

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council  
Self-Determination and Community Inclusion Committee Meeting Summary  
October 18, 2021 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM  
Online Via Zoom

You can watch the meeting here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/LADDCouncil/videos>

View meeting transcript [here](#).

Members Present: Patti Barovechio, Kim Basile, Mike Billings, Lillian DeJean, Jill Egle, Michelle Guillory, Julie F. Hagan, Jill Hano, Steven Nguyen, Matthew Rovira, Crystal White

Members Absent: Roslyn Hymel

Staff: Brenton Andrus, Halie Belin, Amy Deaville, Ebony Haven, Shandrell Stewart

Others Present: Corhonda Corley, Kathy Dillon, Mylinda Elliott, Nicole Flores, Lynsey Hebert, Katie Kroes, Christina Martin, Ashley McReynolds, Charlie Michel, Kelly Monroe, Katherine Parke, Bambi Polotzola, Devika Rao, Susan Riehn, Adrienne Thomas, Kelly Zimmerman

Kim Basile called the meeting to order at 9:32 AM. A quorum was established.

Approval of the [July Meeting Summary](#) passed by unanimous consent.

### **Non-Contractual Activities**

Julie Hagan and Kelly Zimmerman shared multiple updates on behalf of the [Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities \(OCDD\)](#) and the [Bureau of Health Services and Financing \(Medicaid\)](#).

Ms. Hagan reviewed an expansive list OCDD has included in its list of upcoming initiatives and priorities. Some of the initiatives include, but are not limited to:

- Moving forward with preparation for a consolidated waiver
- Vocational rehabilitation services including virtual day habilitation and aligning those rates, services and definitions across waivers
- Addressing the direct support professional (DSP) workforce crisis
- Developing an infrastructure for remote supports
- Bi-monthly presentations by the department for the general public to discuss services and processes for obtaining said services
- Greater outreach by the department
- Updating materials to be more user-friendly to families and individuals with disabilities
- Addressing the needs of individuals with co-occurring developmental disabilities and significant behavioral health needs that are in crisis

- Coming in to compliance with the home- and community-based services (HCBS) settings rule.

Ms. Hagan stated the department was in the process of finalizing a public document listing all initiatives and priorities. Once finalized, this document will be provided to the committee.

Some discussion occurred related to the recent HCBS rate increase for services provided by DSPs within the four developmental disability waivers and the updated wage floor. Members questioned if the department was able to track quality improvements due to the increase in rates and pay to workers. Ms. Hagan stated currently the department can track specific data related to retention and turnover rates, but determining quality of care and specific outcome measures, as it relates to the increased rates and wages, is difficult. Ms. Hagan did agree to provide the committee with a report at its quarterly meetings with DSP turnover data.

Ms. Hagan also briefly updated the committee on the department's use of American Rescue Plan Act funds. Through this legislation, states would be allowed to draw down an additional ten percent federal match on state dollars which have to be spent on HCBS. The department submitted its initial spending plan in July with an updated plan submitted in October. Ms. Hagan stated many of the departments initiatives mentioned previously were included in the spending plan, but CMS has to approve the plan before funds can be spent. The state will have until March 2024 to spend the funds.

Regarding Appendix K waiver exceptions, Ms. Hagan shared information about upcoming focus groups to share the department's findings regarding the continuation of three exceptions in particular:

- Legally responsible caregivers and family members residing in the same home as an individual with a disability serving as paid caregivers
- Suspension of the 16-hour rule which prohibits caregivers from working more than 16 hours in a 24-hour period
- Use of virtual visits for some services.

The focus groups will include two two-hour sessions for each issue. More information about the focus groups can be found in the [letter the department shared with stakeholders on October 13<sup>th</sup>](#). Ms. Hagan hoped the focus group participants and department can work together to address concerns and still be in compliance with CMS rules. She hopes the waiver amendments can be submitted to CMS by February 2022 in preparation for the eventual end of the exceptions.

Ms. Zimmerman provided the committee with an update on the Act 421 Children's Medicaid Option program (TEFRA). It was reported the department withdrew its application for a 1115 Demonstration Waiver and submitted to CMS a State Plan Amendment. The department hopes to have the program start in January 2022. By offering this program via a state plan amendment everyone who is eligible for the program will be able to participate (no waiting list). More information about this program

can be found on the [program's website](#). Questions about the program can be submitted to [421-CMO@la.gov](mailto:421-CMO@la.gov). Ms. Zimmerman also updated the committee on the department's progress toward ensuring dental coverage for adults on HCBS waivers. Medicaid is working closely with CMS and OCDD on drafting waiver amendments to include dental services and hopes to have those amendments submitted to CMS in January.

### **Contractual Activities**

The committee received multiple updates on contractual activities including Partners in Policymaking (PiP), LaCAN, Families Helping Families Resource Centers (FHF) and other initiatives of the Council that began with the Fiscal Year 2021 Action Plan. Additional information about these activities can be found linked in the [meeting agenda](#) and the Council's quarterly [Status of Planned Activities Report](#) under goals one and two.

Devika Rao with O'Neill Communications was present at the meeting to discuss the Council's fully included video series. Members provided suggestions for possible video content in the upcoming fiscal year including

- Act 421 CMO (TEFRA) - explainer video; what is the program; how to access it
- How to get involved with the Council - application process, responsibilities, getting involved with ongoing initiatives like LaCAN and PiP
- Additional IEP video targeting youth and their participation and role in the process
- Importance of self-advocacy especially as it relates to youth and getting youth involved

Meeting was adjourned at 12:13 PM by unanimous consent.