

Background:

Minutes of the May 3, 2012, 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 3, 2012**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Joe Rivas, Chair	Mary Faithfull, DRT	Jeff Kaufmann, DADS
Kristen Cox, Vice Chair	Frank Genco, HHSC	Lora Taylor
Hunter Adkins	Cindy Johnston	Rick Tisch

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Michael Benz	Mary Faithfull	Penny Seay
Mateo Delgado	Sara Kendall	

STAFF PRESENT

Roger A. Webb, Executive Director	Cassie Fisher Melissa Loe	Jessica Ramos Melissa Rosser
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GUESTS PRESENT

Amanda Dunnavant	Leticia Finely	Marisa Quist
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CALL TO ORDER

The Public Policy Committee convened on Thursday, May 3, 2012, in the Majestic 5 Room of the Sheraton Dallas Hotel, 400 North Olive,; Dallas, TX 75201. Committee Chair Joe Rivas called those present to order at 1:42 PM.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Committee members, staff, and guests were introduced.

2. CONSIDERATION OF FEBRUARY 9, 2012, MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the February 9, 2012, Public Policy Committee meeting.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the February 9, 2012, Public Policy Committee meetings as amended.

MADE BY: Hunter Adkins

SECOND: Rick Tisch

The motion **passed** unanimously.

4. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Public Policy Chair Joe Rivas announced that he will be moving into his own home in the near future and discussed plans for the house.

5. REAL COMMUNITIES INITIATIVES PRESENTATION DISCUSSION

Committee members discussed the presentation given on Asset Based Community Development in the Committee of the Whole by Eric Jacobson, Executive Director of the Georgia Council on

Developmental Disabilities. Members appreciated the idea of focusing on approaches in the community that are working, rather than focusing on those approaches that are ineffective.

6. PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

A. State Policy Issues

Public Policy Director Jessica Ramos gave an update on several interim charges issued to Texas Senate Committees on Education, Health & Human Services, and Finance. Council Member Hunter Adkins, Public Policy Director Jessica Ramos, and Council Member Jeff Kaufmann discussed the delay in implementation of the Electronic Visit Verification System in certain regions of the state.

Ramos reported that the House Appropriations Committee is reviewing cost containment initiatives in health and human services programs. The committee will examine ways to lower costs for waiver programs, monitoring the DOJ Agreement with SSLCs, and Medicaid reform options.

Ramos also informed the committee about a House Public Health and Insurance Joint Committee hearing held on February 27, 2012, regarding the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The committee heard invited testimony from Dr. Thomas Saving, a professor of economics at Texas A&M University, who said that people with disabilities and seniors are the major cost drivers in the healthcare system. If implemented, the Health and Human Services Commission reported that the ACA will reduce the proportion of uninsured Texans from 26 percent of the population to nine percent of the population (2.3 million Texans). An additional 1.2 million persons will be enrolled in Medicaid bringing the total to 4.7 million.

On February 29, 2012, the Joint Committee on Medicaid Reform met to address charges required in Senate Bill 7 (SB 7) from the first called special session of the 82nd legislature. SB 7 directs HHSC to pursue a federal waiver requesting flexibility in the way Texas operates its Medicaid program and appointed a legislative oversight committee. DADS and HHSC identified several opportunities for improving the system, and discussion to improve the intellectual and developmental disabilities service system is expected to continue through the summer.

Jessica Ramos informed committee members that individuals on Medicaid waivers have historically been exempt from being included in managed care. However, STAR Health (Managed Care) will include waiver participants in Medicaid Rural Services Areas for acute care services.

B. Update on State Supported Living Center Monitoring Activities

The Committee received a briefing from Public Policy Assistant Melissa Rosser on the efforts of the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) to comply with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Settlement Agreement (SA) regarding state supported living centers (SSLCs). Overall, there was not significant improvement in the facilities' compliance with the SA. The DOJ monitors recently released the last round of reports in the third compliance reviews of the Austin, San Angelo, Lubbock and Lufkin SSLCs.

C. Federal Policy Issues

The Committee discussed specific federal policy issues currently under consideration by the US Congress, including federal appropriations, federal efforts to hire individuals with disabilities, and manufactured housing access.

