



**Arizona Department of Administration
Arizona Department of Economic Security
Division of Developmental Disabilities**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes via teleconference
April 15, 2020 - 10:10am to 12:00pm**

Welcome and Introductions

Attendance via teleconference:

- **Karen Van Epps** (District Central Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairperson)
- **Suzanne Hessman** (District East IOC Chairperson)
- **De Freedman** (District West IOC Chairperson)
- **Jessica Richards** (District South: Tucson IOC Co-Chairperson)
- **Larry Allen** (Arizona Dept of Administration (ADOA) IOC Manager)
- **Sophie Legaspi** (United Health Care Community Plan (UHCCP) IOC Liaison)
- **Laurie Ganzermiller** (United Health Care Community Plan (UHCCP))
- **Amy Pawlowski** (United Health Care Community Plan (UHCCP) Executive Director)
- **Vera Kramarchuk** Mercy Care IOC Liaison)
- **Zane Garcia-Ramadan** (Interim Assistant Director for Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD))
- **Michelle Pollard** (National Core Indicator (NCI) Liaison)
- **Jeffrey Yamamoto** (DDD IOC Liaison)
- **Eric Houghtalin** (DDD IOC Liaison)
- **Richard Kautz** (DDD Chief Advocate)

Public Attendance: None

Call to the Public

No members of the public were present at the meeting.



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District Updates

District East

Suzanne Hessman: Informed that District East IOC has been met with teleconference for the last meeting. They are concerned about the group homes during pandemic. Especially when it comes to having supplies and food. Jeffrey has given to them the links for the COVID-19 updates at the DDD website which details what DDD is doing. This is OK but still hearing that the group homes are still short on food and supplies.

District Central

Karen Van Epps: Commented that she is not getting any information from DDD except for the Thursday night Town Hall meetings. Most of the concern is parents looking to use family for respite providers for their members. She has been attending the Program Review Committee (PRC) by phone. She is concerned on the possible Abuse and Neglect that maybe happening in the community. Concerned on the lack of staffing in the group homes.

District North

Eric Houghtalin: answered for the chair Cynthia McKinnon that they are working on the right format to have the meeting, whether teleconference or live. They changed their meeting day and time to the 3rd Wednesday of the month and later in the afternoon. This will conflict with the Quarterly meeting, so the quarterly meeting has been asked to move day if possible. This is on the agenda to do it.

District South: Sierra Vista

Eric Houghtalin: answered for the chair Chere Solórzano that they cancelled their April meeting as did District North. They have been working on trying to develop a reward system for Providers who go above and beyond for their members.



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District South (Tucson)

Jessica Richards: Advised that they hadn't held a meeting since the beginning of December. They are still looking to fill their committee to 15. Jeffrey added that they are having a teleconference meeting on 4/22/20 and finding another Co-chair is on the agenda.

District West

Jeffrey Yamamoto stated that De Freedman would join the call as soon as she could because she had to attend an emergency meeting. The District West is concerned on the DDD response to COVID-19 and the members. They are frequently asking the Division for updates. They have been given opportunities to visit the website and to participate in the Town Halls. She wanted to know if there is a preparedness policy plan in place for DDD. When **De Freedman** joined the meeting, she added that they have been trying to work on better relations with the District Program Manager (DPM) Barbara Crawford but has not really been too successful in getting her to other than one meeting. She is concerned with the rights of the members not being violated during the pandemic. She is stating that the public, she is talking to, says DDD is not being shown in a good light.

Arizona Department of Administration Updates

Larry Allen: advised the committee members that ADOA is being utilized to help other agencies in their response to COVID-19. He is been charged to keep up with Governor Ducey's executive orders as it pertains to the DD community. Healthcare training can now be "on the job" training to get more healthcare workers in place. Requirements for systematic checking for symptoms upon the entering of group facilities. He will forward the Executive orders of the Governor to the group. **Karen Van Epps** asked if the Governor is requiring mask for all group home providers? **Larry Allen** responded "Yes". **Eric Houghtalin** asked if the Governor specified which type of masks, N-95 or cloth? **Larry Allen** was unsure but would forward the executive orders which may have specifics.



