

Community Living Committee Minutes

August 10, 2023 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Rhonda Cox, Kelly Crosbie, Jonathan D'Angelo, Bryan Dooley, Dr. Joshua Gettinger, Brendon Hildreth, Jamila Little, Dr. Charlrean Mapson (Chair), Ryan Rotundo, Dale Stephenson

Members Absent: Senator Sydney Batch, Bethany Smith, Dr. Peggy Terhune

Staff Present: Irlanda Ruiz, La'Quadia Smith, Talley Wells, Shar'ron Williams, Philip Woodward

Guests Present: Sharif Brown, Caryn Cook (ASL Interpreter), Beth Field, Linda Kendall Fields, Jill Hinton, Jonathan Martinis, Michelle Merritt, Stacy Morgan, Sarah Potter, Devika Rao, Charles Rosseau, Jean Claude Ruiz, Vicki Smith, Kim Wison (ASL Interpreter)

Introduction:

Charlrean Mapson welcomed the committee and did an icebreaker focused on one word to describe each participant's summer.

Charlrean Mapson made a motion to approve the draft February Community Living Committee minutes, and Ryan Rotundo seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous approval.

Fiscal Update:

Shar'ron Williams provided the fiscal update.

Initiative Updates:

Making Alternatives to Guardianship a Reality in North Carolina

Linda Kendall Fields from UNC Cares and Jonathan Martinis from the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University presented. Linda said the initiative developed a Supported Decision-Making video available with Spanish audio and Spanish subtitles and a train-the-trainer toolkit. Jonathan Martinis asked the members to think of a word that describes Tylor Freeman from the video that Linda showed this morning, and he asked them to imagine themselves as Tylor with no rights because they don't know their rights. He said that if someone finds the Rethinking Guardianship website, they can learn about their rights. Linda added that this initiative has helped to achieve specific changes at the state's Developmental Centers but not yet at nursing facilities. Linda also said the initiative has focused on educating the state's Department of Social Services (DSS).

The committee received a question card asking:

What will the “full stop” do to someone who needs a new guardian and that person has near zero capability to make even “supported decisions?” My son just says “yes” to any question. Another person I know says “yes good” to any question or comment. Could we see an extreme pendulum swing to no guardianship?”

Jonathan pointed out that the law says to pause to ask the question. Linda added this work is not intended to be anti-guardianship but to eliminate unnecessary guardianships.

The committee received another question card asking:

How are alternatives to guardianship being presented to all individuals and parents who are of transition age (15-21)? I’ve come across many parents of young adults that aren’t even aware of guardianship in general or any alternatives.

Linda pulled out and displayed the posterboard that the initiative developed for a poster session at the Exceptional Children Conference last November to show the committee. Jonathan Martinis pointed out that Supported Decision-Making is not just a form.

Joshua Gettinger asked about a model that no longer depends on NCCDD support, and Linda replied that Senate Bill 308 (the Guardianship Rights Bill) passing and becoming a law will help.

Justice: Release, Reentry and Reintegration

Sharif Brown from the Alliance of Disability Advocates (Alliance) provided an update. He said the initiative has received 191 total referrals and completed 179 Individualized Reentry Plans (IRPs) with an 87.5% success rate. He said three individuals during this quarter have accepted legitimate legal job opportunities, but some of them have never worked in a 9:00-5:00 job in their lives. Sharif also said one landlord was willing to give an individual a second chance by providing housing. Vicki Smith said she is working on the scope of work for a new contract with the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services.

The committee received a comment card stating:

I have a friend who works in a prison. He wants to make accommodations for an inmate with disabilities, but he is not allowed to. What can he do?

Jamila Little said it is important to identify the facility and the warden. Darcy Hildreth responded that it is located in Pamlico County, and Jamila said she can discuss it with Gary Junker.

Joshua Gettinger said cost accountability would be nice to report occasionally to show the value of this initiative and how it saves the State of North Carolina money. He asked how Sharif will train the people who work with him, and Sharif responded that one of the two people who work with him has lived experience and one worked at InReach prior to doing this work. Sharif said this initiative may hire a third person to work with him. On the subject of gathering success stories, Sharif pointed out that cameras are not allowed in a prison facility, but they can film an individual's story after release.

Supported Living: A How-to Guidebook

Jen Waite, the Executive Director of Liberty Corner Enterprises, presented an update. She said the initiative has engaged more than 30 individuals with I/DD and families, and it has finished some initial podcast recordings. Philip Woodward pointed out that the initiative will lead a Money Follows the Person Lunch & Learn presentation on August 22nd, and Jen said this will be a question and answer (Q&A) session with at least four self-advocates and their families. Joshua Gettinger asked how the initiative is measuring the impact on families, and Jen replied that the initiative has developed a set of questions to guide the conversation; this initiative has found six questions particularly useful.

Meet The Need NC

Beth Field from the Mental Health Transformation Alliance's (MHTA) Leadership Alliance for Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LAND) program provided an update that included a PowerPoint. She provided an overview of the Lunch & Learn session the initiative is doing and the newsletter the initiative sends out as a follow-up to the Lunch & Learn sessions. She mentioned that the e-mail list has grown to more than 2,000 people. She also described how the initiative has developed important infrastructure such as a Policy Task Force. Beth also pointed out the low response rate to the General Assembly survey and the possibility of amending the survey and starting an advocacy and self-advocacy database. Joshua Gettinger asked if there are any survey question barriers, and Beth said the length (30 questions long) may be a barrier to receiving more responses.

Beth also discussed the Lived Experience Speaks Network and its two arms: an English-speaking one and a Spanish-speaking one. She shared a slide with planned activities for Year 3 of this initiative.

The committee received a comment card that it did not have a chance to discuss stating:

1. How many advisory members at end of Year 1 and how many planned for Year 2?
2. Who are other sponsoring/match partners contributing toward sustainability after NCCDD funds end?

Also, I encourage today's focus to be on Year 2 deliverables.

Future Investment Discussion

One-Year Community Living Mini-Grants

Philip Woodward provided an overview of the Community Living Mini-Grants Request for Applications (RFA) application process. Charlean Mapson asked if there are any questions related to this process. Joshua Gettinger said he would consider volunteering to review the applications.

Proactive Approaches to Justice

One of the members asked if there is a connection to broader mental health activities occurring. Jill Hinton asked where the pockets of need are in North Carolina. Kelly Crosbie said 30 counties have funded diversion programs. Charlean said she had a conversation with Jamir Jumoke, who works in New Hanover County, about people with I/DD not being able to control what they do. Jonathan D'Angelo said in July there was a meet your police officer in your neighborhood event. Rhonda Cox pointed out that multiple proactive approaches to justice programs are being funded right now, and she shared an example: Vaya Health funds a training in their catchment area. Jill suggested making access to programs consistent across the state and not just where Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCOs) are funding it. Joshua pointed out how LME/MCOs have responsibility for mental health and I/DD, and they should include I/DD in mental health trainings. He added that there is a benefit to the wider community because helping people with I/DD helps everyone else. The group discussed utilizing an inventory of resources.

Wrap Up

Charlean Mapson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned by 3:30 p.m.