Developmental Disabilities Sub-Committee
December 16, 2020

Present: Brian Hart, Leisa Alger, Pam Overdurf, Melissa Stafford, Rene’ Snyder, David Andreine, Patricia Hawkins, Kellie Traugott-Knoll, AJ Kircher

Excused: Joe Cevette

Minutes:

Approved without changes.

Director of Community Services Report – Brian Hart

- **START Resource Center:** On September 30, 2020, Medicaid billing ended for intensive respite waiver billing. There is not enough coming in financially to keep it up and running. When the contract ended approximately 28 individuals were eligible to say that the Resource Center that were 21 years of age and older. They did have some flex with 18 to 21 year olds that were not in school. There is no funding for this certified setting, and keeping it open is just not sustainable. OPWDD has been informed of the discontinuation of the START Resource Center. As of right now, they are on a temporary suspension of services, as OPWDD really wants us to stay open. It will be a lot of work to make this viable, and if they cannot come up with a plan and a funding source then they will be closing. The question was asked if there was anything others could to do support the Resource Center. The answer was that is all comes down to finances. The demographic does not support a 4 person. Accommodations need to be made for this particular group.

- **HCBS Waiver Amendment – Comment?** Brian went through their 315-page document, and come across two different areas in regards to Respite. They may want to look at page 2 and page 72 of the Amendment. It is about the ability to use intensive respite in settings. Bill Medicaid for those coming from IRA’s. It was mentioned that something needs to be done for these individuals. This Amendment is not approved until April 1, 2021, so it is a “no-go” until then.

- **Website:** Brian stated that there have been some major changes to the OPWDD website. Information is now easily assessable, more user friendly, and it moves faster. It is definitely worth looking at it.

- **Vaccine Plan:** Brian stated that he had heard about OASAS and OMH’s plan for the vaccine, but he has heard nothing from OPWDD. Not sure what Phase they will be in or how many doses are coming to NY. A committee member stated there are 414 sites, and they have to meet the criteria with residents 65 year olds and above and they will be in Phase 1. CVS and Walgreens will be administering the vaccine. The pharmacies have already made contact with downstate (long Island) sites. We do have a site in our area that fits the criteria. OPWDD is working directly with CCO for documentation. The other sites that do not meet the criteria will be part of the Moderna Vaccine that is coming out later. Brian asked if any of their agencies would want to be a vaccination site. One committee member stated that their agency looked
into and determined that they would not be a vaccination site. Another committee member stated that they are having conversation, but would want it closed for just the population they would with, and then later open it up. They have refrigeration units that can store the vaccine to the proper temperature. A committee member was wondering if home care workers/personal care aides would be required/mandated to have the vaccine. They will be lining up 1000 employees to be prepared to have the vaccine, but they are waiting on guidance.

Sharing by Community Members

- **AIM** – They have been networking with other agencies from Syracuse to Buffalo (largely with those out of Rochester NY) due to the State Withhold. Some of the agencies are advocating for a Law Suit to get the money back. A letter was sent out on how they will be passing with withhold onto the consumer. They said when consumers get mad about the withhold and want to move to another agency that the agencies in this collaborative group would not be able to service them. AIM has decided not to join them, as this would be withholding services and hurting people’s lives, and this is not AIM’s way of servicing individuals in need. In the short term AIM can sustain the 20% withhold, but not for the long term. This needs to be addressed with New York State. Brian suggested they notify OPWDD of what they are doing. They are trying to block individuals from getting services from another agency. One FI has already sent out 4000 letters to their consumers. Brian stated that he would bring it up in his meeting tomorrow with other County Directors and OPWDD. Brian requested a copy of the letter that AIM received. The reason AIM wanted to share this information is because it is important to keep our eyes and ears open. We do not want to see anyone go without services. This is potential abuse to individuals we serve. Tomorrow these agencies have a meeting with an Attorney, in which AIM will attend, as they want to hear what will be discussed. Brian stated that they should have met with the Attorney before sending out those 4000 letters.

The next meeting is scheduled for **February 17, 2020**.