

Background:

Minutes of the February 6, 2014, 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
February 6, 2014**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Kristen Cox, Chair	Jeff Kaufmann, DADS	David Taylor
Hunter Adkins	Sara Kendall, DARS	Lora Taylor
Mateo Delgado	Joe Rivas	April Young, HHSC
Mary Faithfull, DRTx	Amy Sharp, TAMU-UCEDD	

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT

Stephen Gersuk	Kate Layman, HHSC
Cindy Johnston	Penny Seay, TCDS

GUESTS PRESENT

Brandy Holt, DARS

STAFF PRESENT

Belinda Carlton	Peggy Oster	Roger Webb
Celina Galván	Jessica Ramos	
Erin Lawler	Lucy Walker	

CALL TO ORDER

The Public Policy Committee convened on Thursday, February 6, 2014, in Room Wildflower at the Hilton Austin Airport Hotel, Austin, Texas 78719. Committee Chair Kristen Cox called those present to order at 2:15 p.m.

1. INTRODUCTIONS

Committee Chair Kristen Cox asked the Committee members and staff to introduce themselves, and to get to know each other more personally, asked those present to share a goal for 2014 for themselves or for the loved one that they represent.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were offered to the Committee.

3. CONSIDERATION OF AUGUST 8, 2013, MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the minutes from the October 24, 2013, Public Policy Committee meeting.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the October 24, 2013, Public Policy Committee meeting as presented.

MADE BY: Hunter Adkins

SECOND: Mary Faithfull

The motion **passed** unanimously with abstentions from Amy Sharp and Lora Taylor..

4. CHAIR'S REMARKS

Chair Kristen Cox encouraged more engagement from the Council members during the meeting, reminding members that enthusiasm is not only needed during legislative sessions.

Public Policy Director Jessica Ramos asked members to talk with or email Ms. Cox or her about any policy proposals that staff might develop.

5. MEMBER UPDATES

No additional member updates were offered.

6. REVISIONS OF TCDD POSITION STATEMENTS

Chair Kristen Cox stated that little input was received from Committee members about the Position Statements and requested that Jessica Ramos lead the Position Statements discussion. Ms. Ramos indicated that the Employment Position Statement was substantially revised to reference to the Employment First Policy that was passed during the last legislative session; to include a reference to reasonable accommodations; to state that transition plans should reflect each student's highest potential; to state that employment should not result in the permanent loss of public benefits such as health care; and to separate, as distinct ideas, the dissemination of information regarding civil rights and the dissemination of information relating to the tangible benefits to employers who hire persons with disabilities. The Committee reviewed the Employment Position Statement companion graphic and recommended using a "softer" tone regarding Americans with Disabilities requirements for employers and using plain language version on the opposite side from the graphic.

MOTION: To recommend Council approval of the Employment Position Statement as drafted.

MADE BY: Lora Taylor

SECOND: Amy Sharp

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Ramos reviewed the proposed draft of the Guardianship and Supported Decision-making Position Statement. Public Policy Specialist Belinda Carlton in collaboration with Richard LaVallo, Legal Director for Disability Rights Texas, provided substantial edits to the proposed Statement. Ms. Ramos also presented a companion graphic on alternatives to guardianship. Committee members agreed that the infographic was clear and helped clarify the intent of Position Statement. After discussion, the Committee recommended Council approval of the Guardianship and Supported Decision-making Position Statement with the following revisions:

- First bullet: Replacing "simply due to" with "because of."
- Second bullet revised to read: "Courts should consider alternatives to guardianship before creating a guardianship. People with disabilities should be given the opportunity to avoid or limit guardianship through a variety of alternatives including supported decision-making. Supported decision-making would allow a person with a disability to select a person or persons to help the person with the disability to understand and make decisions about their own life."
- Last Bullet: Add "required to" between "should" and "meet."

MOTION: To recommend Council approval of the Guardianship and Supported Decision-making Position Statement with revisions as discussed to the first, second and last bullets.

MADE BY: Lora Taylor

SECOND: Hunter Adkins

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Director Ramos indicated that the Public Transportation Position Statement was edited for clarity. After discussion, the Committee recommended the Public Transportation Position Statement with a revision to repeat the four adjectives from the first sentence in the last sentence.

