



**Arizona Department of Administration
Arizona Department of Economic Security
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
Statewide Independent Oversight Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes**

January 20, 2021 - 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

This meeting took place by electronic means due to concerns about Covid-19. There was not a physical location.

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order by Robert “Bob” Malloy. The date was January 20, 2021, at 10:05 am. The address of the meeting was Virtual, no physical address.

Welcome and Introductions

Present:

- **Bob Malloy** (District North Chairperson) (Facilitator)
- **Karen Van Epps** (District Central Chairperson)
- **Suzanne Hessman** (District East Chairperson)
- **De Freedman** (District West Chairperson)
- **Bonner Raskob** (District South:Tucson Co-Chairperson)
- **Linda Mecham** (District Central Member)
- **Sarah McGovern** (District East Vice-Chairperson)
- **Jeffery Yamamoto** (DDD IOC Liaison)
- **Octavia Lamb** (DDD IOC Liaison)
- **Richard Kautz** (DDD Chief Advocate)
- **Leah Gibbs** (DDD OIFA Administrator)
- **Barbara Picone** (OIFA Program Manager)
- **Susanne Arnold** (IOC Administrator)
- **Zane Garcia-Ramadan** (Assistant Director of DDD)
- **Michelle Pollard** (DDD NCI Coordinator)
- **Larry Allen** (ADOA liaison)
- **Mary DeCarlo** (PRC Manager)

Health Plan Present:



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- **Janet Holtz** (Mercy Care)
- **Summer Kamal** (Mercy Care)
- **Vera**
- **Sophie Stevenson** (United Healthcare)

Public Attendance:

- **No public attendance**

Call to the Public

Facilitator did not make a call to the public

DDD Updates: Assistant Director Zane Garcia-Ramadan

Zane Garcia-Ramadan Updated some of the key work being done at DDD. He wanted to give a COVID response information first. He informed the DDD member population is 44,880. For positivity and death rate is lower than the general public. DDD member COVID-19 numbers are 213,000 positive report and 63 member deaths reported by COVID-19. It has been more than a month since last death.

Zane Garcia-Ramadan stated DDD has been having difficulties flexibilities for services being delivered. Respite hours have been increased from 600 to 720 hours until September 30,2021 and Home delivered meals has been extended until April/2021, but as COVID-19 continues to be on the rise then home delivered meals will be extended again.

Zane Garcia-Ramadan continued with the COVID-19 vaccination distribution update that Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs), Nursing Care facilities and Group homes are included in the CDC partnership for



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long term care program and has been paired with either Walgreens or CVS pharmacies to come and give the vaccination as part of Phase 1A and scheduling times to administer for all staff and members that want the vaccine. Many of the that Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) and Group homes that have received the first dose of the vaccination and is scheduled to receive their second dose in a few weeks. He is in hopes that all groups homes will have the first dose done by February. All DDD direct care workers are considered as healthcare workers and is part of the Phase 1A and will have to sign up for an appointment and will be able to be vaccinated. Zane stated he could not clarify about what phase that the families of members and direct care workers outside the home can be vaccinated. He advised for further information on COVID-19 information to view a posted document made by the Self-advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center to reference and that everyone go on their individual county websites for vaccination updates.

Zane Garcia-Ramadan stated the Augmentative Communication Device transitioned to the health insurances started as of January 1st, 2021. If there were any requests submitted before the January 1st transition will continue to be handled by DDD and any requests made after the 1st will be handled by either Mercy Care or United Healthcare.

Zane Garcia-Ramadan stated that Support Coordination continue to conduct meetings virtually and the main focus is to view the DDD members either virtually or if the DDD members cannot be seen virtually to schedule a visit to see the member in person.

Zane Garcia-Ramadan stated that that new provider policy was posted on the use and storage of marijuana in residential settings for public comment and was posted on January 13, 2021 and will be open until February 3, 2021.

