



**Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
District North Independent Oversight Committee
Meeting Minutes Summary & Action Items
Wednesday, January 18, 2023 – 5:00 pm**

Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Don Harrington, on January 18, 2023, Time: 5:08 pm. The meeting took place by virtual conference. (These meeting will continue to be virtual during the Public Health Emergency)

Welcome and Introductions

Meeting was held virtually via Google Meets *Please Note: All attendance for this meeting was by electronic (video or phone) means only.*

IOC Members:

- **Don Harrington**
- **Christina Ostendorf** (by phone)

Absent:

- **None**

Public in Attendance:

- **Kim Foy** (recently retired from DDD Office of Individual and Family Affairs with DDD) currently looking for volunteer opportunities
- **Mr. Delgado (by phone)** (Northern Arizona) parent advocate

Arizona Inspector General's Office

- **Natalie Manwaring**

DDD Staff:

- **Leah Gibbs** (DDD Office Of Individual and Family Affairs Administrator)
 - **Staci Rodarmel** (DDD DN Quality Improvement Manager)
 - **Jennifer Myler** (DDD DN District Program Manager)
 - **Joan McQuade** (DDD IOC Manager)
 - **Michelle Rademacher** (DDD IOC Liaison)
 - **Dean Thomas** (DDD DN Program Review Committee Chairperson) on briefly, left before the introductions were completed
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Updates from DDD Staff

Leah Gibbs shared with the committee, per the updates that were shared by the Assistant Director at the statewide meeting: “As we all know, we have a new governor in the state of Arizona, and part of the function that Governor Hobbs has when she stepped into the role was to potentially identify new directors of different state agencies. And in the Department of Economic Security which is the division, one of the we are falling under their umbrella, the division and developmental disabilities is part of the Department of Economic Security. We have had Director Wiseheart for a few years as our director and he is going to be stepping down at the end of July. Our new DES director will be Angie Rogers.” She has been the CEO of the Arizona Food Bank network and that her background and her knowledge are going to fall into the Department of Economic Security, really, really well. And we're excited to bring her on board. The end of January, beginning of February, the Arizona Health Care Costs Containment System, AHCCCS, last year toward the end of the year, Jamie Snyder, had announced that she was retiring. And the new director for AHCCCS, her name is Carmen Heredia. Carmen has a background of supporting an agency, as the CEO for Via Del Sol, which is a agency that combines behavioral health services with primary care, medical services for underserved populations in the state. Another changeover that has occurred in directorship, is director Tobin who was the director over the state ADOA, the Arizona Department of Administration, has stepped down and the new director is Elizabeth Thorenson. Who was the deputy director prior to this change so she's got good background and experience.

Leah Gibbs stated: “Also, you wanted to just let you know that on September 1st of 2022. The division did implement a new billing system for our qualified vendors who provide services to our DDD members. That billing system is operated through a company called Well Sky. We’ve done a great deal of training and support to the community that does bill for services. The reason for the changes is that historically DDD had a homegrown billing system that really did not comply with Medicaid, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid services requirements for billing. And we needed to start using the national billing standards. So the new system went into effect on September the 1st. Prior to the transition, we had 645 vendors who were successfully billing in our focus system and since the transition we've had 644 vendors successfully submit claims into the system. I can't tell you if that one difference is a vendor who chose to close or if they're still struggling. But I can tell you that most of the vendors have been very successful getting their claims paid. We also did a comparison of what the division has paid out month over month for services and in the four months prior to the implementation of the new billing system, what we paid out was actually less than the four months after we went into the new billing system. So we know that we're keeping up to make sure that funds are flowing into the provider community and that things are happening so that they can continue to employ staff and make sure that services are being provided. There are bumps but our staff have been having regular open forum meetings for the provider community, who have questions or concerns, we've been able to successfully get those elevated into Wellsky and we get them corrected just as quickly as we possibly can.

Leah Gibbs stated: “Another update is that the electronic visit verification system requirements, which is something that has been in effect for, at least a couple of years for most agencies, but it is now gone live as of January 1st that any claims that are submitted for dates of service January 1st, or newer, have to comply a hundred percent with the EVV electronic visit verification requirements. So that is a new change for some of our vendors and the division continues to be available to answer questions and support folks that are using that new system.



