



MINUTES

Transitions Stakeholder Advisory Council

Google Hangout Weblink: meet.google.com/kxu-dohn-qbt

Google Hangout Call-in: +1 614-392-8851

PIN: 894 493 720#

Thursday, July 16, 2020

2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Clarice Ambler, DRCOG X
 - Anne Bartels, PASCO X
 - Amy Dixon, CPWD
 - Paige Gallaher, Atlantis X
 - Jennifer Giurgila, Jefferson County
 - Fallon Gillespie, CO Access
 - Emily Harvey, Disability Law X
 - Ashly Johnson, DRCOG X
 - Jennifer Krulewich, Focus Care X
 - Tracy Martinez, Touch of Care
 - Ed Milewski, Jr.
 - Jenn Ochs
 - Lisa Smith, Team Rubicon
 - Neal Waite, ADRC Region 3B X
- Ann Watt, DOLA, Courtney Thomson, DOLA
- Department Staff: Katy Barnett, John Barry, Matt Bohanan, Michelle Topkoff

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Approval of the June Minutes – Minutes were approved
- Purpose of Today's Meeting

2. Program Updates

- Matt shared that stakeholders should keep an eye out on information on COVID. There will be some changes in the coming months to previously released memos and guidance. Matt also shared that the SEP transitions have moving forward and the Department is looking at consistency and time for planning to finalize all



SEP transitions. Michelle added to Matt's update about COVID, that amendments to the Medicaid waivers that were temporarily for COVID may be rolling back soon. The Department is looking to keep some changes in place from those amendments that had positive impacts on members. With these rollbacks, the Department is following any extension of the health emergency timeline closely. As of the meeting, there was no official news that it will be extended after 25th of July. Michelle also shared that the Department is looking at regulatory updates and any changes that could be considered should be shared with the Department which has a stakeholder engagement process for the rule changes.

3. Council Updates

- Ashly from DRCOG felt like things have been adjusting finally to the COVID routine. They had experienced some issues getting services to members who are not verbal and reached out to the Department for further support. Emily from Disability Law Colorado had no big updates and had not heard any issues with members accessing Transition Services specific to COVID.
- Ann Watt and Courtney Thomson from DOLA shared an update on their group briefing with Christopher House residents. Several residents participated in a virtual voucher briefing and were able to ask questions and received nursing home staff support to fill out paperwork. The team felt they provided enough time in advance (10 days) to coordinate the phone and PowerPoint with nursing facility staff and make sure residents could attend. The team feels like this was such a success they would be ready to do more virtual voucher briefings with nursing facilities and asked that if the Council members know any homes interested to send the information along to Nora, Ann and Courtney. The DOLA team did share they are seeing a flat line for people interested in accessing vouchers and interested in moving out. They had not received many applications the last few days. They believe the slow down may be due to individuals not knowing what will happen in future or if they want to move out. One of the challenges with the program is the rate of application can vary a lot month to month even before COVID. They did see a pickup again after March and April. The team plans to bring more data to next meeting.
- Anne from PASCO shared they had an increase in services and one of their best quarter in a while in part because of additional CARES Act funding. They are focused on their caregiver program, training members, and still doing everything virtually making sure everything is safe with limited home visit. Jenny from Focus Care shared that not having to wait for inspections in the housing voucher process has made moving folks quicker but there is some problem solving around communications with members as well as addressing new risks in the COVID environment.



- Neal from Boulder County share that they recently expanded their team with newly trained options counselors including one bilingual options counselor. Referrals in Boulder County are coming in but there was a large back log and they are working hard to catch up. He feels like the processes was made easier with the COVID flexibilities particularly regarding member signatures. His team has also found they are having longer conversations. The intention is to speak to transitions, but individuals are happy for any conversation. It's also taking more time to explain the visuals used in the options counseling process. He is looking for a way to put hard copies in facilities and asked if the Council had any ideas. Clarice shared that she emails the Social Services Directors and asks them to print and make sure the member has the materials before the meeting. Most times she finds the social service team is happy to help print and get to members. Paige from Atlantis shared that transitions are still moving along, slowly but surely. Atlantis is looking at a transition pilot with the Colorado Cross Disability Coalition and the Reciprocity Collective. The intention is to use hotels before securing housing to get interested members out of skilled nursing faster. Katy asked if their new building was ready and Paige shared that Atlantis would be moving in August!

4. Communication and Planning

- Matt started by touching on fact that there are lots of changes and lots of opportunities at this time and that's why the Department has asked John Barry to help support the next nine months of the Council's work. The Council will talk about how to build on efforts moving forward including identifying a new structure as well as what we want to accomplish and how to use our time. As a Council, there have been a lot of organic accomplishments and there is a solid foundation of representation. There are also many natural milestones happening at same time we are reviewing the Council goals and structure. From the COVID work to the end and celebration of the Money Follows the Person demonstration. The Transition Services team is moving from grant and project focused working and is now looking very closely at how the new services and team fit into the Office of Community Living including using consistent resources and process. This is a good point to then start looking at a restructure and refocus of the Council with the goal to better utilize this group and open up to a more public audience.
- Michelle echoed Matt's statements on the changes coming to the program and the team's move away from pilot project to sustainability under umbrella of the Office of Community Living and the Entry Point Case Management Section. Michelle added that this effort will take what the Council has worked on to this point and make concerted effort to move forward and address barriers that need to get resolved and goals for programs future. The bigger vision is to have the Council's input inform both the barriers to be addressed and the future of the program. Initially, at this natural turning point the Department had considered