MOTION: To recommend Council approval of the proposed draft of the Position Statement on Transportation as revised.

MADE BY: Hunter Adkins

SECOND: Lora Taylor

The motion **passed** unanimously.

Ramos reviewed the Aging with Developmental Disabilities Position Statement. Council member Hunter Adkins worked with Public Policy Specialists Belinda Carlton and Erin Lawler and submitted a substantially edited draft in Plain Language for consideration. After discussion, the Committee decided to take no action on the Aging with Developmental Disabilities Position Statement and asked staff to bring it back for consideration at the May 2014 Public Policy Committee meeting.

7. PUBLIC POLICY ISSUES

Ms. Ramos provided updates regarding public policy activities including guardianship advocacy activities, Senate Bill (SB) 7 Advisory Committees and timelines, Employment First implementation, an update on the Person Centered Thinking training for employees at the state supported living center, and the Austin Travis County Integral Care transition story project.

Ramos provided an update on SB 7 that required the redesign of the Long-Term Supports and Services system for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Ms. Ramos reported that staff are especially concerned about the transition of medical benefits to managed care for waiver participants, and provided a summary of the timeline for transition. Ramos explained that the transition to managed care is complex as a result of all of the different programs and different protocols for people with various individual circumstances. Informational sessions to explain the changes are scheduled around the state. Committee members were encouraged to consider inviting HHSC to make presentations at already scheduled events in order to ensure greater participation.

Ms. Ramos also provided an update on each of the SB7 Advisory Committees: State Medicaid Managed Care Advisory Committee (MMCAC), STAR Kids Advisory Committee, the Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) System Redesign Advisory Committee, and STAR+PLUS Quality Council. Ramos reported that the Employment First Taskforce application had been released and that 116 completed applications had been submitted, 1/3 from people with disabilities. The Council is providing travel support to self-advocate and family members of the Taskforce. April Young from the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) reported that the first meeting of the Taskforce is scheduled for February 15, but that the meeting may be moved to March because of questions about the composition of the members. Initially agency employees were thought non-voting members of the Task Force. However, HHSC's legal

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department has indicated agency members are voting members which changes the composition of the Taskforce since the enabling legislation requires that 1/3 of the members be people with disabilities.

Executive Director Roger Webb reported that advocacy organizations are invited to attend a Disability Rights and Services Roundtable Discussion with John Colyandro, Director of Policy for the Greg Abbott Campaign, on Friday, February 7. Ms. Ramos and he will attend. Webb congratulated Public Policy Specialist Belinda Carlton and Richard LaVallo, Legal Director for Disability Rights Texas, for their work to build coalitions with the elders system, the judicial system, and the disability world to move forward on various issue concerning guardianship and alternatives to guardianship.

Ms. Ramos reported that the census for State Supported Living Centers (SSLC) is currently 3,509 people at the 13 SSLCs. Webb noted that the Institute for Person Center Thinking training, a collaboration with the SSLCs, the University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) and TCDD, is on-going. Director Ramos updated the committee on the Austin-Travis County Integral Care (ATCIC) pilot program of at Austin SSLC that is assisting with transitions of SSLC residents who choose to move to the community as part of the downsizing of the Austin SSLC. ATCIC is collecting transition stories and will produce three short videos. The purpose of the project is to build support for the pilot’s expansion, support for people and families working to achieve transition, and an acknowledgement that the community is an option even in the most unlikely circumstances. As discussed previously with the Committee, TCDD is contracting with ATCIC to assist with these video stories.

Ms. Ramos reviewed a recent Internal Revenue Service’s (IRS) update regarding foster companion support payments to parents of an adult child in Home and Community-based Services Medicaid waivers. IRS has reversed its position, and has stated that “difficulty-of-care” payments may now be excluded from income. A News & Features article is forthcoming.

Joanna Cordry, Project Development Coordinator, updated the Committee that the Council is about half way through the Five Year State Plan, and will try to use more images in the next Plan.

8. PUBLIC INFORMATION REPORT

Ms. Ramos discussed the Public Information Report behind Tab 13 as well as the newly developed graphics for two of the Position Statements

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Committee Chair Cox adjourned the meeting at 4:06 p.m.

Roger A. Webb
Secretary to the Council

Date