

**Whatcom County  
Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board (DDAB)**

Whatcom County Health Department  
3333 Squalicum Parkway, Bellingham

January 22, 2018

4:30- 6:00 PM

**Board Members Present:**

Ken Larson  
Jeffery Hart  
Kathleen Harrigan

Russ Sapienza  
Aaron Perzigian

**Board Members not Present:**

Joshua Strick (absent)  
Barry MacHale (excused)

**Guests Present:**

Beverly Porter, The Arc  
Molly Hughs, Cascade Connections  
Kait Whiteside, Max Higbee Center  
Megen Porter, Community Member

Rod Duncan, DDA  
Susan Larson, People First  
Tarra Hollins, Community Member  
Carrie Carron, Cascade Connections

**Staff**

Jessica Lee, WCHD Developmental Disabilities; Amber Wolpers, WCHD Developmental Disabilities; Chris D'Onofrio, WCHD Clerk; Anne Deacon, WCHD Human Services Manager.

**1.  Call to Order & Introductions**

Meeting called to order by Russ Sapienza and introductions conducted. Quorum present.

**2.  Minutes Approval**

Kathy motioned to approve minutes as presented. Motion seconded by Ken.

**ACTION** November 2017 minutes approved as presented. Aye 5, Nay 0  

**3. Unfinished Business and Discussion**

**A. Community Forum-DDAB Priorities, continued:**

The three community forums last fall generated a list of program ideas that were discussed and ranked in November.

**Short term/time limited priorities:** 1) Disability awareness; welcoming communities 2) Employer hiring and engagement initiatives 3) Infant mental health consultation for early intervention providers.

The November exercise produced mixed recommendations for **longer term projects and pilots**. In order to clarify and refine priorities a second exercise was conducted with a tally produced during the January DDAB. Below is the ranking for longer term commitments with #1 receiving the most support.

1. Projects and partnerships with school districts to improve post graduate outcomes
2. Assist Individuals/families to identify community inclusion/leisure goals, practice and build skills; access community resources to meet goals.
3. Identify and address rural transportation barriers and gaps
4. Care coordination to support mid-level developmental evaluations
5. Support to navigate affordable housing; assist in roommate matching
6. Connect community members with individuals with disabilities based on similar interest.

The board and community members present discussed other factors to be considered in program development.

- The number of DDA enrolled individuals who do not have access to community engagement, community guide or community inclusion services are relatively small. Developing strategies to improve understanding of and access to these services should be considered first.
- Focusing on younger middle school and high school populations to improve community inclusion/ leisure navigation should be considered in partnership with existing district efforts.
- Transportation is key to community integration for those living in rural areas that have no central hub and few businesses. More information about the limitations and barriers with existing rural transportation authority services such as “zone” and “flex route” is needed.
- The housing navigator/roommate matching model discussed would require a minimum # of participants for success.

## **B. 2018 DDAB Committee Nominations**

Jessica reviewed the board positions for which nominations are sought. The following slate of officers and committee members were proposed.

- Co-Chairs: Ken Larson and Russ Sapienza
- Executive Committee: Aaron Perzigian, Jeff Hart, Ken Larson and Russ Sapienza
- Nominating committee: Kathleen Harrigan and Russ Sapienza

Aaron motioned for the board to accept the slate of officers and committees as proposed. Ken seconded the motion.

**ACTION** 2018 DDAB officers and committee approved as presented.  
Aye 5, Nay 0



#### **4. New Business:**

##### **A. 2018 Legislative Updates**

###### **I. Federal**

Several concerning trends have occurred at the federal level:

- Proposed requirement that all Medicaid recipients must work. This requirement does not take into consideration the needs of many vulnerable individuals.
- Written “guidance” related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) have been rescinded. No changes to the law were made and state responsibility remains the same. Withdrawing guidance, however, creates ambiguity and weakens protections provided under these laws.

###### **II. Washington State**

Efforts continue to change the scope of the DDA Working Age Adults Policy. This policy establishes employment as the focus of County services for adults with DD ages 21-62.

- Senate bill 6360 and House bill 2613 propose that districts be allowed to either a) determine that an individual with DD is un-employable. b) Counts district services toward the DDA requirement to participation in 9 months of employment services prior to receiving community access. Language which strengthens district requirements related to transition planning was also proposed.

- One concern is that legislation does not address the role of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Educator training and expertise in employment services is also not consistent statewide.

## **B. Medicaid Rule Changes Impacting Behavior Support**

Recent clarification from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has made accessing behavior support more difficult.

Previously, individuals could access specialized behavior supports through DDA. CMS is now requiring that individual's first access contracted mental health services through the typical Medicaid system. Behavior is not necessarily a function of mental health, and most mental health providers do not have specialized training in working with individuals with DD. These changes have created additional barriers and resulted in individual's not being able to access services. Solutions are still being developed.

### **5. Public Comment:**

- Tarra Hollins, parent and community member, suggested the idea of holding a symposium for parents to learn about services and programs.
- Jessica suggested that the upcoming *Transition Fair* on March 27 is a good opportunity for parents to learn about services. It is held annually and brings together 30-40 adult service agencies.
- Lynden Middle School is hosting a showing of films, supported by the Arc, celebrating individuals with DD.
- Susan Larson will be traveling to Olympia to speak on behalf of human rights issues. There is a bus travelling to "Advocacy Day" from Bellingham on Wed, Feb 7, 2018. The focus of the day will be early intervention services. For more information contact the Arc at 360-715-0170
- On Saturday, Feb 10. Max Higbee Center is hosting the "run/walk/roll" 5K to benefit the center.

**6. Meeting Adjourned:** Meeting was adjourned by Russ Sapienza at 6:00 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Monday, March 26, 2018.

Respectfully submitted by Chris D'Onofrio, Human Services Clerk

**HD staff**

Jessica Lee

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