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- doing a taskforce or workgroup but realized “why recreate the wheel” when the Council has been so valuable. In addition, the Department wants to bring wider group of shareholders. Something like an audience for these meetings which aligns with one of the Council goals of expanding representation. The hope is to use these Council meetings as a forum for good stakeholder engagement for any changes the Department moves forward with. As for John Barry’s role, he is a “communication guru” whose role is not to take over meetings but rather make it so that Katy and Matt can be fully engaged. John will help run and keep the Council on time and talk a little about facilitation. The Department is happy to bring resources that are available in the office. The Department is thinking this would be six to nine-month project to cover each of items identified by the Council’s SWOT analysis. John will also help us get the word out and develop a stakeholder outreach plan so the Council can get a larger audience to the meetings and find out not just what the council is aware of but creating an open dialog to the entire stakeholder community. The Council would set up each meeting to address one of the issues. In addition, the Department would like to get out survey to greater stakeholder community to identify any other issues and tap into community to support subcommittees and workgroups and keep moving along on the goals.
- Michelle introduced John Barry and provided him an opportunity to introduce himself. John has worked for 11 years. He shared that most of that time in was in Long Term Services and Supports where he followed this project from the beginning of Money Follows the Person to Colorado Choice Transitions and worked closely with Tim Cortez and Sam Murillo. John shared that he does a lot of communications emails through Constant Contact and facilitation of public meetings. In 2012, he was involved in the Community Living Advisory Group which many Council members may be familiar with. It was the first time LTSS deliberately held a series of meetings with providers, advocates, legislators, family members, members, facility-based, and community-based stakeholders. John also facilitates stakeholder participation in the person directed programs, waiver redesign, older adults. He considers himself just a piano player, his customer is the agenda and making sure stakeholder meetings are set up in a transparent way. With regards to this specific group, these meetings need to be more inclusive which sounds good and is good but how do we do that? How do you handle meeting with 50 to 70 people where perhaps ten people are brand new and didn’t know they could have a voice? How do we make sure they are heard and how do we manage different level so information and communication? How do you help with those folks taking the risk to be there and make sure that they feel like their voice matters? Connecting with new people the Department can’t do on its own that’s where connectors in the community, whether provider, member or legislator, have to use their networks to connect. Which leads us to what are agreements or reasons for the Council members both during the meeting and between meetings? Some stakeholders may not trust the Department but could feel comfortable with a provider, advocate. The



Department still wants to hear from Council members but how do we incorporate others who are entrenched in the work and hear new voices?

- Michelle paused the conversation here and asked for Council feedback on this new direction. Emily from Disability Law Colorado said in the past she had commented on the need to do a better job of getting the voice of others using the serves and believes this is a good way to capture those voices. Ann from DOLA shared that the Department does a great job on stakeholder engagement and had previously participated in a positive process on home modification redevelopment process. Jenny from Focus Care thanked Clarice for taking on the role of co-chair believing that her diverse background was a value to the Council. She also felt this shift is a wonderful opportunity for people from all the different areas of the program and would get everyone on the same page as well as creating open ended opportunity to talk about what's going on, especially now since there is a lot of unknown. Paige from Atlantis said it's exciting to bring more folks with different backgrounds and experience in the field to the table. Neal from Boulder County was excited about more communication about this program. He said many see this as a housing program and that hopefully the work on this group can help in messaging that and make it easier to correct at the onset. But also, a place to talk about what other transition services exist and talk to the overall public not just those in the facility. Michelle agreed with the feedback and stressed that Council members are conduits to getting the word out and that the Department is looking to Council members as messengers and stakeholders. She said the goal will be to get the process kicked off in September with the broader public but start having deeper conversations in August with the Council about structure and process.

5. Council Priority Review

- As part of the shift in the Council the Department is planning to develop and send a survey to the larger stakeholder community for input on the goals identified in the Council SWOT analysis but also to identify other priorities or barriers for the program moving forward. Clarice led a review of the four goals identified by the Council:
 - Improving general understanding of new services and new regulations for all stakeholders including TCAs, SNFs, Options Counselors, and other Transition Service.
 - Developing resource tools for providers and members after Transition Services end.
 - Helping eliminate rural barriers to providers including bringing more representation onto the Council from rural areas.



- Grievance process explanation including developing an FAQ and reasonable timelines/expectation sheet
- Clarice asked Council members if other issues existed that would be beneficial to add to a survey of stakeholders. Katy suggested housing as a potential area of discussion especially as the statewide housing navigation contract gets underway and better supporting members with “zero income”. This is a topic that had come up in previous meetings since members with “zero income” have a harder time finding housing and remaining independent in the community. Jenny from Focus Care suggested issues around isolation especially given COVID concerns. They are finding it hard to stay connected to members in the community and provide them with engagement. Paige from Atlantis suggested looking at how to support faster transitions to get members out of nursing homes. There have been many members who passed away in nursing home nationwide due to COVID. Finding ways to make the process more streamlined could help get individuals out of nursing homes faster. Jenny echoed the concern and noted that collecting documents for voucher information has been very difficult, especially if members can't leave their facilities. She asked if there was leniency from DOH/DOLA on those requirements. Ann shared that DOLA could make reasonable accommodations for those situations. Clarice asked the Council which of the issues discussed seemed best to focus on first. She shared that there seems to be a lot of the opportunities in the first topic related to training and the Council agreed.
- Matt shared that the team is anticipating the next meeting will be focused on fleshing out what a yearlong schedule might look like i.e. what topics will be covered in what month. With that, Matt hopes to have survey out to greater stakeholder community in August. The September meeting then would be used to start thinking of the first prioritized issue topic or may be used as a listening session. Katy added that the team is also looking at other communication systems to help engage stakeholders like developing a dedicated email list for Transition Services and creating a Google Group where information can be shared between stakeholders.

Adjourn

- Katy will send the Council a follow up email with the goals document for review prior to the August meeting. The next meeting will be another Google Hangout.

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