

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council  
Act 378 Subcommittee  
January 29, 2025

BROOKE STEWART: Good afternoon everyone. It is 4:01 and I would like to call the meeting to order. Rekeesha, would you mind doing a call.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Christi Gonzales.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Here.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Julie Foster Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Here.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Pasqueal Nguyen. Mr. Tony Piontek. Ms. Bambi Polotzola. Ms. Brooke Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Here.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Mr. Erick Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Here.

REKEESHA BRANCH: You have four. You have a quorum.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you, Rekeesha. Before we get started I just want to remind you all of a few rules. For committee members and members of the public attending in person please raise your hand to speak and wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking. To help the meeting run smoothly please keep side conversations to a minimum and comments related to the topic we are discussing. For those committee members who are attending virtually remember you must be on camera and have your first and last name showing to be counted towards our quorum. Please keep microphones muted unless called upon by the chair. Electronically raise your hand to request to speak and wait to be called on by the chair. For attendees electronically raise your hand. Once recognized by the chair your microphone will be turned on. After speaking the microphone will be returned to mute.

Also, the Q and A is to only be used by those needing an ADA accommodation to participate in the meeting. Public comment will not be accepted via the Q and A except for those individuals who requested the accommodation. As per order committee members in person and virtually will be allowed to speak first. Public members in person will then be called on followed by public participating virtually who have their hands raised. Comments in the Q and A will be addressed last. As with all hybrid meetings

it can be difficult to keep track of those wanting to speak in person and virtually. Please be patient. All comments and questions from the public may be subjected to two minutes at the discretion of the chair. So please keep that in mind. Depending on time constraints we may also limit comments to once per issue. Also, comments about a person's character will not be allowed. Finally, members of the public will have the opportunity to provide public comment before each vote and during designated public comment periods. The chair may also use their discretion to determine if comments will be accepted outside of those times.

Everyone should have reviewed the October meeting summary which was attached in the agenda you received via email. There is also a copy in your committee packet. I need a motion to adopt the October meeting summary.

ERICK TAYLOR: I motion to adopt.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. Erick Taylor motioned to recommend adopting the October meeting summary. Is there a second?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Second.

BROOKE STEWART: Christi seconds. Is there any discussion? Any public comment? Okay. Now we will do a roll call vote. A vote yes is to approve the agenda. A vote no is not to approve. Rekeesha, please call the roll.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Gonzales.

CHRISTI GONZALES: Yes.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Ms. Nguyen. Mr. Piontek. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you, Rekeesha. The motion to accept the October meeting summary has passed by a vote of four yeses. Okay. Next, we are moving on to the Office of Behavioral Health reports. Dr. Savicki, the floor is yours.

KRISTIN SAVICKI: Great. Thank you. Just to let you know I've been having some audio issues this afternoon with Zoom and it's been intermittent. So please let me know if you stop being able to hear me. So this is the quarter two report. Looking at the consumer care resources just to

update on a few things. First of all, North Louisiana, as you'll recall, were not able to report in quarter one because they were still dealing with the results of a cyber security issue or some cyber-attack on their system. So now they have been able to report so we're kind of catching up on seeing where North Louisiana is.

As per usual we look to the consumer care resources. What we like to see is halfway through the year that half of the funding is expended. Although we always know that these reports are due to the council before the LGEs are fully able to process all of their quarter two invoices. So it's pretty common for them to be at least a little bit under 50 percent in quarter two. Most of the LGEs are doing pretty well with their level of expenditures. You'll see notes when an LGE is significantly under 50 percent. You'll see notes in the note section around what's impacting their ability to spend or what their plan is to spend the funding over the course of the fiscal year.

Any questions about the consumer care resources section of the report?

BROOKE STEWART: No questions.

KRISTIN SAVICKI: Flexible family funds. What we look for here is we look to see that at least 90 percent of the allocated slots are filled. All of the LGEs are meeting that metric right now. I think it was maybe one has an unfilled slot that they're working on filling. But they're certainly well within that metric. Any questions on that portion of the report?

BROOKE STEWART: No questions.

