

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY TASK
FORCE

Meeting Summary

January 29, 2020

Co-chairman of the task force, Mark Weinberg, convened the meeting

Co-chairman of the task force, Orv Karan, announced that Paul Rosin of the Community Residences will not be presenting today due to illness.

Mary Pat DeCarl, Vice President, Program Services, Kennedy Center, presented and stated that the Kennedy Center has offices in Fairfield and New Haven counties, comprising of 16 residential services, 32-day programs, art programs, competitive employment, and until recently the Birth to Three program.

Ms. DeCarl added that the Center struggles to provide the services needed by the intellectual disability community. Currently, 11 individuals who need one on one care are waitlisted by the Center because it is unable to provide the necessary staff. The main concern the Kennedy Center has with the intaking of individuals with complex needs is finances. Ms. DeCarl added that although in the past there has been financial support for the Center, currently there is not.

Ms. DeCarl stated that employees at the Center are paid \$14.75 per hour, and for approximately 75% of the employees, the Center is their second or third job. As such, although individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) may require a complex regiment of medication and a lot of patience, it may be difficult for someone without an advanced degree and on their third job of the day to understand the medications or have the patience necessary to provide care to the IDD community. Ms. DeCarl suggested that a certification program be implemented for individuals working in the IDD community so that they are better able to implement goals set by the Center.

Heather LaTorra, President and Chief Executive Officer, Marrakech, Inc., presented and stated that Marrakech is a statewide human services organization. Marrakech provides services to the IDD community, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services community, and to

youth with or without disabilities. They also provide services to individuals with medical complex needs and behavioral complex needs.

Matt Puttre, Director of Residential Services, MidState Arc, Inc., presented and explained that MidState Arc is based in Maryland although they offer services in Connecticut. The Arc services 300 individuals with disabilities per day, and offers group home residential services, individualized services, day programs, and in-home support services. Mr. Puttre offered specific examples of the challenges individuals with developmental disabilities have faced and the way MidState Arc has helped them in their endeavors.

Barry Simon, President and Chief Executive Officer, Oak Hill, presented and spoke of housing options for the IDD community.

Barry Simon Presentation

Mr. Simon stated that housing options for individuals with complex needs exist if the state is willing to pay for them. He added that individuals with complex needs and their families prefer to be integrated into the community. Mr. Simon noted that although housing options exist, choices remain limited due to cost.

Ms. Milo asked Mr. Simon whether Oak Hill has had incidences of abuse, neglect or untimely deaths.

Mr. Simon answered that at some point there have been such incidences.

Martha Dwyer, an individual who signed up to speak during the public portion of the meeting, testified. Ms. Dwyer is the president of the Home and School Association of the Southbury Training School. She is an advocate of keeping available to the IDD community facilities such as the Southbury Training Schools and increasing their availability to any individual who requires their level of care and environment.

Hugo Dwyer, an individual who signed up to speak during the public portion of the meeting, testified. Mr. Dwyer is the treasurer of the Home and School Association of the Southbury Training School. Mr. Dwyer noted that he is here today to ask the task force to keep all housing options open for individuals with developmental disabilities. Although group homes are great for many people, there are people on different complex spectrums that need different levels of care. Institutionalism does not work for everyone.

Rose Petrusi, an individual who signed up to speak during the public portion of the meeting, testified. Ms. Petrusi is the advocate of the Home and School Association of the Southbury Training School. Staff at STS are paid well, and the turnover is very low. She added that the process for reporting abuse and neglect at STS is probably one the best in the state. Ms. Petrusi advocated for an online comprehensive database where the IDD community can help each other by publicly sharing their knowledge.

The next task force meeting was scheduled for April 15, 2020 at 1:00 PM.