Ms. Ramos informed the committee that beginning in FY 2013, federal appropriations will be reduced by nearly \$1 trillion through automatic, across-the-board cuts (also known as "sequestration"), over 9 years if Congress does not change the budget agreement law passed last year or find alternate savings and revenue increases. The proposed cuts would be in addition to \$1 trillion of spending cuts already approved. At the recent Disability Policy Seminar, advocates encouraged Congress to consider options other than an across-the-board cut which would hinder recession recovery and inhibit agencies from responding to poverty and population growth.

Policy Specialist Cassie Fisher informed the committee that the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is receiving pushback regarding its proposal to set a target for federal contractors and subcontractors to hire persons with disabilities at a rate of seven percent of their workforces. DOL is currently receiving comments on the proposed rule change.

Ms. Fisher also reported that Social Security Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) funding is expiring at the end of June if Congress does not take action. WIPA funding enables Social Security beneficiaries to return permanently to the workplace.

Jeff Kaufmann, Council Member from DADS, asked for input from the Council on project ideas for \$50 million that DADS will receive from the Money Follows the Person program. Plans must be approved by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid services, but DADS will be seeking public input and suggestions on ways to transition individuals from institutions to the community.

7. PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT

Communication Coordinator Melissa Loe reported to the Committee about staff public information and outreach activities. TCDD staff have been working with legislative offices to announce new grant projects in order to build relationships and inform those legislators about disability issues. These announcements have received a lot of media coverage. The launch of Project HIRE received extensive media coverage, and TCDD was invited to speak about the project at the House Technology Committee Hearing on March 30, 2012. Staff created a new graphic, encouraging the use of People First Language in preparation of Facebook's transition to the timeline format. This image was also used for an advertisement in the State Independent Living Conference program. Staff are developing a new website that will be in a better-supported platform and accessible for screen readers and mobile devices.

8. FUTURE PROJECTS/ STATE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Communications Coordinator Melissa Loe led a discussion on the new State Plan objective on Public Awareness Activities. Goal Three of the State Plan calls for the Council to conduct two ongoing educational activities in collaboration with other organizations and businesses to provide culturally responsive services for people with disabilities. At the February 2012 Council meeting, the Committee asked staff to conduct research on accessible parking. Melissa Loe informed the

Committee about current laws regarding vehicles other than vans utilizing van accessible spaces. She also reported on initiatives by the City of Austin and Travis County to raise awareness and conduct outreach on accessible parking.

MOTION: To recommend to the Council that the the first Public Awareness Activity be focused on accessible parking.

MADE BY: Rick Tisch

SECOND: Cindy Johnston

The motion **passed** unanimously.

9. TCDD 2012 BIENNIAL DISABILITY REPORT UPDATE

Ms. Fisher provided an update to the committee on the 2012 Biennial Disability Report. Fisher informed the committee that the technical writer is reviewing data with contacts from state agencies and provided a timeline of the project.

10. REVIEW OF POSITION STATEMENTS

Fisher led a discussion on Council position statements regarding the following issues: Access to Health Care, Service Coordination, Guardianship, and Family Support Services. The committee reviewed proposed changes from Council members and staff and proposed additional changes for the consideration of the Council. A technical change to the position statement on Children and Families, as approved at the February 2012 was also reviewed.

MOTION: To approve proposed changes to the Access to Health Care position statement and present the revised position statement to the Council for consideration.

MADE BY: Rick Tisch

SECOND: Lora Taylor

The motion **passed** unanimously. (Attachment 1)

MOTION: To approve proposed changes to the Service Coordination position statement and present the revised position statement to the Council for consideration.

MADE BY: Rick Tisch

SECOND: Hunter Adkins

The motion **passed** unanimously. (Attachment 2)

MOTION: To approve proposed changes to the Guardianship position statement and present the revised position statement to the Council for consideration.

Draft Minutes, May 3, 2012, Public Policy Committee Meeting

MADE BY: Kristen Cox

SECOND: Lora Taylor

The motion **passed** unanimously. (Attachment 3)

MOTION: To approve proposed changes to the Family Support position statement and present the revised position statement to the Council for consideration.

MADE BY: Lora Taylor

SECOND: Hunter Adkins

The motion **passed** unanimously. (Attachment 4)

MOTION: To approve proposed changes to the Children and Families position statement and present the revised position statement to the Council for consideration.

MADE BY: Kristen Cox

SECOND: Lora Taylor

The motion **passed** unanimously. (Attachment 5)

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Committee Chair Rivas adjourned the meeting at 4:46 PM.

Roger A. Webb
Secretary to the Council

Date