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Leah Gibbs shared: “Another update we have is that as you are probably aware in 2021- 2022, the division has been struggling with staffing for support coordination positions. As you mentioned to Joan, we know a lot of places that have challenges with positions and getting them filled. We have put together many many strategies about addressing that. And we can announce tonight that between the months of August and January, the division has successfully hired more than a hundred new support coordinators. As Jen mentioned, she's gotten a new staff person in the Cottonwood office and it's really exciting that we've got these new support coordinators on our teams that we can hopefully, then improve on our caseload sizes and the support coordinators won't have so many things on their plates, that they can feel more successful in those relationships and supporting members and families. This is not done. We are continuing to work on hiring but we are certainly on track to be able to be very well staffed by mid this year. So we're really excited about that.

Leah Gibbs stated: “We want to make sure that folks are aware that the public health emergency did, in fact, get extended in January by the Secretary of Health and Human Services Federal. However, we were told in that extension, that at any time, we may be getting notified that they're going to resend the public health emergency, we expect to receive a 60-day notice as to, when that will happen. And we will absolutely make sure that you're all aware when we are aware of that. But in preparation for that, for over a year now our direction to our support coordinators has been when you're scheduling meetings and reviews for members, that you give that family and that member the option to have that meeting virtually or in person. But it has been quite some time since we've had mandated in-person meetings. And as of April 1st of 2023, we are going back to in-person meetings like they were done prior to the pandemic. We have announced that out through as many venues as we can and we will continue to get that message out. We feel that it's important that we have eyes on members. Virtual meetings are really nice, and they're convenient, but it's not quite the same as that eyes on to make sure that everything's going well for that member. So effective, April 1st, that will be implemented for the division.

Don Harrington asked Leah Gibbs in reference to the virtual versus in person meeting, so as of April 1st, are they going to do in person as well as virtual so somebody who's out of town or members out of town can join virtually?

Jen Myler to answer Don's questions stated: “yes, so really what our goal is is to have our support coordinators in any DDD staff in the home, specifically our support coordinators, right? That's the primary, our support coordinators need to be in the home. They need to be able to see what's going on and really have that connection with a member. As far as other team members. If they are unable to attend, we do have the virtual option for them if necessary and we can. And it's just like we used to. We used to be able to do phone calls if somebody was not. And now we have the the added benefit of the of the video too. So yeah. We definitely can make accommodations for those but the support coordinators will be in the home. And if at any point a family member or the member themselves really start talking about being uncomfortable, we're gonna have those conversations about what can we do to make you feel more comfortable with us being in the home. Is there a PPE just kind of what can we do to make it work. Obviously up here, we couldn't do an outside meeting right now. But can we do an outside meeting.”

Kim Foy stated: “It was good to hear that, people can attend virtually to the the ISP meetings, because I know DDD has done a great job in building, rapport with the behavioral health community and their case managers and in that is really the best way for some folks to attend when they're meetings are scheduled back to back. But that's really my only comment that there is.”



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Don Harrington asked related to the disbursement of COVID funds that were supposed to be directed towards the DSPs, did that ever get finalized and did the DSPs actually get that money?

Leah Gibbs stated: “The American Rescue Plan Act funds and I know they were distributed last year. I also know that the division in collaboration with auditors that are on staff are going back and auditing those agencies to ensure that the funds were utilized as intended. I do not know that they've gone out yet this year but I do know that they are working on that. I don't have a date yet though.”

Staci Rodarmel reported “here in Qi we remain fully staffed so um that's my only update”.

Jennifer Myler shared as far as vacancies, District North is down to 11. She stated that District North just hired in the Cottonwood Office and other Support Coordinators started this week. Jennifer stated that it is one of the harder offices. She said slowly but surely vacancies are being filled.

Joan McQuade informed the committee that DDD no longer has a backlog. The unit is fully staffed. Incident redactions are getting taken care of so that they can get out to the different committees.

Don Harrington stated he knows getting and maintaining staffing is very difficult but thank you for all your hard work.