KRISTIN SAVICKI: Okay. And then in the supported living section of the report. Pulling that up now. Similar this is traditionally fewer of the LGEs have these funds allocated but you're seeing their report of expenditures similarly. You know, Capital Area, for example, the same is true for their CCR program. They typically spend these funds later in the fiscal year. So it's pretty typical for them to be reporting 0 percent spending. At this point in the year they typically always catch up at the end of the year. And you'll see three of the LGEs have expended all of their funding based on needs in their communities. And at least one LGE has a note around how they've allocated some separate funding to meet additional needs going forward over the course of the fiscal year because they used this particular account to

meet needs that came up early on in the fiscal year. Any questions on that?

BROOKE STEWART: No questions.

KRISTIN SAVICKI: I'm here if there's any questions. That's all for our reports.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. Y'all are going over the responses from last quarter.

BROOKE STEWART: So Dr. Savicki, there were a few questions from last quarter. Would you like to address those?

KRISTIN SAVICKI: I'm sorry. I can't tell, was that Rekeesha who was speaking?

BROOKE STEWART: Brooke Stewart.

KRISTIN SAVICKI: Okay. I shared those with Brenton and Rekeesha. Did those get shared with the committee as well?

REKEESHA BRANCH: I didn't make a copy for everybody but I do have it here. Do you kind of want us to read off the questions and answers?

KRISTIN SAVICKI: Yeah. We wanted to share those answers back with the committee. But just let me know the best way to do that. Would you like me to address those?

BROOKE STEWART: I can read it if you would like Dr. Savicki?

KRISTIN SAVICKI: Okay.

BROOKE STEWART: The first question was why does CLHSD use CCR funds for school credit recovery. And this is in reference to the fiscal year 24 yearend report. So CLHSD uses CCR funds to assist students who need financial support to enroll in school credit recovery programs during summer. As the school district charges an enrollment fee this funding helps students stay on track academically, advance to the next grade and enhances their self-esteem and confidence.

I'll move on to the next question. The next question was how many individuals received funding for driver's education course also received a license. And this is also in reference to fiscal 24 year-end report. Out of all individuals who received funding for driver's education courses only one has not yet obtained their driver's license. While the client has successfully passed the class behavioral issues have lead their parents to withhold permission for them to receive a driver's license at this time.

The next question. Why did CLHHSD expand all or most of their funding in the first quarter. And we're referencing fiscal year 25 quarter one supported living report. The act funding for fiscal year 24/25 was largely utilized in the first quarter to address urgent needs for eviction prevention in Central Louisiana. Extreme utility rates made it challenging for many residents to cover rent and utilities. Both of which are required under lease agreements. Without utilities tenants face immediate eviction. The demand for assistance is so high that other local agencies providing similar services also exhausted their funding early in the fiscal year.

So the next question is coming from SCLHSA. So why did SCLHSA expend all or most of their funding in the first quarter. And we are going to be referencing fiscal year 25 quarter one supported living report. Funds have been used to fulfill direct requests that include but are not limited to utility assistance, rental assistance, furnishings, educational material, et cetera as well as paying for peer support specialists for services performed. MHBG funds will be used to fulfill requests received that exceed the 50,000-dollar commitment to the Act 378. Requests from adults including payments to peer support specialists as of December 31st, 2024, total 75,341-dollars.

And this will be the last one from NLHSD. How many individuals who received funding for driver's education courses also received a license. And we're going to be referencing fiscal year 24 yearend report. NLHSD approved three requests for payment of the driver education courses in fiscal year 24 and all three youth received their license. This assistance is only offered to clients that have proven to be in active treatment and shown that they're responsible enough to follow through. We do not recommend any certain driving school but will cap the assistance at 500-dollars. This includes the 30-hour training course, all testing required by the state to obtain the license. And that concludes the questions and responses. Does anyone have any further questions for Dr. Savicki? Okay. Hearing none.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: A question in the Q and A chat. The question is if the federal funding freeze will affect any DD services.

BROOKE STEWART: Who was the question for?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I guess it would be for any of our representatives. Although I think the services we talk about in this committee are mostly state funded. I don't think we have any federally funded programs in this committee that we talk about so these should be fine.

KRISTIN SAVICKI: These are all state funded.

