

**Developmental Disabilities Sub-Committee**  
**August 18, 2021**

---

**Present:** Brian Hart, Leisa Alger, Pam Overdurf, Madison Sautley, Michelle Nicholas, Melissa Stafford, AJ Kircher

**Excused:** Leisa Alger, Rene' Snyder, Rebecca Robertshaw

---

**Minutes:**

Approved without changes.

**Director of Community Services Report – Brian Hart**

- **State Aid Roster Request-Monitor Funding Use:** OPWDD originally requested a small blurb on each agency for 2020. Brian said that 1 ½ weeks ago they stated they only needed him to submit 2020 Rosters to get funding for 2021. In this case only CIDS needed to be submitted. Brian spoke with other regions and they never received this request from OPWDD. He then asked OPWDD why they were asking for this just from Chemung County they responded and said they reserve the right to have access to data to make sure state aid money is serving people. Brian thought it was an odd request.
- **Care Planning and Service Options Post Pandemic:** Brian received a five-page email to explain how to do your job after the pandemic, which was basically the same way we are doing it before the pandemic. It is interesting that the State who still has most of their staff working from home would be sending out these emails to those who are working in the field and reminding them how to do their jobs. Brian asked the committee members if they read all the emails on COVID related materials. One committee member stated that they need to have more faith in us, and they do not have the optimal health of the client population in mind. The agencies providing services are trying to make smart business decisions to stay afloat, as well as keep serving individuals on a individual basis. Another committee member stated the State is wasting their time drafting up something like that, due to all the many regulations we continue to follow, and it just wasn't necessary to remind us how to do our job.
- **Intensive Treatment Program - Update:** Brian was at a meeting with the NYS Association of Welfare, where all the Deputy Commissioners for the state organizations come together and talk about difficult cases. There is a great dual diagnosis facility in the far western part of the region. But what happens to the individuals when they are released. Do they think that the individual will automatically learn and know what to do? They need the proper educated staff to support and guide them as they transition back to their IRA. The State announced that they will be opening up another new facility in one year at Upstate Medical in Syracuse NY. A committee member stated that it is frustrating to try and find services to assist these individuals, and help them sustain success. Another committee member stated that we need to have some in between services and the system has to be flexible to meet the individual and their needs. The State is responsible for their failure, they need to be less compliance oriented and more flexible to meet each individuals needs. Brian

stated that money is decided at the State level. It has never been about what you need in your community. It would be nice for them to give us money to meet our goals in our local plan.

- **Waitlist Request:** Brian stated that if your agency has a waitlist of individuals who need your services, please keep him informed. If someone has been on your waitlist for a long time, you might want to contact them and see if they are receiving services they need from a different agency, and can be taken off your list. By having a waitlist you need to evaluate what it says about your services. Brian understands that there is a huge problem with workforce and this is creating the problem with the waitlist. There has also been an increase in the amount of individuals struggling with mental health and substance abuse during the pandemic. Do individuals who currently are receiving help need to continue or are they stable? If they are stable and do not need the service, you need to open up the spot so other's in need are getting the services they need. The individual can always come back if needed, as serves are not supposed to be for life. They are to assist those who need it and once they are stable can be let go. A committee member brought up that once a person no longer receives services, they do not re-enter services quickly. Brian stated that he is not willing to wait for the State to solve the problem. We need to look and see what we can do better. A committee member said that maybe some of the COVID monies could assist in filling in the gap in services. Brian stated that unfortunately that money doesn't make it to his level to see how those funds need to be spent. A committee member stated that some of their staffing issues are the increase in minimum wage, and people are receiving more money on unemployment than if they were working. People are choosing jobs that are less stressful (i.e. choosing retail over social work). A committee member stated that dollars are not why we are going to get people to stay in this field of work. You have to have a heart for this job, not chasing dollars. The generation today have different priorities, work life balances, and work ethics. We will continue to struggle with staffing, and just do our best so we can move forward. Brian stated that he does not see this getting better any time soon, and everyone is competing for the same people. Staff are chasing the buck because living expenses have skyrocketed so now they need a full time job and a side job to cover the costs. A committee member stated that some individuals that we give support services to can only do jobs like at McDonalds. If they are working a 40 hour work week, they should be able to pay for the daily living expense too.
- **October Meeting:** Brian stated that he will not be available on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of October for our next meeting. He asked the committee members if they would be able to meet on the second Wednesday of October which is October 13, 2021. None of the committee members had an issue, and agreed to the date change for October.
- **Sharing by Community Members**
- **START** – The Director of the program relocated down south and our new Director is Caitlin Sestokas. Staffing has been very challenging, and she is currently working on getting all the vacancies filled.

**The next meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2021 via ZOOM.**