Dean Thomas (left meeting before it started): **Don Harrington** asked about the DDD PRC Chair and did DDD replace the PRC chair in Northern Arizona and if he was going to attend these meetings? **Michelle Rademacher** shared that his name is Dean Thomas and he has been invited. He was planning on attending the last meeting, but his manager wanted to come along with him to help introduce and, and to kind of introduce him to the process for the IOC meetings. And I saw him pop on for just a minute this evening. And then he popped right back off. So I don't know if he had an obligation, but I'll reach back out and see if we can get him and regular attendance for the meetings.

Discussion, Review on Committee Membership

Leah Gibbs: I just wondered, Michelle, I don't mean to jump ahead, but did the committee want Kim to share a little bit of background about herself.

Don Harrington: That would be good. I'd be open to that.

Kim Foy: “So, how much time do you want me to take? I've known Leah for quite quite a long time. Our children went to school together. I live in Chandler, Arizona, and I moved here in 1987 and I did volunteer at extensively when I got here. I have three children and my oldest child was diagnosed with Brett Syndrome, which is she qualified for DDD services and was there for about 25 years before she passed away. Um so I was involved with the PRC. I was involved with what was formerly the Human Rights Committee. And I worked for Raising Special Kids. I volunteered for them for quite a few years. And then, I started working for in the behavioral health system. The children's system and and help them create the role of the parent partner, family support partner. Family and family parent support, I think, is one of the best services. We can provide. And, 2020, I started working for DDD and a couple of years later, I became retirement age. So I took advantage of that but I am very interested in helping and supporting the mission of



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making sure that our members get what they need.

Don Harrington: “I think that anybody who is associated with DDD, whether they work here or volunteer, all have that just commitment to help, you know. I think that's what we're all about. I just want this population to be recognized and to have as many rights as possible. So I can be kind of direct if I have to, like today at the meeting. It's just, for me, I have a son with a cognitive disability. He'll be 40 in a couple weeks. I can't believe that but I just want him to be and he seems happy you know and I just don't want anybody to take advantage of that situation. He lives in Missouri and let me tell you something, their DDD programs. They are so far behind ours it is not even funny. So what we do here, I feel like we're kind of on the leading edge, that the top tier, if you will, and I'm proud to be associated with that, you know? Because when I talk to my son and see what services he does not have and so on, it's just, it's just hard to deal with.”

Don Harrington: “About me. I worked for a little over six and a half years with Child Protective Services where I really, really enjoyed that job. But like most support coordinators, you get a caseload that's not manageable and you just try and try and trying to point where you burn out. So anyway, I found this as a way to, you know, fulfill my need to help people. So that's why I am here, been in Arizona since 1983, move to Page where I work and not been down to Flagstaff. Hopefully soon, because at my house there's three feet of snow. I'm ready to move to Cottonwood or someplace. Where my wife, full disclosure works for vocational rehabilitation services out of the Cottonwood office.

Don Harrington: So anyway, um Christine do you have anything that you want to say? Because I really, I really don't know much about you, or were you coming from? I'm so happy that you're here. Don't misunderstand me. But is there anything that you would like to share?

Christina Ostendorf (present by phone): so, I was born and raised here in Prescott Arizona where I still reside. I worked in behavioral health for About 15 years. So I worked a year as a CD service manager for an in-home care that I also has a group home as well as a small day program. I have since moved on from that job and I am a primary therapist at another behavioral health center. I am looking to start online school with ASU summer or fall for my Masters in Special Education with emphasis on behavioral analysis. So that's really it about me.

Don Harrington: Okay, so I do want to vote on Kim. So is the vote just for the IOC members or everybody that's in attendance?

Michelle Rademacher: Just for the IOC members and how it works through, Robert's rule, as we would ask, if Christina would have a motion and then, since there's only two of you then you guys could vote based off that motion. Each of you verbalizing, your vote,

Don Harrington: So Christina, do you have a motion?

- **Christina Ostendorf Motioned that we vote Kim Foy in as IOC volunteer.**
- **Don Harrington seconded the motion since there are no other members.**
- **Vote passed unanimously**
- **Kim Foy is an official member of the DDD District North IOC committee.**



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Call to the Public

Don Harrington made a call to the public.

Mr. Delgado: Thank you, Northern Arizona, a parent support, under the compliance of ADA and Final Four. What I want to ask today is last week or so, we've heard a lot of concern about the behavior problems and then very much of it. And what I want to ask on that point, is that what benefits developing and monitoring, those who have the monitoring, of what they call the electronic monitoring units in their group home settings and other couple other, when ADH called, I don't know if it is or not but I assume they were Made available. and if they are, we serve it about 47,000 I think but not in group homes and it could some numbers smaller.