Zane Garcia-Ramadan stated that on December 24,2020 a new rate book was published for providers with the effective date of January 1,2021 and it addresses rate increase in minimum wage that took effect on January 1, 2021. On January 8,2021 a temporary rate book was published, and services will be delivered between January 1,2021 and March 31, 2021 and it is being used to address the challenges and concerns to recruit staff during the pandemic and 70% of the rate increase must go directly to the care workers.



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DDD is continuing to work on the abuse and neglect taskforce recommendations and are working with self-advocates and stakeholders about implementing a process on required training on abuse and neglect will take place on a recurring basis

Zane Garcia-Ramadan lastly stated that DDD is aware of the recent concerns expressed by the IOC members how the system is working the team has been looking at the processes internally to determine how to meet the identified gaps that were brought forward and there has been delays with getting out Incident reports timely, but there are resources now available to make this process timely. DDD is currently 60 days behind and anticipate being caught up within 4-6 weeks and the IOC members should be receiving incident reports within 30 days once DDD is caught up and are working on a technical enhancement for both DDD staff and IOC members to make the incident report process more efficient.

District Updates

District East

Suzanne Hessman stated that the electronic IR platform has been going very well and appreciated all the hard work from Jeffrey and the IOC team to put this platform together and it much easier and faster than the old way. They had one member resign and may have 1 potential member. They are still working on the Annual Report.

District South (Tucson)

Bonner Raskob She is excited about the electronic IR platform. They have may have potential members joining but is looking forward to more recruits.

District Central



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Karen Van Epps Prior to the pandemic they have had a good relationship with the quality assurance department, but since the pandemic they have been having more difficulties with incident reports. Committee members are proposing in their annual report that redactions for incident reports and behavioral plans are not necessary and conversations have been held with Senator Barto about this and she is looking into legislation and propose that DDD examine situations that fall under abuse and neglect categories. A complex care unit be developed with UnitedHealth Care and Mercy Care to coordinate services that are needed amongst DDD members.

Karen Van Epps Also stated that the committee feels that guardianship is important to help DDD members make decisions and that it is not easy to be obtained and does not need a law in place.

Karen Van Epps Nursing homes continues to be an ongoing issue and that they are not appropriate for long term care members. Article 9 still has not been revised, there are still concerns of wages to direct care providers. Families cannot connect with each other because the lack of advocacy organizations.

Karen Van Epps continued that many of the concerns that the committee had discussed last year are the same.

District West

De Freedman District West continue to have the same concerns that were discussed last year. The district program manager that attended a committee meeting has not been heard from again and the committee has no way to contact her. There have been communication concerns with the Program Revenue Committee, and they request that committee members participate more in PRC meetings, but do not having a small number of committee members they are not able to attend the PRC meetings. The committee request an Online system for incident reports and is looking forward to the electronic IR platform. There are concerns about meeting Quorum and in hopes for more committee members soon.

District South (Sierra Vista)



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No representation from District South Sierra Vista: No update was given.

District North

Bob Malloy One of their long-standing committee members resigned from the committee in December and they had a member pass away last year. District North currently has 3 members and Bob recruited his wife. Because of their committee numbers they do not have time to review behavioral plans. He also is looking forward to discussing the new electronic platform for Incident reports.

Division of Developmental Disabilities Updates

Leah Gibbs and Richard Kautz Leah Gibbs stated that she is doing her best to attend meetings to be available to answer questions and will be looking into individual annual reports and report back to the committees on the actions that they can take. **Richard Kautz** welcome Octavia Lamb to the OFIA team as the new IOC liaison. Jeffrey and the OIFA team have worked very hard on the electronic platform for incident reports and in hopes that this saves time on receiving incident reports and would appreciate any feedback on progress with the shared drive.

Barbara Picone No other updates

Arizona Department of Administration Updates



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Larry Allen wanted update from on the IOC questions about agencies, policies or programs that the committees submit and written request to the IOC liaisons and Larry Allen will be informed as well. So that all concerns, questions, and outcomes can be tracked, and it provides the agency to provide a written response in a timely manner. Then the IOC members can take a vote and submit a recommendation to the agency or appeal the decision and their next calendar meeting.

