

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
Quarterly Council Meeting
January 9-10, 2020
Atlanta, Georgia

MINUTES

The mission of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities is to advance social change, public policy, and innovative practices that increase opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and families to thrive where they live, learn, work, play and worship in Georgia's communities

Present: Tom Connelly, Mark Crenshaw (for Dan Crimmins), Dorothy Harris, Teresa Heard, Heidi Moore, Evan Nodvin, Debbie Hibben, Nandi Isaac, Dana Lloyd (for Ruby Moore), Madeline Petrone, Mitzi Proffitt, Zo Stoneman, Aisha Williams (for Shawn Ryan), Brian Dowd (for Frank Berry)

Thursday, January 9, 2020

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mitzi Proffitt made the following announcements.

- April Council meeting is April 16-17 at the Georgian Terrace in Atlanta
- Introduction of Charlie Miller who began as the GCDD Legislative Advocacy Director on December 1.
- Thank you and goodbye to Kina Jackson whose last day is January 15
- It is expected that each Council member attend at least one GCDD sponsored advocacy days.
- The LEND program is accepting applications for the coming year
- Annual Autism conference will be in May
- Mitzi Proffitt asked for a motion to defer elections of officers until the April Council meeting.

Heidi Moore made the motion to defer election of officers until the April Council meeting. Zo Stoneman seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously by the Council members.

- GCDD members and staff reviewed a draft film being produced for GCDD about the Waiting List.

II. Discussion about Site

Eric Jacobson lead a discussion concerning issues members had with holding GCDD quarterly meetings at a site with a history of racism. Members met in small groups and a large group to voice their concerns and discuss alternatives and recommendations. **The members decided that once the contract with Stone Mountain is completed, GCDD will no longer hold meetings or events at this site. Staff will investigate other places to meet not including Stone Mountain. In addition, staff will investigate and suggest a ritual to take place at the beginning of each meeting concerning the history of the site and its relationship to marginalized people.**

III. Agency Updates

Aisha Williams GVRA:

Ms. Williams gave the following report about what is happening at the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. She reported that GVRA was required to cut \$1 million from its administrative budget plus the 4% required cut implemented by the Governor. There were questions about the impact of these cuts including questions about the loss of vocational rehabilitation counselors. What happens if the DD Counselor leaves? A: Team leader takes over.

Brian Dowd: Medicaid

Mr. Dowd gave the following report about what is happening at the Department of Community Health. He reported that the agency is still negotiating with the Electronic Visit Verification provider on a contract. DCH has received a Good Faith Exemption from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services that will allow DCH extra time to implement EVV.

Mr. Dowd reported on the status of the Statewide Home and Community Based Transition Plan. He reported that the document will be available for public comment in the next few weeks.

Mr. Dowd reported on the status of amendments to the NOW/COMP Waivers which will take place over the next couple of year.

IV. Direct Support Professionals

Mitzi Proffitt introduced Dr. Carol Britton Law from the University of Georgia. She reminded members that one of the most pressing issues that face people with disabilities and their families is finding the support staff that will provide quality support. This is an issue that has come up in the legislature, in DBHDD meetings and in casual conversation. GCDD commissioned Carol Britton Laws from IHDD to review what is happening with direct support professionals and to make recommendations about how the Council should address this important issue.

Dr. Britton Law reviewed the report she had produced and included recommendations for the Council to consider. She made the following comments:

- Economic Development agencies need to be part of the conversation about direct support professionals.
- One of the major issues is that direct support is not considered a profession by the U.S. or GA Departments of Labor. GCDD should consider advocating for the Bureau of Labor Statistics to create a category for direct support professionals.
- Salary and benefits for direct support professionals need to be addressed as a policy. This will help in retaining staff and reducing turnover.
- We need to examine a code of ethics and competency performance evaluations. States such as Tennessee, Ohio and New York have created portals and other tools to help recruit and retain direct support professionals.
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities is funding LaunchPad which is an effort to provide training and leadership skills for direct support professionals.

Dr. Britton Laws made the following recommendations:

- Advocate for standard occupation code category for direct support professionals.
- Support for a national quality forum for direct support professionals
- Innovative recruitment incentives to get people to come into the workforce. This might include discussion with immigrant rights organizations since many immigrants become direct support professionals.
- Competency based training
- Career ladder
- Increase reimbursement rates for professional training
- Increase reimbursement rates for cost of living and/or who has completed training
- Create a registry of direct support professionals that families and providers can access
- Create an Innovative Fund to support pilot projects

V. Legislative Update

Alyssa Lee and Charlie Miller presented an overview of the upcoming legislative session and the issues GCDD will be working on. In addition, they also announced the creation of a committee that will meet as needed to discuss public policy issues.

Friday, January 10, 2020

I. Old Business

Consent Agenda

- Minutes from October Meeting
- Quarterly Financial Report
- Quarterly Program Report
- DSP Report

Members asked about why the ADAPT advocacy effort was yellowed in the Dashboard report. This is because they lost an administrative assistant and the work was slowed by this person's absence.

Tom Connelly made a motion to adopt the consent agenda. Evan Nodvin seconded the motion. The Council voted to unanimously accept the motion to adopt the consent agenda.

Heidi Moore made a motion to adopt the report The Direct Support Professional Workforce Crisis: Challenges, State Approaches and Opportunities for Georgia. Debbie Hibben seconded the motion. The Council voted to unanimously accept the report.

Eric Jacobson presented the recommendations discussed the previous day about the Direct Support Professionals:

1. GCDD should use its funds to support an innovation fund for providers to examine better ways to recruit and retain direct support staff.
2. GCDD should support a Task Force to examine credentialing efforts in Georgia
3. GCDD should support legislation to develop a standard occupation code on the federal and state levels
4. GCDD should support increased funding for wage increases directed at staff.

Heidi Moore made a motion to adopt the recommendations presented by Eric Jacobson. Theresa Heard seconded the motion. Council members unanimously adopted the motion to implement the recommendations.

III. Federal Update

Alison Barkoff

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Alison Nodvin presented on the following federal issues:

- Permanent reauthorization of the Money Follows the Person program
- Congressional briefings on employment. GCDD should review what Colorado and Maine have done around phasing out of subminimum wage.
- Keep All Students Safe Act

III. Real Communities

Malieka Wells

10:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Malieka Wells presented on the current status of the Real Communities Partnership and Community dialogues.

IV. Meeting Evaluation

12:30 – 1:00 p.m.

Council members and staff had an opportunity to share about how they felt the quarterly meeting was conducted.

V. Adjourn

12:30 p.m.

*Items in bold require a vote