

Developmental Disabilities Sub-Committee
December 17, 2025

Present: Jennifer Emery, Melissa Stafford, Dina O'Herron, Leisa Alger, Kacey Gergel, Holly Usack, Brandy Reynolds, Kelly Loysch, Yalitzza Marrero, Sarah Callahan, Kristen Carpenter, Daniel Smith

Excused: Kellie Traugott-Knoll, Susan Bull, Willam Wasserman, Sarah Ameigh, Julie Overton, John Zick, Shannon Benton, Gina Tinker-Williams,

Minutes:

Motion to accept August 2025 Meeting Minutes was made by Melissa Stafford and Seconded by Dina O'Herron. Approved without changes.

New Chairperson Needed:

Leisa Alger is stepping down and a New Chairperson is needed. It will need to be someone with consistent attendance, OPWDD knowledge and involvement, and do occasional follow-ups. This person will facilitate the subcommittee meeting. Jennifer Emery asked if anyone had interest. Holly Usack volunteered to step in as the new Chairperson for the Developmental Disabilities Subcommittee.

Old Business:

- **Update on Able2 reopening beds** – They are reopening a home that was put on hiatus during COVID. It has been approved, and there will not be an increase in beds. They are reconfiguring the space - one half will have two supportive beds, and the other half will have two supervised supportive beds. It will be six to eight months before the beds are operational. The individuals moving into this home are coming off an existing OPWDD list.
- **Update on Pathways opening beds** – No one from Pathways attended the meeting to provide an update.
- **Update on Chemung/Schuyler ARC RFP's** – They have decided on not doing anything with the expansion of an article 16 site.

Director of Community Services Report – Jennifer Emery

➤ **Update on AOT Critical Case Review Team:**

Jennifer stated that the Critical Case Review team will be having their first meeting on January 5, 2026 at 11am. The hope is that this team could also serve to be beneficial for some difficult OPWDD cases. Currently the review team includes: DCS – Jennifer Emery, AOT Coordinator – Kristen Carpenter, ER – Stacey McMail, ACT – Cara Hope, SPOE/SPOA – Kellie Traugott-Knoll, CRISIS – Dustin McCullough, Community Mental Health Worker -Melissa Stafford, CASA-Trinity – Dina O'Herron, and Catholic Charities – Suzie Fritz. Currently there is one active AOT case, in which the individual is currently in

the hospital. We will be having an additional case coming from Greater Binghamton in January 2026. Kristen Carpenter recently did an investigation into an OPWDD case. If we do a formal AOT in Court, we are not allowed to use any OPWDD providers in the order. We must develop a contract with OPWDD providers. We have notification that the individual is going to have placement at the State level. We hope this will be successful. If the placement does not work out, then we will proceed to complete a Voluntary Service Enhancement with the individual. This will be similar to an AOT but is not through the court but will allow all providers to come together with a plan. We already have two more cases to discuss at our January meeting.

➤ **Update on Exploration of additional Psychological Testing:**

We need to have more options for psychological testing. Jennifer has found someone who has retired from the school district and is willing to do the testing one day a week. She also has some friends who will be retiring and might be interested in doing the same thing. There is some funding available to assist with getting the tests needed to get this initiative off the ground. Jennifer said she has been talking with Arnot, and there is some potential with Family Services. A committee member asked if the person is NYS licensed, and Jennifer will be looking into the supervision requirements needed to support this position. She will keep the committee posted.

