

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Self-Determination and Community Inclusion Committee Meeting Summary
July 21, 2021 9:00 AM - 12:00 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, Roslyn Hymel, Jen Katzman, Steven Nguyen

Members Absent: Matthew Rovira, Crystal White

Staff: Marilee Andrews, Brenton Andrus, Amy Deaville, Ebony Haven, Hannah Jenkins

Others Present: Karen Artus, Anastasia Boudreaux, Kathleen Cannino, Lori Carter, Corhonda Corley, Brenda Cosse, Kristie Curtis, Jamie Dawson, Mylinda Elliott, Nicole Flores, Julie Folse, Liz Gary, Lynsey Hebert, Mellissa Johnson, Ashley McReynolds, Kelly Monroe, Bambi Polotzola, Devika Rao, Susan Riehn, Adrienne Thomas,

Mike Billings called the meeting to order at 9 AM. A quorum was established.

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

Non-Contractual Activities

Julie Hagan and Jen Katzman shared multiple updates on behalf of the [Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities \(OCDD\)](#) and the [Bureau of Health Services and Financing \(Medicaid\)](#). During the 2021 legislative session, [HB1 \(Act 119\)](#) provided for over \$16 million in state general fund dollars to increase OCDD home- and community-based (HCBS) waiver rates for those services provided by Direct Service Workers (DSWs). This funding does not include a rate increase for aging and adult HCBS services or for those served in Intermediate Care Facilities. The department, with input from the Council and providers, proposed at \$2.50 rate increase per hour with DSWs and providers splitting the increase equally. A direct care service floor would be set so DSWs would be paid at least \$8.50 per hour. Conversations with legislators and other stakeholders continue before the department finalizes its recommendations and publishes rule.

With regard to dental services, it was noted [HB172 \(Act 450\)](#) passed which ensures comprehensive dental coverage for adults in OCDD HCBS waivers. Funding was also included in the budget to increase reimbursement rates for hospitals and anesthesia services for dental treatment performed in hospitals.

Ms. Hagan and Ms. Katzman also shared information regarding additional dollars awarded to the state via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP). This act provides states with a temporary ten percentage point increase to the federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP) for certain Medicaid expenditures for HCBS services. The funding must be used to implement new programs or supplement activities to enhance, expand, or strengthen HCBS under the state's Medicaid program by March 31, 2024. An initial spending proposal was submitted to CMS this month.

Committee received an update on the Act 421 Children's Medicaid Option program. The department is still waiting approval from CMS. However, the department is reevaluating its approach in light of the additional funding via the ARP and other changes to initial estimates on expected participants. Clarity is being sought from CMS to determine if the Act 421 program would qualify for the enhanced HCBS funding provided in the ARP, which could potentially provide additional funding for more services. Should additional federal funding be made available, the department may look at the possibility of State Plan coverage rather than the demonstration waiver currently being sought. 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.

Ms. Katzman also shared Medicaid renewal letters were going out to families in preparation for the end of the public health emergency. If participants are no longer eligible based on the information they provide, they will receive a pre-closure notice saying their benefits will end once the public health emergency ends.

Regarding COVID exceptions, Ms. Hagan shared during the 2021 Regular Legislative Session Representative Turner introduced [HB204](#), aimed at continuing three flexibilities (family as paid staff, suspension of the 16-hour rule, and continued virtual visits). The bill was voluntarily deferred, and OCDD is working with Rep. Turner and providers to allow some of the flexibilities (with reasonable, CMS-approved guardrails) to continue post-COVID-19. OCDD is currently evaluating rule changes, manual changes, and waiver amendments that might be necessary to make those changes (subject to CMS approval). The department's letter sent to Rep. Turner can be found [here](#). Ms. Hagan also shared the [New Opportunities Waiver renewal application](#) was released for public comment today through August 20th. Comments can be sent to ocdd-hcbs@la.gov. Included in the application is language that would allow non-legally responsible caregivers to serve as paid staff.

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 of Planned Activities Report](#) under goals one and two.

Emergency Preparedness & Response Initiative

At the April 2021 Council meeting, the Council approved a motion to request new contract proposals for Activity 2.7.4 (Activity 2.2.2 in FY22 plan beginning October 1) with strong consideration to be given to instate organizations. The purpose of this activity is to establish a training program on emergency preparedness and response relative to people with developmental disabilities. The deadline to submit proposals was July 9th at 4:30pm. Only one proposal was received from [Niagara University](#). They are also the contractor currently working on the initiative.

MOTION PASSED

A motion by Roslyn Hymel, seconded by Steven Nguyen to recommend to the full Council contracting with Niagara University to complete Activity 2.2.2 in the Council's Federal Fiscal Year 22 action plan passed with no objections, abstentions.

Meeting was adjourned at 12 PM by unanimous consent.