BRENTON ANDRUS: These would not be impacted by the freeze that we still don't have much information on.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: There was a rescission of it.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Okay.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. Thank you, Dr. Savicki. Do we have any more questions before we move on? Okay. Now we are moving onto the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities report. Julie Foster Hagan with OCDD is here to report out on this program.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: And I'm actually going to ask, I have Brandy Croft on the line here because Tanya Murphy who normally gives the report is not able to provide the report today. So Brandy, do you mind going through the report for folks please.

BRANDY CROFT: Good afternoon everyone. As Dr. Savicki said at this point of the fiscal year in the second quarter the LGEs should be at about 50 percent expended for the individual and family support funds. So they typically do not receive all the billing until about maybe midmonth, the month following the quarter. So several of them or most of them did report that they were still waiting on some billing invoices for December or some of those services that were provided prior to the end of December.

There were a few that were a little bit farther behind but that is one of the reasons that they have reported that they are behind is due to waiting on those invoices. And then in the notes too you can see, for example, for IMCAL they reported that due to some of the incontinent supplies that have been taking over being funded through the waiver programs that had an impact on some of their funds that they're obligating and expending. That they had previously obligated those funds for those incontinent supplies but now they're covered through the waiver. But they have, as they've said, they're researching other ways in order to expend the funds. And so they've shared that information with support coordination agencies and others trying to get that word out there that they have some funds available to utilize for services and supplies that may be

needed.

Does anyone have any questions about the individual and family support funding for OCDD?

BROOKE STEWART: I have a question Ms. Croft. I was looking at JPHSA. I know you said their invoices are due by January 10th but do they expect to be up to at least 50 percent?

BRANDY CROFT: That is my understanding is they do expect to be closer to that 50 percent. But I can check with them to get an update on their expenditures.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. And SCL?

BRANDY CROFT: Central Louisiana Human Services District.

BROOKE STEWART: Yeah, they don't have any notes. But I would say significantly under but no notes.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I think she was talking about South Central.

BRANDY CROFT: South Central, I did check with them too about theirs and their response was that they have obligated at least 54.8 percent of their funds towards their 9 percent that must be utilized for individuals. But they did not have any other comments at that time. I can check back with them to see if they can give an update on their expenditures too to see if they've gotten a little bit farther along with that.

ERICK TAYLOR: It's 200,322-dollars.

BROOKE STEWART: Could you explain, Ms. Croft, the red in both IFS and FFS.

BRANDY CROFT: It's my understanding that for Capital Area Human Services District and Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority that they had some funding that was put over into the flexible family funds to make it available for that but then it was not needed so they moved it back into the individual and family support funding budget.

ERICK TAYLOR: Does that mean they're over?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I didn't know if Brandy heard the question. I think they're not necessarily under or over. I think they're just moving the money between the two programs to meet the needs of that program.

BRANDY CROFT: That's correct.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So it reflects as a negative because they're moving from one program to the other but it's still within their service programs.

BROOKE STEWART: Are there any more questions for Ms.

Croft?

BRANDY CROFT: Okay. For the flexible family fund all of the LGEs are at 50 percent. I think there was one that had gone just a bit over but they can always adjust for that towards the end of the year as children age out or move out of state. Then they can adjust that to where their funding covers the appropriate amount of children for the slots that they have allocated to that particular LGE. So everybody is on track for the flexible family fund for the second quarter. Are there any questions about flexible family fund?

So the Act 73 compliance report. This is regarding using the state funds for services specifically for the individuals. So those funds are going to services for the individuals. There are some that are below the 50 percent but that is going to be affected by the expenditures on the individual and family support funds for those invoices on the billing that they have not yet received. So it should hopefully come up as the year goes on and they receive all of that billing.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: This is Julie. I also just note that if you look at the column, because we do also on this try to make sure people, that all of the LGEs have at least allocated the 9 percent that's required by the Act 73. And you can see that all of the LGEs have allocated at least 9 percent, some of them more than 9 percent of their total state general funds budget to the Act 378.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So is Central a little short? Am I reading that correctly? 983 would be the 9 percent but they have 947.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Did I miss them? I guess so. We need to follow up with them then, Brandy, on that one to let them know that they don't have 9 percent allocated.

BRANDY CROFT: Central?

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yes, Central Louisiana. They should have 983,000 allocated to meet the 9 percent of their total SGF and they only have 947,000 allocated. So they are required to have the 983 so they need to bring that up. They need to allocate more to the Act 378 program to be in compliance. Does that make sense?