Mr. Delgado: How much benefit has it? Been simply been involved are being that valuable. For those who have the units and wanted to monitoring reports on that. If when they review them has it been a plus? Because I've had some concern from parents about how it's being done. And it helping that particular. Item on the Martin year that can be told that. Now, it's a statue and the variable. You've done. and created, but perhaps to an IP if they wish to do so. I understand a little bit about it. That's got to be voted on by you. Vendor. and other parents who might have been involved, And then those who may say yes and no, they say no. All I need to know has helped and it has improved the monitoring system? And improvement on statistics, Behavior?

Mr. Delgado: All I want to know is that those monitoring reports on them on their electronic monitoring, behave on when electronic units for the homes that they do have them. I don't know. How many have? Can you tell me? How many have been done? And, have you been a plus in the reviews? And that's about it more or less because, well, I went a lot of where a lot about some behavior, this and behavior that and some of the homes. Advocates in conjunction with the support of the idea, of course. And it was approved and they had no units available thinking that. That might be a plus. To get better information, and behave. The programs. I get that would be in that area that concerned when the monitoring units when they reviewed them after the 20 days or 30 days. What's the responsibility of the monitoring people? Do they review those monitoring units that's been done this as a support? Integration?

Don Harrington: So I can tell you that it's still a new program. I think it's correct me if I'm wrong, Michelle but it's been implemented less than a year. So I think it's a little too soon. But I think if we can Michelle, we can look for that to see if that is available. If it's not, when will be available.

Michelle Rademacher: Okay. So what I can do is I can add that to the next meetings agenda and we can see what information we can collect for next. Month's meeting

Don Harrington: That would be wonderful. So Mister Delgado, like to attend next month's meeting, maybe we'll have presentation for you.

Mr. Delgado: Thank you anyway. Well, thank you very much, but I think it's important and now that the consideration to expand on that, I think other parents would be well, I think it'd be very interested and I think it could be very good for parents...



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Discussion and Review of Incident Reports and Behavior Plans

There was no discussion or comments made in reference to incident reports.

Assignments made at a previous meeting:

Bob and Sandy Malloy – Human Rights- Closed

Don Harrington – Emergency Measures & Client Missing- Closed

Jody BonDurant-Strong – Physical Abuse & Neglect- Closed

Christina Ostendorf - Property Damage, Med. Error & Other Abuse

The committee has received **November** 2022 reports. The September incident reports include **56** open and **366** closed reports. This is a total of **422** incident reports presented to the committee for review.

Incident Type	Open	Closed
Accidental Injuries	4	50
Client Missing	1	3
Deaths	1	4
Emergency Measures	0	3
Human Rights	4	3
Legal	0	2
Medication Errors	24	43
Neglect	11	33
Other Abuse	1	3
Other – Behavior	1	116
Other – Unkn Injury; hospital;	7	97
Physical Abuse	2	3
Property Damage	0	6
Suicide	0	0
Totals	56	366



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The committee has received **December** 2022 reports. The September incident reports include **46** open and **283** closed reports. This is a total of **329** incident reports presented to the committee for review.

Incident Type	Open	Closed
Accidental Injuries	9	39
Client Missing	2	3
Deaths	2	3
Emergency Measures	0	5
Human Rights	1	7
Legal	0	1
Medication Errors	13	54
Neglect	10	17
Other Abuse	3	3
Other – Behavior	3	76
Other – Unkn Injury; hospital;	3	73
Physical Abuse	0	1
Property Damage	0	1
Suicide	0	0
Totals	46	283

The committee submits their comments and questions to **Jeffrey Yamamoto and Michelle Rademacher** via comments in Shared drive and will be sent to District North Quality Improvement for a response.

Adjournment

Don Harrington asked for some time with his two committee members and dismissed the other meeting attendees. **Don:** We're closing it to the public, will go into executive at 5:46 pm.

Don Harrington adjourned the meeting from the executive session 5:52pm.

The next meeting is set for Wednesday, February 15, 2023, at 5:00 pm.