

**Background:**

Minutes of the May 2, 2013, Public Policy Committee meeting are included for your review.

**Public Policy Committee**

**Agenda Item 3.**

**Expected Action:**

The Committee will review, revise as appropriate, and approve.

**PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
DRAFT MINUTES  
MAY 2, 2013**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Kristen Cox, Chair	Mary Faithfull, DRTx	Sara Kendall, DARS
Kelly Chirhart, UT CDS	Stephen Gersuk	Kate Layman, HHSC
Mateo Delgado	Cindy Johnston	Lora Taylor
Mary Durham	Jeff Kaufmann, DADS	

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT**

Hunter Adkins	Joe Rivas	Amy Sharp, A&M CDD
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**GUESTS PRESENT**

Cassie Fisher, DARS

**STAFF PRESENT**

Roger A. Webb, Executive Director	Melissa Loe Jessica Ramos	Lucy Walker
Belinda Carlton	Koren Vogel	

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Public Policy Committee convened on Thursday, May 2, 2013, in the Robertson Room of the DoubleTree Hotel, Austin, Texas 78752. Committee Chair Kristen Cox called those present to order at 1:05 p.m.

**1. INTRODUCTIONS**

Committee members and staff introduced themselves.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No public comments were offered to the Committee.

**3. CONSIDERATION OF FEBRUARY 8, 2013, MINUTES**

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the February 8, 2013, Public Policy Committee meeting.

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the February 8, 2013, Public Policy Committee meeting, as presented.

**MADE BY:** Mary Faithfull

**SECOND:** Stephen Gersuk

**ABSTENTIONS:** Cindy Johnston

The motion **passed** unanimously.

**4. CHAIR'S REMARKS**

Chair Kristen Cox reviewed Council and Committee Responsibilities with Committee members as a refresher regarding their role on the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD). At her request, Committee members and staff shared information on their disability background and why they have chosen to serve on the Council and Public Policy Committee.

**5. MEMBER UPDATES**

No additional member updates were offered.

**6. PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT**

Communications Coordinator Melissa Loe reported on recent public information activities, including news releases and media coverage, the Council's new website that was launched in January and statistics on its usage, and social media statistics. After the TCDD home page, the website's most visited content is the People First Language page, with the average viewer spending about four minutes on the page. The TCDD Annual Report web page was viewed by approximately 181 people (i.e., it had 181 "unique views"). TCDD re-posted the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities' Facebook posting of a young child with high heels and a briefcase, which states "Expect me to succeed. I will.," was shared by 30 people within 48 hours of being posted, making it TCDD's most shared post so far.

**7. PUBLIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE**

Public Policy Director Jessica Ramos updated the Committee on the two TCDD Public Policy Recommendations that were adopted in February 2013, which would: prohibit organ transplant recipient discrimination on the basis of certain disabilities; and establish an Employment-First policy in Texas and a task force to promote opportunities for individuals with disabilities to earn a living wage with competitive employment.

These recommendations are addressed in Senate Bills 1112 and 1226, respectively, which are under consideration by the 83rd Texas Legislature. The organ transplant bill is not expected to pass during the current legislative session because it did not receive a hearing because it probably is better addressed at the federal level. The Employment First bill already was passed by the Senate and has enough time to make it through the rest of the legislative process. Because anything can happen during the legislative process, Ms. Ramos urged Committee members "not to let a bill break their hearts." TCDD staff used two personal stories from grant projects in testimony on the Employment First bill. One personal story is about Mark Puckette, a small businessman who owns Not A Mark window cleaning in Longview, Texas. He started his business in 2008 with assistance from Texas Customized Self-Employment Project, a TCDD funded project through Community Healthcore. The other story features Joey Elizondo Jr. who is attending South Texas College in McAllen, using support from Project HIRE, TCDD's career development project through the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services.

**8. PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES**

Ramos and Public Policy Specialist Belinda Carlton updated the Committee on public policy issues and state legislation important to people with disabilities, as well as a few federal issues such as the effects of sequestration on housing for people with disabilities. Key state legislation included Senate Bill 1, which is being discussed by a Conference Committee now and would set the state's budget for the next two fiscal years. Another bill, SB 7, would reform Medicaid long-term services and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities by transferring their services to a single managed care system by 2020. This includes HCS, CLASS, DBMD and TxHmL waivers and the ICF/ID

program, but not state supported living centers. Other significant issues include interest list reduction, mental health, a proposal that college students who are training to be teachers learn about positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), and other education bills.

The Public Policy Committee also received an update regarding a meeting between disability advocates and Department of Justice (DOJ) staff concerning the SSLC settlement agreement established in 2009. Monitors continue to track the progress in meeting the terms of the settlement agreement at all 13 SSLCs. The centers are not expected to achieve the settlement targets in the near term..

#### **9. FUTURE PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY PROJECTS**

The Council invests in advocacy and leadership training for Texans with developmental disabilities so they can advocate for their right to be fully included in the communities where they live and can exercise control over their own lives. The Committee received background information regarding the community organizing executive summary under consideration by the Project Development. The Committee reviewed this executive summary because of its potential advocacy and policy implications. The objective is to increase grassroots advocacy by developing leaders who can effectively address the policy issues of their choosing.

In April, to address risk management recommendations, the Executive Committee reviewed ideas for distributing funds quickly. One of the ideas reviewed favorably by the Executive Committee related to funding fellowships to support the development of advocates who can effectively address statewide developmental disability public policy issues. As the result, the Public Policy Committee also discussed a possible project relating to developmental disability advocacy fellowships and provided guidance to staff to further develop the idea.

Texas nonprofit advocacy organizations would be eligible to receive a grant to hire and train a developmental disability policy fellow for up to two years. Staff anticipate that the fellows would be recent graduates of law, social work, public policy or other related graduate programs. The fellows would learn about the many ways that public policy advocacy can influence systems change, including statutory and regulatory actions and organizational practice with a foundation in the Council's values.

The work of the developmental disability policy fellows could inform the development of advanced policy symposiums, webinars and podcasts for advocates across Texas who are interested in state level policy and advocacy. It is envisioned that this project would result in growing the ranks of those who "get it" and develop a pool of persons with the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to begin to build the developmental disability policy workforce. It could also provide electronic and accessible products to self advocates across Texas. The Committee regarded the potential project favorably and expect staff to develop an executive summary for this project for consideration at the August Council meeting.

#### **10. OTHER DISCUSSION ISSUES**

Committee members suggested and discussed ideas for topics that they might like to learn about in future meetings. These ideas included EveryChild, Inc.'s work to create families for children residing in institutions, the transition from children's to adult Medicaid and how services change, the State's Aging and Disability Resource Centers, an update on the Affordable Care Act, and a primer on the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, Committee Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

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Roger A. Webb  
Secretary to the Council

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Date