➤ **RFP – Rochester Deaf Kitchen:**

Jennifer received an email from the Rochester Deaf Kitchen, Inc. They are notifying her of their intent to apply for an RFP for NYS OMH Promoting Wellness and Healing in Communities. The Rochester Deaf Kitchen is a community based nonprofit organization headquartered in Monroe County. It serves Deaf, Deaf-Blind, and hard of hearing individuals throughout Western New York. They are proposing to implement a trauma informed, community-based wellness initiative that will be accessible to Deaf community members in Chemung County, through a combination of virtual programming, regional partnerships, and accessible community-based activities. This project will focus on addressing language deprivation trauma, interpreter-related trauma, and cumulative trauma associated with systemic barriers and communication inequities experienced by Deaf individuals. Programming will center American Sign Language accessibility, Deaf leadership, peer support, and culturally responsive wellness strategies. Jennifer asked the committee members if they had any knowledge of this agency, and no one had ever heard anything about them until now. A committee member said that this could be valuable to a handful of their clients. A committee member said that it might be useful in our community. Another committee member said peer support would be beneficial to deaf employees. Jennifer said that if they win the RFP, she will invite them to the committee meeting to explain their services.

➤ **NOFO Funding – No More Permanent Housing:**

Jennifer shared information from DOH that came out to state that no more than 30% of a CoC's Annual Renewal Demand can be used to fund Permanent Housing projects. This is forcing CoC's to reallocate most of their current programming to other project types. Currently 30% of permanent housing is moved to transitional housing. People are challenging this and are suing. HUD pulled it at the last minute. This could be a potential issue for homeless housing. A court date has been set, and the Judge wants information on all of this. The Court Hearing will decide if this will move forward.

➤ **Future Considerations of the Crisis team in Chemung County:**

Jennifer said that Family Services has headed the Crisis team for 25 to 30 years and has done an amazing job. We also have the 988 system currently serving individuals in Chemung County and we will soon have the Intensive Crisis Stabilization Center which will be open 24/7. The Crisis Stabilization building will be completed hopefully in February 2026 and then it needs to be staffed. We are currently experiencing a workforce shortage, and the possibility exists that these competing programs will be competing for staff. We will also have CPAP, potentially starting in 2027. The mobile component required for CPEP could be contracted out. Jennifer said she is having a meeting with Schuyler County to discuss how this could impact their county. Family Services currently has thirteen crisis members and is well organized. The 988 System is exclusive to telephone conversations. The 988 System sends Jennifer monthly information on the statistics that they gather. Concern was expressed because they do not gather names and addresses, making it difficult to reach them if needed in an emergency. Jennifer said that they do have their phone numbers and call them back to see how they are doing. Jennifer said she called other counties that utilize this system and they all said that they have not had any serious complaints about the 988 System and overall are satisfied with 988. They are trained to talk about suicide prevention. Jennifer said that 988 had 144 calls in November and 43 of those calls were from the Elmira Correctional Facility. Jennifer said we do not want multiple crisis options, we need to consolidate services in a meaningful way for our community, and we do not want to create a system where we keep swapping staff. CASA Trinity is not only concerned about finding clinical staff, but nursing and peers will also provide a challenge for their staffing requirements.

Sharing by Community Members:

Chemung-Schuyler ARC:

They have a 2 ½ hour training they would like to offer other agencies on developmental disabilities and dementia. This is for direct support staff, caregivers, and family on how to interact and support those who are developmentally disabled with dementia. The IDD population is living longer, and those with downs syndrome are at higher risk of developing dementia. Contact Holly Usack if you are interested in this training as well as another training course that does an overview of autism spectrum disorder in children and adults.

They applied for two grants. One they did not get was the capital grant for the article 16 expansion. The one that we did get was funding to expand and enhance access to our 711 Sullivan Street building

They responded to an RFP for Family Support Services that had to be in by September. They are looking for Social and Recreational activities for individuals 21 to 26 years of age. The stated date would be January 1, 2026.

Family Services:

Dustin, who oversees the Crisis Team, is being interviewed by WETM-TV and will be on the news tonight.

Jennifer Emery:

Jennifer would like to thank Lisa Algiers for her service as Chairperson for leading the meetings of the Developmental Disabilities Sub Committee. Lisa said that she will continue to attend the meetings.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2025, at 10:00am IN-PERSON at Chemung County DSS/HRC Building – 425 Pennsylvania Ave. Elmira, NY 14904 – ROOM 319.