Larry Allen would like the 2019-20-year end reports to submitted to him by all the committees as soon as possible and the 2020-21 end of year reports are back on state fiscal year to be started in July and submitted by October/2021.

Q: If the committees have any questions or concerns who are they elevated to?

A: All questions and concerns are to be discussed at the committee meetings and the committee vote and submit the written request to the IOC liaisons and the IOC liaisons will elevate to the ADOA liaison.

ProPublica Article

Karen Van Epps Discussed the article that was published in December/2020 by Amy Silverman for Arizona Daily Star and she agreed with all that was stated in the article and hopes that all committees will have more support and that there is a plan to address all the concerns that were stated in the article and Senator Barto is working with committee members on the effect of the abuse and neglect committee.

Bob Malloy stated that the article destroyed the North committee and members left the committee and they are disappointed in Arizona. The redaction process has made the role of the committee less effective.

Linda Mecham Feels for all IOC committee members, all members have dedicated their time and they are trying to protect all vulnerable individuals in the state of Arizona.



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De Freedman stated that she agrees and stands by all comments that were made by her fellow committee members. They made their concerns very clear last year but nothing has been done by the government, but all the members on the committee are there because they want to be even though they are frustrated.

Karen Van Epps spoke about a comment that was made by the executive director of an agency about committee members are “only volunteers” and it is very frustrating that committee members are looked at this way when those that speak negatively about the committee, they don’t know anything about the committees and what they do and the time that they give. The point that was made it is okay for staff to have all the information and the committee members cannot and this was a slap in the face to all the committee members because all the time members put in for the people they serve.

Linda Mecham stated the concern is with direct care staff and agencies and that they are not long term staff and DDD cannot stop direct care staff workers who are fired from being hired at other agencies.

Home Based Medical Models for Members

De Freedman There was a study that was done that she shared and feels that it is important to look at the background on service delivery for 90% of DDD members who reside in a family home and to provide input from committee members in understanding the delivery systems and the models and make recommendations to improve the system.

Jeffrey Yamamoto emailed the link to all the members to view this study

Bob Malloy stated that legislator Blackman who serves District North attend a district North meeting and it was stated that most of DDD members cannot vote and voting has power, and many legislators ignore members with disabilities. Has legislators feel that many people with disabilities can make major



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decisions and therefore does not pay attention to them because the members that that they serve are not voters.

Karen Van Epps stated that Senator Barto was elected to office and she understands what the committee concerns, and frustrations are. The problem is that there use to be advocacy groups that spoke to legislators that would communicate with each other and DDD no longer has them anymore and no one knows each other and if everyone from legislation, DDD, and the committees knew each other than the committees may have more communication and get together and talk about there concerns and frustrations.

Karen Van Epps stated that if DDD reimbursed for mileage for committee members than more people would be inclined to join the committees and have more input.

Zane Garcia-Ramadan stated that DDD will look into having mileage reimbursed for committee members and to make the committee members aware that there are DDDAC Public forums and the next one is February 10th and is up for suggestions to provide more updates from town hall meetings and public forums.

Karen Van Epps people are afraid to speak when they are in a room full of DDD personal and there needs to be a place where parents to get together and talk and people are fearful of speaking about their concerns because they are afraid of loosing their services. The biggest problem is parents that serve the DDD population have no one to speak to.

Linda Mecham stated that she served on the DDDAC as well for a few years and they had public forums every other month and the way they invited people was by mail, contacted Day programs so they can notify parents by email. Concerns were heard at the forums; the issues are still the same but now people are afraid to speak up because they are afraid of losing their services.