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Health Plans and NCI Updates

Jeffrey Yamamoto: Informed the committee members that he had forwarded some questions from De Freedman that may be able to be answered by the health plans. The Health Plan liaisons are going to answer the questions as best as they can,

Sophie Legaspi, Laurie Ganzermiller and Amy Pawlowski: from United Health Care Community Program (UHCCP) were on the line to answer the questions. Sophie began by stating that she will have the details of the questions and answers forwarded to Jeffrey for adding to the minutes. One of the questions from the chairs was whether UHCCP has partnered with DDD on providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the members. She said she would need more clarity to the question to effectively answer the question. She hasn't heard that DDD has requested for any PPEs. She also hasn't heard of any collaboration between UHCCP and DDD concerning PPEs. Should there be any word of PPE and DDD she will contact the DDD IOC liaisons. **Richard Kautz** indicated that Zane may be able to answer the question when he joins the call. With regards to questions concerning the first point of contact information for members. Sophie said she would send out the Nurse help line, emotional help line and the DDD/ UHCCP mailbox address. The mailbox is monitored by the UHCCP 24 hour and 7 days a week, to answer any questions from the public or DDD. The next question deals with the advocacy with a member who may have Corona Virus and having someone in the hospital with them. If there are any barriers to this the concerned parties can contact UHCCP and together they may be able work out something with the facility with reasonable accommodations. The last question is that is there was an ask for Telehealth information and which disciplines were able to accommodate in this fashion. So far as she knows most of the behavioral health can be done by telehealth. UHC has asked that all its providers have some sort of access through telehealth and UHC is asking its members to reach out to their providers to find out how they prefer to administer telehealth. She reminded the chairs that there are advocates and liaisons who are available to answer questions and help the members during this uncertain time. They can be reached through the help lines and through the UHCCP DDD mailbox 24/7.

Jeffrey Yamamoto asked for the email address for the UHCCP DDD mailbox for members and parents to call into. Sophie responded with the address: UHCCPDD@UHC.com .

At the time of the posting of the minutes, UHCCP had not provided their official response to the questions sent to them by the DDD liaison.



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Vera Kramarchuk: Mercy Care will send out the contact information to the group for the nurse line and other information. Here is the phone information, Mercy Care Member Services 1800-564-5465. For the inpatient hospitalization of members, the practice is to let the Health Care Case manager know and they can work with the hospital in specific cases. **Karen Van Epps** asked if someone could request more time with a patient member. Vera commented it would be on a case to case basis through the case manager, Member services or her, as the Ombudsman for Mercy Care. Telehealth for the members are available for those services which can be done through that modality. Mercy Care is following all the CDC and ADHS guidelines for all its members.

Michelle Pollard: NCI has posted the results of last year's survey. The survey for this year is being mailed out to the 10% of the member population around 1500 surveys. In-person surveys are being discontinued until the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. The results of this year's survey will be affected by the COVID-19 and the help which can be given to the members. On the survey there is plenty of room for comments about the handling of the self-quarantine.

DDD Actions Update

Zane Garcia-Ramadan: Began with "thank you" for inviting him to talk during the meeting. He stated that with the current COVID-19 going on he would dive into what the Division has done and is doing for the members. The Division staff has been taking the COVID-19 recommendations from the CDC and ADHS very seriously and most of the staff is working from home or remotely. The driving concern is the health and safety of the members, family and the professionals who work with them. Trying to maintain the continuity of care for the members during this difficult time. DDD is monitoring the service and delivery of the essential services for the members and taking care of any problems as they take place. He wanted to give a brief overview of the times and actions that DDD has taken to ensure the health and safety of the members, their families and providers. On March 11th, DDD started with ensuring that all vendor agencies had their "pandemic provisions plan" in order and are following it. On March 16th, DDD Support Coordinators stopped doing face to face meeting with their members to avoid getting and transmitting Corona Virus to them. On March 17th DDD stopped all onsite monitoring visits except for when addressing health and safety. The increase usage of Telehealth was authorized around this time. Day treatment programs (DTA) have not been closed by DDD after a 70% response that they wanted to stay open. The remaining members families who opted not to take their members to DTA could make arrangements and get their services done in their homes. In late March DDD was working on guidelines



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for group homes during COVID-19. DDD was hearing of problems with the guidance for nursing home and intermediate care facilities were not relevant to group home practices. DDD has teamed with other states and the group homes to come up with a guidance for group homes which is more tailored to their normal practices. This started on March 29th and continues to grow. It is now an 18-page document in support of the group home practices. DDD is now holding weekly meetings with all group home agencies, Adult and Child Developmental Homes to discuss pain points and make further improvements on the document. On April 8th DDD got approval to allow an adult to be paid as a provider in the home for a child if they pass the qualifications to be a provider. There has also been a respite benefit increase in hours from 600 to 720 for the current billing year. Training and certifications have been changed to allow for quicker use of provider staff if they are not working with behavioral members. DDD has been also trying to outreach to the community and not just posting to the website. Having weekly Town Halls, weekly technical support calls to Qualified Vendor Agencies (QVA), state planning council meetings, daily updates to all DDD staff including all support coordinators and social media updates,

In response to the questions on the agenda; Shortages – The QVA should continue to request supplies through their normal supply chains. If still unable to secure needed supplies the QVA will contact the County Health Department and document their attempts to obtain supplies. The County will then be able to assist the QVA. DDD does not directly supply QVA's. DDD did increase the funding that QVAs are experiencing with increase pricing for the common supplies. For Resources Questions: Resources sections on the DDD website will answer the resources available to public and QVAs. QVA Trainings are also addressed there.