BRANDY CROFT: It does. Thank you.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Act 73 was the act that required that 9 percent of each LGEs total state general fund, so that's why you see that first column is their total state



general fund, and then what is 9 percent of that. They have to have 9 percent of the total state general fund allocated to these programs. The IFS program and the FFF program in OCDD. And so this is checking to make sure, you know, what they're showing right here that they have obligated in their budget it is meeting that 9 percent. So all of them at least meet the 9 percent. Some of them go over but Central Louisiana is under by 30 something thousand dollars. They don't have enough allocated to meet that 9 percent. And then these programs, the IFS and the FFF program or the Act 378 that was established by Act 378. So that's why those numbers are different.

BROOKE STEWART: Just for my own clarification, I'm looking at the Act 73 compliance report. The last row should show what percent over 9 percent? I'm just looking at CLHSD, for example, it's saying 46 percent but it really should be like under...

BRENTON ANDRUS: So that last column is basically saying by the end of the year we would want them to expend all of that 9 percent that they've allotted to those programs. So that last column is kind of like the expended percentages on the front page of that document just showing where they're at in spending the money that they had set aside. For the newer folks the idea for Act 73 came out of this committee and was a legislative agenda item some years back so that's why we monitor that.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you, Julie. Do we have any more questions for Julie before we move on? Or Brandy? Now we are moving on to our SPAS report. Kelly Monroe with the Arc of Louisiana is here to report out on this program. Kelly.

KELLY MONROE: Hey guys. How y'all doing? I'm assuming everybody has the report in front of them. Thank you. So this quarter there were 40 people who were served. Eighteen of those-- I'm sorry. Seventeen of those were African American, 22 Caucasian. Twenty-seven of those individuals were male and 13 were female. The change that we had was in region two. So when we went down from 41 to 40 that was in region two. So there are now five people being served in region two instead of six. If we go down to the next page 40 people received support coordination. Thirty-six of those people received personal care assistance. Two of them were either rental or utility assistance. Two were medical assistance and there was no

one received any type of vehicle or home modifications. So so far in the second quarter we've spent \$231,193.03. I know it doesn't seem like it's a whole lot but we are on target. We do have all the funds that are already spoken for through the entire year.

So currently the waiting list is at 104 people. There was a mistake right there where it says 90. It should have been 104 so I apologize for that. In region one there's 24 people. Region two there's 23. Region seven there's 8. That's where the changes were. The additional people that made the change, the increase to 104. And of those people the demographics of those people are 43 of those people are African American, 49 of those people are Caucasian, one is Hispanic, one is Caucasian Asian. And there are ten that are unknown with the demographics. They never completed the application. So we've reached out to them but they have not responded. Forty-seven of those people are male and 57 are female.

And then if you go to the next page, 88 of those people are interested in PCA services. Fourteen are interested in either home modifications or vehicle modifications. Two for dental services. Thirty-seven people interested in either medical equipment or some type of supplies. Two for rental or utility assistance. And one in some type of therapy. I want to say it's physical therapy but I would have to ask Whitney because I didn't get that clarified before I left the office. So I apologize for that.

And then the next thing you guys have asked about a while back was for us to kind of like find out if people were receiving other services and if they applied for other services. So that's what this next chart will show. There are two actual applicants that are not eligible for any services. But if you look at the chart these are the people who have applied and are currently receiving other services right now. And that's it. I don't know if anybody has any questions. I know that was really quick but there really was no changes from last quarter to this one except that one person.

BROOKE STEWART: Kelly, I have a question. Out of the 104 people on the waiting list 40 are receiving other services?

KELLY MONROE: Yes. And then 32 people have applied for services. And the others just nothing. I think Tony has a question.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes, Tony? You're on mute.

TONY PIONTEK: Okay. For that transportation part is that kind of normal or not? Or not just our region but for Louisiana especially.

KELLY MONROE: Well, we have provided, we have paid for transportation services but it is rare that they ask for that. I think we've done it a couple of times but as of right now no one's requesting that.

