths, contributions, etc.

August 17 – **Emergency Management Disability & Aging Coalition**

Attended the Emergency Management Disability & Aging Coalition (EMDAC) meeting where various agencies provided updates on their response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Relevant discussion included requests for home testing to be available for those individuals who may not be able to go to a facility to be screened for COVID-19 and developing protocols to ensure individuals receiving services, especially those that are elderly, are protected against direct service workers who have not been vaccinated. This coalition discussed meeting regularly (possibly bi-weekly) given the current COVID-19 surge in Louisiana and the increase in tropical systems that may affect the state.

September 22– **Governor’s Advisory Council on Disability Affairs Legislative Committee**

Attended the Governor’s Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA) quarterly Legislative Committee meeting. Members discussed federal pieces of legislation including Better Care Better Jobs, Build Back Better Resolution & reconciliation and Able Age Adjustment Bill. A motion was passed to recommend GACDA send a letter to Louisiana’s congressional delegation supporting these issues. Committee also discussed preliminary ideas, issues and concepts to support in the 2022 legislative session including Virtual participation in public meetings; expanding ABA insurance

coverage to include other diagnoses; requiring pharmacies and distribution centers to maintain working generators; studying the feasibility of making Legacy Medicaid services portable across state lines; evacuations of nursing homes and senior living apartment; State as a Model Employer becoming statute and additional higher education funding for programs for individuals with disabilities.

September 27– Louisiana Department of Health Enhanced FMAP Spending Plan Feedback Session

Attended the Louisiana Department of Health's (LDH) feedback session for stakeholders regarding the use of additional federal funding to enhance home- and community- based services in our state. Representatives from the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) and Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS) shared recommendations they will share with the LDH secretary on how to use the funding. Some items under consideration include:

- Continuing the \$2.50 rate increase for services provided by Direct Support Workers (DSW) in the DD waivers
- Rate increase for support coordination
- Rate increase in LT-PCS and Community Choices Waiver
- Workforce incentives for DSWs
- Incentive pay for DSWs and Support Coordinators vaccinated against COVID
- Expansion of PACE program
- Access to medically tailored meals and technology for aging/adult population

September 28– Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities Waiver Rate Increase Provider Meeting

Attended the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) meeting for providers regarding the waiver rate increase and direct support worker (DSW) wage floor. OCDD provided an overview to participants on the emergency rule increasing rates for services provided by DSWs in the four DD waivers by \$2.50 as well as the wage floor of \$9/hour for all DSWs. Providers had an opportunity to submit questions to the department prior to the meeting which were answered on the call.

Ebony Haven:

August 19 – NACDD Diversity, Inclusion and Cultural and Linguistic Competence (DICLC) Workgroup

The Workgroup discussed:

- Reflections on the 2021 Technical Assistance Institute (Emerging Practices Session on DICLC and the Top 10 Practices on DICLC Resource) - <https://itacchelp.org/diversity-inclusion-cultural-linguistic-competence-diclc/top-10/>
- New Five-Year State Plans (How is your Council incorporating DICLC?)
- DICLC work group for the new ITACC Training and Technical Assistance contract

Meetings Attended by Executive Director (July 1 – September 30, 2021)

- July 7 – Meeting with LDH Budget
- July 8 – Meeting with LDH Legal
- July 13 – Meeting with Contractor
- July 14 – NACDD Update Call
- July 16 – Meeting with Program Director of Capital Area Autism Network
- July 26-29 – Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Conference (with staff)
- July 28 – Training with LDH Human Resources

- August 5 – OCDD HCR 45 Workgroup Meeting
- August 12 – Training on Verity Analytics (data management system for OIDD’s federal reporting)
- August 18 – Meeting with Parliamentarian
- August 24 – Meeting with LDH Human Resources
- August 24 – Meeting with Contractor
- August 25 – Training on Verity Analytics (data management system for OIDD’s federal reporting)
- August 26 – HR 118 Initial Meeting – Workgroup re: FMLA Leave
- August 26 – LaCAN Leader’s Summer Training (with staff)
- August 26 – OCDD HCR 45 Workgroup Meeting
- August 31 – EMDAC Meeting re: Hurricane Ida
- September 2 – EMDAC Meeting re: Hurricane Ida
- September 7 – Walking the Walk – peer e-learning session #1 (with staff)
- September 7 – Meeting with Julie Foster Hagan
- September 8 – EMDAC Meeting re: Hurricane Ida
- September 10 – EDMAC Meeting re: Hurricane Ida
- September 15 – NACDD Update Call
- September 17 – Meeting with LDH Legal
- September 21 – Walking the Walk – peer e-learning session #2 (with staff)
- September 23 – Legislative Kick-Off Meeting (with staff)
- September 23 – DD Council State Plan Review Call
- September 27 - Louisiana Department of Health Enhanced FMAP Spending Plan Feedback Session (with staff)
- September 28 – Meeting with Commissioner Jay Dardenne
- September 30 – OCDD HCR 45 Workgroup Meeting