Dee Freedman asked Zane if the processes by DDD is following a preparedness plan. Zane replied that there is a Continuity of Operations Plan in place and DDD is working daily to improve on the plan because of the new precedence. Food security was brought up and that DDD will respond through the Quality unit or Support coordination if the group homes report difficulties. Since this is a health and security problem, DDD would most likely help the group home in discussions around different menu options since only certain foods seem to be scarce. The increase funding of all supplies would also support the food supply issue. To date, DDD has not been informed of any group homes without food for their members. **Dee Freedman** informed Zane that the optics concerning efforts for the members from DDD is not good in the community. The Town Halls do not seem to directly answer questions from the public. Zane thanked De for the comment and would try to further elaborate to the public better what DDD is doing. **Suzanne Hessman** responded that she had requested the Pandemic Plan from that the facility that her daughter attends and they questioned "why". Afterwards they sent to her a hastily written



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plan. Suzanne wants to know why the contract information isn't being followed at the end user facilities. Zane commented that he had heard of some instances of insufficient Pandemic Plans for group homes. This is the reason for the new QVA guidance document and weekly meetings that are being held to ensure that the congregate facilities have all the information possible to properly function. All facilities will have to create a new Pandemic Plans and are to include COVID-19 responses which are due by Friday. DDD will review and ensure that they have enough actions/planning needed during this pandemic. **Suzanne Hessman** suggest that DDD communicate with the grocery store to maybe allow smaller group homes to shop during selected hours like seniors do to make sure that they can get the supplies they need. Zane thought that this was a good idea and would follow up with that idea. **De Freedman** asked about if a member is hospitalized that they can have someone stay with them for comfort and communications. Is DDD reaching out to the Health Plans to ask if this can happen. Zane responded that they are in daily contact with the frontline health providers any new issues with members are brought up to their attention. He also asked for any type of clarification from the Health Plan liaisons on the call. **Sophie Legaspi** answered that UHC has a dedicated team of DDD advocates on duty at the website and with the nursing hotline and any questions will be answered and followed up with them. **De Freedman** asked if DDD could have the support coordination teams to reach out to their members with updated contact information and their supervisors' information so that they can contact them in a crisis. Zane replied that DDD is working on that and that most of the Support Coordinators have already done this.

What are available resources for members

This was answered during the DDD Actions Update. This information is available on the DDD website "DDD actions related to COVID-19" Resources

What is DDD doing to address shortages for providers

This was answered during the DDD Actions Update. This information is available on the DDD website "DDD actions related to COVID-19" Resources- "COVID-19 QVA Guidance for Congregate Settings"



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**What is DDD doing to address training for increase behaviors in DDD
managed facilities**

*This was answered during the DDD Actions Update. This information is available on the DDD website
"DDD actions related to COVID-19" Resources*

Office of Individual and Family Affairs (OIFA) DDD Updates

Richard Kautz: Thanked the chairs for their time and dedications. He began with stating that the new approval for habilitation and employment service which Zane has mentioned has been passed. The OIFA has a new Community Engagement person named Shawn Thompson join the team. Look out for the stimulus check which started today. Town hall meeting on every Thursday at 6:00pm. All of the OIFA team members are working from home but are still available by phone and email.

Roundtable Discussion

De Freedman wanted to add for the next meeting to have the topic of IOC begin preparing for another pandemic by tapping into the community resources and begin making good relationships with those resources for DDD.

Next Meeting Date/Time/ Discussion and Vote

The committee Chairs voted and agreed that next statewide meeting will take place on Thursday July 16, 2020 at 10:00 am. The Third Wednesday of the month has been the previous scheduled time but now the meeting will be held on the third Thursday of the month. The change is due to the District North monthly meetings were changed and would always be on the same day as the Statewide Quarterly Meeting. A motion was made by De Freedman and seconded by Suzanne Hessman. All 4 chairs present vote "aye" and the motion carried to make the Quarterly Statewide meetings occur on the 3rd Thursday of the 3rd month.



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Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm by **Jeffrey Yamamoto**, due to the facilitator having technical difficulties. The next meeting will take place by teleconference unless stay at home orders have been lifted. The meeting will be held on Thursday July 16, 2020 at 10:00 am.

The minutes here are an overall summary of the meeting as best summarized by the DDD IOC Liaison Jeffrey Yamamoto. Recording of the meeting is available upon request.