TONY PIONTEK: Because I can say with experience being with Families Helping Families in my region four area we need to get more insight and more detail, a lot more than UL Lafayette. They have a bus. We don't have anything close to that. And we're still working with my two Representatives Blake and Beau and they're just endlessly working on their end to get something but we still just have an Uber. That does not help us. That's just where we are.

KELLY MONROE: Yeah, transportation is an issue.

TONY PIONTEK: People in my area with Ms. Christi on the board with us. She and I have gotten so many times (inaudible). It could be so much better.

KELLY MONROE: Yeah, absolutely.

TONY PIONTEK: Thank you for that.

KELLY MONROE: And I meant to tell you guys if we wanted to serve everybody on the waiting list it would cost 2.6 million. Almost 2.7.

BROOKE STEWART: Kelly, my other question I guess, I know we've said this before so I feel like we've made this comment of what would be able to clear your waiting list or make sure these people get services. I know more funding was needed. Is that something you would like to see on like our advocacy agenda, more funding?

KELLY MONROE: I would love that. This is one of my most favorite programs because it doesn't really function like a waiver but yet it gives the same services. It gives people a lot of the ability to actually go out and work where waivers allow you to work but very minimal hours. Where this actually really does support people to go to work. And it's one of my most favorite programs because it just gives you, you get a budget and then you get to do what you need to do within that budget. So some people use personal care assistance but then some people might say I'll use personal care assistance but then I also need some modifications done and as long as they're within their budget it's great. We would absolutely love if you guys wanted to advocate for

that. We would welcome it and help you too.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you, Kelly. I know you've given the number before that you would need to clear your list.

KELLY MONROE: I would have to go check. It's roughly 2.7 million but that's with the federal match. So I want to say that that is like, I don't know, 500,000 of state general funds. I would have to ask though. Can anybody do the math? I'm not sure.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: What's the percentage?

KELLY MONROE: I think it's 62 percent. Or 68? Julie, are you still there?

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: I am, but I didn't think there was a federal match for the SPAS program.

KELLY MONROE: Oh, yeah. There is. That's what's so great. That's how we're able to...

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: So my response earlier in terms of federal money changes not affecting this program that would apply to OCDD but with SPAS. Charles sent me the federal match the other day. It changes on a regular basis.

KELLY MONROE: Yeah, I don't know if it's 62 or 68.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I thought it was 67-point something last time I checked.

KELLY MONROE: Okay. If somebody could do the math. I don't have a calculator with me. I want to say state general fund dollars would have been somewhere around 500,000 or something like that.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: For fiscal year 24/25 it's 67.96 Federal, 32.04 state. Federal is 67.96. And then next year changes to 67.89.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So that would be about 900,000 or so would be state give or take.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: It's under 900,000.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Between 8 and 900,000-dollars. There's a hand raised, Melinda Elliot.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes, Ms. Elliot.

MYLINDA ELLIOT: Hey, good afternoon. I was thinking along the same lines. One of the things that came up in the LaCAN community input meetings was about an increase in DSW wages. Could we add that to the agenda as well? How does that work?

BROOKE STEWART: We can bring the recommendations to the planning committee.

JILL HANO: I'm kind of confused. Why are we talking

about the legislative agenda? When do LaCAN roundtables start?

BRENTON ANDRUS: Mid-February is when the first one starts.

JILL HANO: So 2025 advocacy agenda is set?

SPEAKER: Uh-huh.

JILL HANO: Okay. My bad. I'll pay attention. Thank you.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you, Kelly. Do we have any more questions for Kelly before we move on?

KELLY MONROE: Thanks guys.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. Does anyone on the committee have any other announcements to make? Do we have anyone wishing to share public comment?

TONY PIONTEK: If anyone is in the education area, but this is just a long shot per se, like from high school seniors that are graduating high school or college, what is the actual, the difference of the percentage of them to move on? Would anyone know that?

CHRISTI GONZALES: Moving onto what, Tony?

TONY PIONTEK: From high school graduating into college.

BROOKE STEWART: Tony, I think that would have been for the last meeting. I'll pass that onto Renoda.

TONY PIONTEK: Yeah, because I'm in that area as well with not just us here but Families Helping Families when we have our meetings too. And I know it fluctuates.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. Maybe we can ask Meredith to give an update on that.

TONY PIONTEK: Wonderful.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. I hereby adjourn this meeting at 4:44.