

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council  
Self-Determination and Community Inclusion Committee Meeting Summary  
April 19, 2021 12:00 PM - 2:30 PM  
Online Via Zoom

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

Members Present: Patti Barovechio, Kim Basile, Mike Billings, Randall Brown, Lillian DeJean, Jill Egle, Michelle Guillory, Julie F. Hagan, Jill Hano, Jen Katzman, Hyacinth McKee, Steven Nguyen, Matthew Rovira

Members Absent: Roslyn Hymel, Crystal White

Staff: Marilee Andrews, Brenton Andrus, Halie Belin, Ebony Haven, Courtney Ryland

Others Present: Karen Artus, Dustin Chandler, Tommy Comeaux, Kristie Curtis, Jamie Dawson, Mylinda Elliott, Nicole Flores, Julie Folse, Liz Gary, Selina Gilliland, Stacey Guidry, Angela Harmon, Lynsey Hebert, Shontae Johnson, Charlie Michel, Kelly Monroe, Christina Paoletta, Lorene Phillips, Bambi Polotzola, Devika Rao, Adrienne Thomas, David Whalen, Angela Whittaker, Holly Wood

Mike Billings called the meeting to order at 12:05 PM. A quorum was established.

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

**Non-Contractual Activities**

Jen Katzman shared updates on Act 421 Children's Medicaid Option with the committee. More information about this program can be found on the [program's website](#). The [program application](#) submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on September 1, 2020 is still pending approval. The department originally planned, pending approval from CMS, to open registration up in April 2021 with a program implementation date of May 2021. This timeline has been delayed. Total funding for this program (\$27.2 million) was included in the Fiscal Year 22 (FY22) budget proposal. Questions about the program can be submitted to [421-CMO@la.gov](mailto:421-CMO@la.gov).

Ms. Katzman also shared the Medicaid renewal process has started, and service recipients need to be on the lookout for this information. Currently they are still maintaining all eligibility at this time, pending few exceptions, but some individuals may be receiving notice that they qualify for a different Medicaid program.

Julie Foster Hagan and Ms. Katzman also provided information about the current proposed budget. At this time, the budget is intact and no major cuts are being proposed. Included in the American Rescue Plan was a ten percent increase in the federal match for home- and community-based services. The department is awaiting

guidance on how these additional dollars can be used. There has been some discussion about using some funding to ensure adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities have comprehensive dental coverage and children who require anesthesia for their dental treatments. It was also noted that the Biden administration extended the public health emergency for an additional 90 days.

Ms. Hagan provided the committee with an update on the Appendix K exceptions. She shared the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) held two listening sessions earlier in the month to share plans for Home- and Community-Based (HCBS) Waiver Services after the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ends and to solicit feedback on those plans. Over 200 individuals participated in the call for providers and over 400 participated in the call for families and self-advocates. Many of the participants expressed the need to continue the exception that allows close relatives to continue serving as Direct Support Workers (DSW).

It was shared that 45% of waiver recipients have been vaccinated for COVID-19 with 17% remaining who want to receive the vaccines. Only 21% of the DSW workforce and 20% of support coordinators have been vaccinated. Ms. Hagan also shared the Office of Community Partnerships and Health Equity within the Louisiana Department of Health is hosting an upcoming webinar event discussing COVID-19 and its impact on persons with disabilities and providers. This information session will be held on Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 1:30 - 2:30 PM ([flyer](#)).

Ms. Hagan also provided an update on OCDD's Developmental Disabilities Services Visuals Workgroup. This workgroup was created to identify processes in the OCDD service delivery system that may benefit from visual representations (i.e. flow charts, mapping) with a goal to ensure visuals are developed in a manner that is easy for individuals and families to understand so they may be better informed regarding what steps should be taken to access OCDD services. She mentioned OCDD had plans to update its website as well to make sure it was user friendly. More information about the status of the workgroup can be found [here](#).

### **Contractual Activities**

The committee received multiple updates on contractual activities including Partners in Policymaking (PiP), LaCAN, Families Helping Families Resource Centers (FHF) and new 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 Report](#) under goals one and two.

Adrienne Thomas, PiP Coordinator, shared [specific updates](#) about the steps taken thus far to ensure the 2020 class can resume virtually in 2021. PiP participant, Christina Paolella, shared some of her classmates concerns for conducting PiP virtually and requested they be allowed to resume classes in-person when it is safe to do so. Council Chair Randall Brown acknowledged the concern and assured the committee he will reach out to the Colleen Wieck, Minnesota's Council Executive Director, to discuss how their PiP class has been moving forward during the pandemic.

Marilee Andrews and Devika Rao (O'Neill Communications) discussed Council member concerns about the videos produced as part of Activity 1.4.3 specifically the lack of diversity and persons of color in the first video designed to introduce viewers to the Council. Ms. Rao stated a second video, which will expound upon the first video, is in production and includes diverse participants.

Dustin Chandler with Interaction Advisory Group (IAG) provided the committee with information about efforts to establish pilot programs in multiple regions across the state on first-responder tactics, approaches and resources in fostering relationships with and dealing with individuals with developmental disabilities and training for people with developmental disabilities on how to interact with first responders. Mr. Chandler stated they strive for at least two self-advocate and one parent advocate be included in the first responder trainings. Thus far, the trainings have been well received but the demand is greater than the monthly trainings currently included in the Council's contract with IAG. Due to this demand, IAG has offered additional trainings at no expense to the Council. Concerns were noted about the outreach to promote such trainings statewide. Mr. Chandler provided his email address ([dustin@interactionadvisorygroup.com](mailto:dustin@interactionadvisorygroup.com)) so those with questions, comments and concerns can contact him directly.

David Whalen with Niagra University also shared with the committee information about efforts to establish a training program on emergency preparedness and response relative to people with developmental disabilities. Those with questions can find more information at <https://frdat.niagara.edu/> or email Mr. Whalen at [dwhalen@niagara.edu](mailto:dwhalen@niagara.edu).

Meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM.