

DD Stakeholder Task Force Meeting Summary

A meeting of the DD Stakeholder Transition Plan Task Force was held at 3:00 pm, February 24, 2022, via Zoom.

Members Present:

Connie Batiste, ADMH	Terry Pezent, ADMH/DD
Ken Oliver, Glenwood/Alabama Council	Jo Poates, ID 310 Boards
Susan Ellis, People First of Alabama	James Tucker, ADAP
Carla Stallworth, Other Providers	Zina May, ADMH Advocacy
Carrie Bearden, BHAA	Donna Foster, Future Living Community Services
Kathy Sawyer, ADMH/DD Consultant	Delshonda Thomas, Ace Arc
Jana Haggard, ID 310 Boards	Vivian Warren, ADMH

Members Absent:

Anne Riddle, The Arc of Alabama	Mattie Jackson, Alabama Medicaid Agency
Jerry Pike, Eagles' Wings	DeAnna Ferguson, Other Providers
LaSundra Foster	

Guests:

Veronica McGee, Project Manager for People First CWP Services	Andy Slate, ADMH
Francilla Allen, ADMH	Rebecca Wright, Medicaid
Beth Hataway, Medicaid	Jenny Lux, People First
Kathy Fountain, Medicaid Agency	
Wade Reese, Ace Arc	
Riyyah James, Medicaid	

Recorder:

Velma McElrath	
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Welcome and Introductions:

Kathy Sawyer called the meeting to order and welcomed task force members and guests. She also introduced Kathryne Fountain as the new Long Term Care Reform Division Director for Alabama Medicaid, replacing Ginger Wettingfield.

Agenda and Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as distributed. The agenda for the meeting was also approved.

Associate Commissioner Update: Terry Pezent stated that she had no updates; however, the department is getting closer to releasing the Statewide Transition Plan. She also thanked everyone for working so hard to meet HCBS compliance in the deficient areas that were identified.

State Transition Plan Update: The following updates were provided by Medicaid representatives Riyyah James, Specialized Waivers Program Manager and Rebecca Wright, Medicaid Consultant. (See Attached)

- The Medicaid and DDD staff have partnered closely to design transition processes for the ID and LAH waiver programs by providing technical assistance and oversight on an ongoing basis. The feedback from the stakeholders over the years have been very helpful and appreciative which has given Medicaid additional level of confidence in the overall process and its results.
- The State Transition Plan is finally at the point of being submitted for public comment by Medicaid. At the end of September beginning of October, the department had to send to CMS a list of all the settings that were compliant prior to July and those that were noncompliant but will be by March 2023, for CMS to review. A lengthy narrative regarding this process was also included, which was posted in the public comment document; this information has also been transferred into the STP.
- The State Transition Plan will include the heightened scrutiny procedures for day and residential programs under the ID and LAH waivers. The Plan will also include requirements for evidentiary packets. These packets will be for settings that have overcome the institutional presumption through the setting validation processes. DDD and providers will submit these packets to Medicaid for review. Once a packet is determined to be completed, Medicaid will publish it for a 30-day public comment period, required by CMS. Upon completion, Medicaid will determine if a setting has not overcome the presumption and will provide DDD with a summary of the outstanding areas of noncompliance and requirements that must be received. Hopefully, in the next week, a notice will be sent out that the State Transitions Plan is available for review and public comment.
- It was also encouraged for to provide both your comments and concerns. The public notice will be posted on Medicaid's website and notices will be sent out to their list serv. Medicaid will also be asking that hard copies be available at the Medicaid District Offices, Aging and Disability Resource Centers and the ID 310 Boards.

Ms. Sawyer requested that the five DD Regional Community Service Offices also maintain hard copies for public access at their locations.

Task Force Chair Report: Kathy Sawyer provided the following updates:

- Ms. Sawyer reported on a webinar held January 27, 2022, with Ralph Lollar, CMS and Alison Barkoff, ACL, regarding current compliance status with HCBS regulations. She reported that as of December 31, 2019, 46 states had received approval of their initial Plans with only two more states, for a total of 48 states, with initial plan approvals as of January 27, 2022. As of January 27, 2022, only 21 states had received approval of their final plans. Ms. Sawyer reported that Alabama received approval of its initial plan February 21, 2017. (See Attached Copy of Webinar Slides). Ms. Sawyer also reported there are monthly calls with other states, ACL, Medicaid, CMS and other officials to discuss the status of the HCBS compliance. Both representatives of Medicaid and DDD participate in these calls. Ms. Pezent asked the task force to share this information with others to make them aware of the on-going work on the HCBS regulations.

Workgroup Reports:

Ms. Sawyer asked each of the workgroup chairs to give an overview of their work since the last meeting. The following reports were given:

Education and Advocacy: Zina May (replaced Byron White) provided the following updates: (See Attached Report)

- The Education and Advocacy Workgroup met on February 11, 2022. The workgroup acknowledged the new members to this committee and will continue to recruit additional family members and stakeholders. Zina May and George Neal will chair this workgroup.
- The workgroup reviewed the previous workplan provided by Bryon White, to get an update on completed projects and ongoing projects that remained. They discussed outreach materials but awaiting an update from Malissa Valdez-Hubert as to what materials are still available. The workgroup will schedule a meeting after the DD Stakeholder Task Force meeting to plan and set their goals for the year.

Person Centered Planning: (See Attached Report) Francilla Allen provided the following updates:

- The Person-Centered Plan Workgroup met December 15, 2021. Updates were provided regarding the person-centered assessment and planning transformation process, which included aggregating data from the Support Coordination Tool and work plan.

- The Strategic Steering Group was formed to develop a comprehensive plan that addresses all questions and activities/action items that still need to be completed to support the PCP transformation.
- The 4-day person-centered assessment and planning trainings are still on-going for new hire support coordinators and internal ADMH staff and are held on a bi-monthly basis.
- Cellestine Walker, Support Coordination Enhancement Specialist, is the lead facilitator of all PCP trainings.

Validation: Vivian Allen provided the following updates:

- As of the January 31, 2022, it was reported that 1014 residential settings were determined compliant and 100 were determined non-compliant. Of the day settings/programs, it was reported that 44 were determined compliant and 42 were determined non-compliant. Letters to providers regarding the compliance statuses of their settings, as of 1-31-22, were sent out the first week of February. It was also reported that on-going compliance monitoring will be continued by the community services staff. Monitoring will occur once every six months to follow up on compliance.

Training and Technical Assistance Plans: Connie Batiste provided the following updates:

- QE staff is still available to provide HCBS technical assistance to providers. In each region the QE staff have completed 3-5 sessions of the TA group trainings. All QE staff have received calls from individual providers for one-on-one TA/ training. It was also reported that each provider had been contacted personally by the QE staff either by phone or email.
- A guide regarding money management has been developed for training. This guide was developed to assist providers who struggle with how individuals can have access to their funds and still meet guidelines. Ms. Sawyer indicated that these guidelines were shared with Virginia at their request

New/Other Business:

There was no new or other business discussed.

Next meeting:

April

TBD: Date, Time

Attachments:

- Heightened Scrutiny Procedures
- HCBS Setting and Regulation: Where Are We Now and Where Are We going
- Person Centered Planning Workgroup and Work Plan and Minutes
- Education and Advocacy Workgroup Minutes