

# **District South (Sierra Vista) ANNUAL REPORT**

July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019

Independent Oversight Committee

**INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.** This report reviews the activities of the Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) based in Sierra Vista serving the southeastern counties of Arizona. The current IOC is the extension of the Human Rights Committee (HRC) established in that area in 2016. The IOC had four members when administration of the committee was transferred to the Arizona Department of Administration (ADOA) in August of 2018 and currently has expanded to 11 members who meet monthly.

**ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES.** The IOC provides protective oversight of the human rights of members receiving services from the Department of Economic Security Division of Developmental Disabilities (DES/DDD) due to certain disabling conditions. The IOC reviews reports of service to determine that no human rights violations have occurred. If violations are suspected the IOC requests further investigation and reports to the proper authorities, if substantiated. The IOC completed and approved guidelines for committee procedures in November of 2018, which were reviewed and then approved by the ADOA in January of 2019. The guidelines provide for a chairperson, vice chairperson, terms of office and reelection, and requirements for continued membership. All requirements for government meetings are included in the guidelines.

**THE COMMITTEE.** Aggressive efforts were made by the District South Volunteer Coordinator, Donna Marie Terranova, and by committee members to recruit additional members this year. The committee has spent much effort on the approval and orientation of new members who were new to the work of the committee. As the year progressed and more members became comfortable with their role, the attention has shifted to identifying issues that are felt to need attention. The effort continues to recruit persons with legal, social work, and criminal justice experience to complete the recommended roster of members, which now stands at 11. The committee was assisted by the Division of Developmental Disabilities Liaison, Eric Houghtalin, and by the quality assurance professional provided through DES/DDD, Mike Valdez.

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The committee functions well primarily because of the invaluable and competent assistance given by these individuals. Each member of the committee brings their interest and expertise to the table and raises important and meaningful questions to the discussions. The committee has developed a form to document concerns they have about specific Incident Reports (IRs) and this form is given to the quality assurance person who investigates and reports back the next month. Additional aids to data understanding are being developed. Training in Article 9 and incident reporting was requested was provided by the quality assurance professional and the DES Office of Professional Development when all the new committee members were approved. Extensive computer-generated reports are provided each month which allow tracking of treatment centers and members from month to month. ADOA representatives attend committee meeting electronically when there is new information for the committee. Each committee member has information about how to expand training through the state internet system. The committee has undergone changes in leadership during the year due to health issues and but continues to meet these challenges without disruption. The DDD Liaison, Eric Houghtalin, has smoothly steered the committee through these changes and goals are being visualized and planned as the committee becomes more experienced.

**CONCERNS AND ACTIONS.** The issues that have been raised as the committee became more experienced include:

1. The information provided in the Incident Reports the committee reviews is very often insufficient to understand what happened during the incident. The description of what was done to resolve or follow up the incident is very often lacking or insufficient. The vendors should be responsible for making sure reporting is sufficient.
2. The number and complexity of medication errors is of concern and reports do not make clear what was and is done to rectify or prevent errors.
3. The difficulty with clear communication about events and actions may be due to the limited educational level required of caregivers and

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suggests that supervision is not supplementing or being corrective of this situation which is the result of the low level of pay provided.

4. The monthly information that is provided by the Liaison's office is complex and it is difficult to interpret. It is unclear which treatment sites are in Sierra Vista's purview and which relate to the Tucson (District South) IOCs.
5. The committee has been welcomed to attend the Program Review Committee (PRC) meetings monthly and several persons are planning to attend. This will help a great deal with the information gap the committee has experienced.
6. The widespread and continued use of psychoactive drugs, primarily antidepressants, is of concern. There are questions about the procedures and qualifications of persons providing the diagnostic data underlying what appears to be medication regimes lasting many years and involving multiple drugs at the same time. There appears to be a need for closer knowledgeable communication between treatment staff and medical staff.
7. Coordination with the PRC Chairperson, Barbara Carty, may provide opportunity to resolve some of these concerns and the committee is working on this.
8. The committee plans to attend the statewide meetings to be knowledgeable about other issues of concern. Mary Haynes was to attend by phone in January but was given the wrong contact code.
9. Committee members want to work out the permission routes needed to be able to visit some of the treatment programs in the area and to become more familiar with the vendors. There is also interest in visiting the Arizona Training Program at Coolidge, but permission has not been obtained. The IOC will work with the DDD Liaison, Eric Houghtalin, to obtain permission in the coming year.
10. There are some situations that are clearly detrimental to the well-being and safety of the member, but which have not been responsive to intervention by the Adult Protective Services.

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11. The problems of low compensation to the caregivers and supervisors in treatment settings is seen a major barrier to improving the self esteem, joy, and security of the members served. Committee members are discussing ways and means to offer support and incentive to the caregivers and supervisors who live and work with the members daily. In this role the committee would become a source or support and encouragement in addition being judge and critic.
12. It would be very helpful to have a format for the ADOA annual report including the specific data that should be maintained and reported.

### **CURRENT DISTRICT SOUTH (SIERRA VISTA) COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

- Chere Solorzano (SV IOC Chairperson)
- Jerry Regan (SV IOC Vice-Chairperson)
- Mary Haynes (SV IOC Member)
- Margarita Fate (SV IOC Member)
- Amy Schroeder (SV IOC Member)
- Keith Jansen (SV IOC Member)
- Gloria Brunell (SV IOC Member)
- Patsy Sartain (SV IOC Member)
- Vickie McDonald (SV IOC Member)
- Sheri York (SV IOC Member)
- Michelle Talley (SV IOC Member)

### **CURRENT STATE OF ARIZONA STAFF ROSTER**

- Eric Houghtalin (DDD IOC Liaison)
- Richard Kautz (DDD Chief Advocate)
- Mike Valdez (DDD Quality Assurance Retired/Volunteer)
- Larry Allen (ADOA Independent Oversight Committee Manager)
- Veronica Peralta (ADOA Compliance Manager)
- Barbara Carty (DDD District South PRC Chairperson)

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## **INCIDENT REPORTS AND BEHAVIOR PROGRAMS REVIEWED.**

- September 2018 – No behavior plans reviewed. Reviewed 2 closed and 5 open IRs
- November 2018 – Behavior plans reviewed. Reviewed 9 closed and 3 open IRs
- December 2018 – Behavior plans reviewed. Reviewed 3 closed and 1 open IRs
- January 2019 - No behavior plans reviewed. Reviewed 57 closed and 1 open IRs
- February 2019 – No behavior plans reviewed. Reviewed 21 closed and 2 open IRs
- March 2019 - No behavior plans reviewed. Reviewed 59 closed and 6 open IRs
- April 2019 – Behavior plans reviewed. Reviewed 50 closed and 2 open IRs
- May 2019 – Behavior plans reviewed in Program Review Committee. Reviewed 26 closed and 9 open IRs
- June 2019 – Behavior plans reviewed in Program Review Committee. Reviewed 91 closed and 7 open IRs.