

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council  
Self-Determination and Community Inclusion Committee Meeting Summary  
Wednesday, April 17, 2024  
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

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

View meeting [transcript](#).

Members Present: Patti Barovechio, Mike Billings, Julie Foster Hagan, Jill Hano, Angela Harmon, Melinda Perrodin, Tony Piontek, Melinda Richard, Tory Rocca, Brooke Stewart, Lauren Womack

Members Absent: Cheri Crain, Tangela Womack

Staff: Brenton Andrus, Rekeesha Branch, Stephanie Carmona, Ebony Haven, Hannah Jenkins

Others Present: Brenda Bares, Brian Bennett, Kristie Curtis, Lillian DeJean, Nicole DeJean, Kathy Dwyer, Mylinda Elliott, Nicole Flores, Julie Folse, Christi Gonzales, Sharla Green, Chanel Jackson, Aisha Johnson, Shontae Johnson, Christina Martin, Ashley McReynolds, Charlie Michel, Kelly Monroe, Bambi Polotzola, Susan Riehn, Samantha Singletary, Mimi Webb, Vivienne Webb

Brooke Stewart called the meeting to order at 1:07 PM. A quorum was established.

**MOTION PASSED** Approval of the [October Meeting Summary](#) made by Tony Piontek, second by Lauren Womack. Passed by a vote of 9 to 0 with no objections or abstentions.

### **Non-Contractual Activities**

Julie Hagan shared multiple updates on behalf of the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) and the Bureau of Health Services and Financing (Medicaid). Additional information can be found in Ms. Hagan's [SD/CI report](#).

- Legislative: [House Bill 829](#) by Rep. Lyons would move the State Interagency Coordinating Council from the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs to OCDD. The department is supportive of this move as SICCC is the advisory body for EarlySteps which operates under OCDD. [Senate Concurrent Resolution 17](#) by Sen. McMath would increase eligibility requirements for the Medicaid Purchase Plan also known as the Medicaid Buy In program.
- American Rescue Plan Act Funds: The START team held in-person outreach sessions during the month of April, with a focus on outreach to self-advocates, those in rural areas, and mental health treatment providers. LDH is also seeking an extension until December 2025 to use ARPA funds. Also reported approval from CMS to utilize these funds for the rate methodology study.

- Clarified the Screening for Urgency of Need (SUN) can be done in-person if requested and not strictly by phone or virtual means. Previous feedback was that phone or Zoom screenings had been effective, but that is no longer the case. In-person requests can take longer to process as there are only six screeners statewide. More work will be done by the department to ensure people know in-person is an option.
- Discussed concerns of families that the local governing entity (LGE) deems them eligible for Act 421 Children’s Medicaid Option (TEFRA) but then are denied upon state office review. In order to be eligible for TEFRA, children must be determined eligible based on level of care (ICF/IID, nursing home, and/or hospital level of care) AND through Medical Eligibility Determination Team (MEDT) which is the Social Security Administration eligibility. LGEs complete the level of care determination and Medicaid completes the MEDT eligibility. 110 children who have been denied TEFRA eligibility because they did not meet MEDT determination. OCDD will continue to work with the LGEs to ensure families are educated about the need to meet both criteria.
- Discussed concerns about moving from the Children’s Choice Waiver (CCW) to an adult waiver. State’s must follow a federal requirement that all state plan services have to be exhausted before waiver services can be provided. At least six months before aging out of CCW, the conversation should be started about steps needed to transition to prevent lapses in services. Ninety days before aging out, individuals must apply for Long Term Personal Care Services (LTPCS) to determine eligibility and if needs would be met. The department understands this may not be the timeframe followed, but Support Coordinators should be starting the conversation at the six month mark. Committee members mentioned a document explaining transitioning would be helpful for families.

### **Families Helping Families New Orleans**

The committee received an update on Families Helping Families of New Orleans (FHF NOLA). FHF NOLA Executive Director Aisha Johnson attended to share updates on the Center. Despite loss of funding, Ms. Johnson felt her Center and staff were still able to meet Council deliverables and ensure availability for families across the region.

While the committee agreed the Center was making some improvements, there were still concerns for the management and functioning of the Center especially given the results of their most recent [legislative audit](#) which found similar issues to the year before. Ms. Johnson shared the continued struggles due to lack of funding and expressed concerns that staffing may be greatly impacted should funding not be restored. Thus the committee felt some funding should be restored based on progress, but not all funding, until the fiscal year 24 legislative audit is complete. That should come out next March or April. This additional funding would also be contingent upon additional dollars being appropriated by the legislature.

**MOTION PASSED** Recommend restoring \$28,000 to Families Helping Families of New Orleans’ (FHF NOLA) budget in Fiscal Year 2025 with the opportunity to receive full

funding in Fiscal Year 2026 pending positive outcomes of the Center's financial audit for Fiscal Year 2024 made by Lauren Womack, seconded by Tony Piontek. Passed by a vote of 7 to 0 with one abstention by Dr. Barovechio and no objections.

Regarding the search for a new Executive Director, Ms. Johnson stated there has been little interest. The few applicants received were not in agreement with the salary offer (~\$43,000/annually) or they were not qualified. Ms. Johnson did not rule out rescinding her resignation and remaining at the Center.

The committee did request more quantitative data in the quarterly report submitted by the Center.

### **Contractual Activities**

Due to time, the committee was unable to review contractual updated. However, additional information about these activities can be found in the Council's quarterly [Status of Planned Activities Report](#) under goals one and two in addition to reports linked in the committee's agenda.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:09 PM.