

  
**Tompkins County**  
**COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BOARD**

Tompkins County Whole Health  
201 East Green Street  
Ithaca, New York 14850-5421

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**Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee**

**April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Via Zoom**

**Meeting Minutes DRAFT**

**Minutes Approved**

**May 14, 2024**

**Present:** James Beaumont; Jeffrey Boles; Sheila McEnery; Allison Weiner-Heinemann; Nancy Saltzman; Walaa Maharem-Horan; and Khaki Wunderlich

**Excused:** Cassidy Stanley and Sally McConnell-Gist

**Unexcused:**

**Guests Present:** Christopher Kaiser, RACKER; Briggs Seekins, Challenge; Anne Seepersaud, Life Plan; Jamie Kelly, OPWDD; Jennifer Payne, Catholic Charities

**Staff:** Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, DCS; Margo Polikoff, RN, CSCN; and Karan Palazzo, LGU Administrative Assistant

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The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by James. Sheila motioned to approve the March 2024 minutes, seconded by Khaki; all were in favor.  
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**Privilege of the Floor:** None.

**Announcements/Correspondence:** Anne shared that LifePlan is hosting an educational webinar on aging & Dementia for Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (IDD) providers and will host quarterly webinars on various topics.

**Discussions**

**Provider Fair Update:** James reported that the Provider Fair will be on June 5<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 – 6:30 pm at Ithaca High School with a save-the-date flyer forthcoming.

**TACA Meeting** – Jeff and James met with school district counselors and teachers on March 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee meetings, the goals, and how they can help better inform students and their families of transition services, and the processes including the front door and wait lists. The meeting went well and anticipates a road map of services next year. Anne recommended looking at the informative and short YouTube videos on the OPWDD page about the front door process and a better understanding.

**CSE Chair Meeting Update:** Briggs reported that he did not get as much information back as he expected from agencies to present but did have a PowerPoint presentation to address concerns. He is uncertain how CSE Chairs will respond.

There was a lengthy conversation with children not being determined eligible by 15 years of age. Margo said that Tompkins County found that children benefit from enrollment in OPWDD, even as they continue to receive early intervention services and in agreement transfer the service coordination over to OPWDD. Jamie shared that OPWDD is re-evaluating the program and encourages all to continue to participate and receive outreach from Guidehouse is hopeful that these recommendations will bring forth new ideas to the overall process.

James stated that education, visibility, and awareness/understanding of options have opened doors for many young people to access services. Anne referred to a “reasonable need” video and an email to the subcommittee clarifying reasonable need. Clarifying unreasonable need” will provide information and context because a child can receive OPWDD at any time as early as an infant if needed. Suppose a child receives early intervention from birth to three years of age. In that case, OPWDD can start CCO care management but must obtain a reasonable need waiver based on medical and developmental disability after community and natural resources have been exhausted (above and beyond respite needs). Any CCO can assist in the challenging process of going through the front door as there are many benefits to gain.

Goals and achievements to make the transition process much easier and get people better informed.  
Engagement with CSE Chairs, TACA, and schools to better transition services for students with disabilities, attend student-related events, host annual provider fairs, and create a road map handout for parents and individuals.

National Association of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) – Corning Community College and TC3 offer free courses to current DSP staff to become DSP-certified with an additional \$1/hour.

Competitive Integration Employment Transformation Hub:

- Efforts to increase employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities post-COVID
- Webinar created to attract companies/businesses to hire people with disabilities
- Working with Day Hab participants on soft skills

Provider Updates:

OPWDD – Jamie shared that April is “Autism Acceptance Month” and 1 in 46 children are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in the US. The strategic plan forms will be available in various locations across the State in May, June, and July with sessions available online. ADM-01R Group Day Habilitation Service Documentation and 21 ADM-02R Community Habilitation in Residence requirements were edited in response to the public comments received.

LifePlan – Anne shared that on April 10<sup>th</sup> LifePlan’s member relations will hold a forum on self-direction for LifePlan members and families.

Challenge – Briggs shared that they are making referrals for pre-vocational.

Racker – Chris shared that they traveled to Albany to communicate with elected representatives about the need for wage enhancement for DSPs. They also discussed well-being in the workplace focused on protection from harm connection and community, work-life harmony mattering at work, and opportunity for growth and worker voice and equity.

CARS – Jessica shared that they are having a professional development series on financial assistance on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

Catholic Charities – Jenifer shared that they had one pre-vocational and one community referral and are accepting referrals for Tompkins County.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

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**The next Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee Meeting is  
Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.**