Zane Garcia-Ramadan stated that the DDDAC are looking for ways to increase attendance out the public forums and apricates the advice on how to inform people in the community about the scheduled forums



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Possible Legislative actions with Senator Barto

“throughout the minutes legislation was discussed in other agenda items”

Karen Van Epps suggested that more people reach out to Senator Barto so that she can be aware of the concerns with committee and DDD members and needs to hear this so she can support the committee members. Senator Barto is also supporting the behavioral health IOC’s to address any concerns because Senator Barto is willing to assist IOC members

IR Platform Update and incident reports

Karen Van Epps stated her main concern is that members have not received the incident reports and have the ability to work with DDD and with Dr. Peterson who is in charge of quality management who was going to look into an investigation on incident reports and whatever the results of the investigation was, would be looked into internally along with APS. All that is requested is that when an incident is read, committee members feel confident that something is or has been happening and want DDD to fix the incident that day. And it is a waste of time to receive incident reports that are a year old. She is open to the new IR electronic platform and see how it works.

Discussion on COVID-19 Vaccine Groups

Bob Malloy The vaccination process has been a disaster and at the rate that the vaccinations are going he heard that it would take five years (for everyone who wants to receive the vaccination) go through the entire population and hopes that President Biden has a better plan. It is the governs that are controlling the



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vaccine distribution and the federal government. The CDC added that individuals with Down Syndrome was added to the increase list, but only 10 states have added this, and Arizona is not on this list. The concern is individuals with Down syndrome has not been included in any of the phases and this is a real concern for those that want to be vaccinated. There are no vaccinations being provided for those that live in Yavapai county for Phase 1B and there are barely any vaccinations for Phase 1A.

Zane Garcia-Ramadan will follow up on Bob's concern about the increased risk list being added. For those DDD members that are currently not Long-term care there is not specified what Phase they are in. It is the assumption that individuals with developmental disabilities will be lumped together in Phase 1C were there is a category that says, "individuals at higher risk for severe illness". There is a work group that is being formed to address and come up with a system that can be administered for ALTCS members. There are around 60,000 ALTC members in Arizona and about 35,000 are DDD members and there are going to participation from AHCCCS, medical personal, representatives from the health plans and brainstorm on ways to get vaccines out quicker to ALTCS members.

Bob Malloy stated that Phase 1B is a large group and they ran out of vaccines over the weekend and it is looking like Phase 1C will not start until December and can the state wait that long for individuals that have an increased risk?

Zane Garcia-Ramadan The ADHS website is projecting that Phase 1B would be complete by spring 2021 and do not know what Month it is, but the hope is Phase 1C should be open by April or May and hopefully sooner. It will be determined on how many doses are going to be available and how quickly they will be distributed.

Bob Malloy continued to say that the problem is that there are more doses out there than there are people and in District North there are no vaccination centers at all other than the hospitals and only the hospital workers are receiving the vaccine. The group homes in District North has not received any calls from pharmacies to schedule appointment to receive the vaccine.

De Freedman In the meetings with AHCCCS are they discussing reasonable accommodations being made for DDD members?



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Zane Garcia-Ramadan Yes that is why they are trying to separate the group of ALTCS members because they recognize that there will be different needs that will need to be accommodated in order for the vaccines to be administered and this is the primary reason why they are separating this group so they can work through any difficulties.

Karen Van Epps accessing ADHS website is not easy and what are individuals supposed to do when they are having difficulties making appointments?

Zane Garcia-Ramadan He has not received any complaints on his end with difficulties gaining access to the ADHS website.

Roundtable Topics for Next Meeting

Karen Van Epps Will like an update on the reimbursement of milage to committee meetings. Also an update on the redaction process with Senator Barto.

Bob Malloy would like the latest COVID-19 updates

De Freedman would like an update from the health plans on how they are integrating with DDD to protect DDD members human rights on services that they provide and the work they do to advocate for members

Next Meeting Date/Time/Facilitator Discussion

Jeffrey Yamamoto Advised the next scheduled time would be April 21st, 2021.

Facilitator to be determined at later date.



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Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 am by **Bob Malloy**. The next meeting will take place virtually on April 21, 2021 at 10:00 am.