

Virginia Brain Injury Council

October 27, 2023, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Minutes

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Central Office
8004 Franklin Farms Drive Henrico, VA 23229

Council Chair, Mike Puglia, welcome everyone and called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Donna verified a quorum was physically present at the meeting location. There were no objections to the participation of members attending electronically.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mike Puglia, Chair
Kara Beatty, Vice Chair
Patrik Sandas, Secretary
Maria Altonen (Proxy – Camilla Herndon)
David DeBiasi
Kristen Galles
Deborah Johnson
Amol Karmarkar
Kevin Koziol
Kelly Lang (participating electronically from home, medical reason)
Erika Lawhorn (Proxy – Ben Shaw)
Elizabeth Horn (participating electronically from home, caregiving reason)
Christiane Miller
Susan Moon (participating electronically from home, caregiving reason)
Steven Nape
Derek O’Neal
John Reynolds (participating electronically from home, personal reason)
Nicholas Rudisill
Maria Stransky
Amber Walter
Jason Young

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Gayl Brunk
Joani Latimer
Cara Meixner, Immediate Past Chair
Teri Morgan
Sandy Parker, Family Ombudsman
George Worthington

OTHERS PRESENT:

Donna Cantrell, DARS, Staff to Council
Marcia DuBois, DARS, Deputy Commissioner, Division for Community Living
Carolyn Turner, DARS, Director, Office for Disability Programs

OTHERS OBSERVING VIRTUALLY:

Kathy Stumm

Rachel Evans, Executive Director, No Limits Eastern Shore

Kyle Fulk, No Limits Eastern Shore

Review Proposed Agenda

There were no changes to the proposed agenda, and it was approved by consensus.

Review of July, 2023 Meeting Minutes

There were no changes to the proposed minutes which were approved by consensus.

Public Comment Period

Jason Young proposed that the Public Comment Period be moved at the request of the speaker to accommodate her participation. The Council agreed to move the Public Comment Period to after the Retreat Discussion.

Retreat Follow Up

A Council-member retreat was held on September 19th and 20th, in Richmond, Virginia. 22 Council members and 3 individuals from DARS' Administration attended the program that discussed various operating protocols, began a discussion clarifying both member and Council roles, responsibilities and mission, and identified some next steps for improving Council's effectiveness as an advisory body to the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services. A brief summary document is provided as an attachment to these minutes.

Members offered their feedback on the Retreat. Many members expressed that they felt "heard," and the in-person time was well spent and that the most valuable aspects of the Retreat was the networking and getting to know and understand other members and their interests and expertise better. Several noted that while there was a lot of important information that came out of those 2 days, the follow-up is going to be critical in putting it all together and using that information to drive the mission focus and progress that came out of it. Others agreed that the small group work was good, but that the amount and speed of the activities was a bit overwhelming.

Chris read feedback from a member unable to attend the meeting who felt that while it was very good networking time, it did not meet the purpose they expected. They had hoped to receive more information on the history and activities of Council through the years, and it would have been helpful to receive information on the funding structures that support both DARS and the Council, ahead of time.

Kelly Lang works with the Health Services and Research Institute (HSRI) on several projects related to survivor engagement on advisory boards and is currently working with several states to develop recommendations for best practices. She shared that she and her project partner have learned that it all comes down to "on-boarding." An

Orientation Planning Committee has been appointed and will meet in November to evaluate the current program and propose modifications.

Specific ideas from the Retreat that Council members would like to discuss further include:

- How youth and sports related brain injuries are represented on Council.
- How Council can address the needs of individuals with less than "severe brain injuries."
- Needs and Resources Assessments: A Needs and Resources Assessment is part of years 4 and 5 of the federal grant and will be done through a contract with researchers at James Madison University.
- What is the Executive Committee's role related to committees (i.e. should committee chairs be represented on the Executive Committee).
- Education on current brain injury programs and what DARS' role is related to brain injury services across the State.
- Assure that Council members have updated information about implementation of Brain Injury Targeted Case Management and development of a waiver and links to related resources.
- Information on how a Bill becomes a Law and where the advocacy points are in that process. DARS staff will ask the policy unit about training for Council.
- Developing two-way communication between DARS and VBIC.

The facilitators of the Retreat will debrief with the Executive Committee. A plan for next steps will be developed for Council to review.

Council took a 10 minute break.

Consideration of New Meeting Time

At the retreat many Council members expressed that Friday afternoon meetings are problematic for a variety of reasons. Council reviewed the results of the survey about potential meeting times.

- Thursday, mid-day appears to be the day that most, but not all, members favor.
- Federal funds are not to be used to provide lunches; therefore, meetings may not include lunch.
- More information is needed to move forward. A more specific survey will be sent to Council members.

The January meeting will be held virtually at the previously scheduled time: January 26, 2024 at 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Public Comment Period

Kathy Stumm submitted written comment and spoke to the Council electronically. Ms. Stumm's written public comment is provided as an attachment to these minutes.

Following Ms. Stumm's public comment, Jason Young asked if a representative of the Department for Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) would be appointed to the Council given activities related to Medicaid in the State of Virginia. Chris explained that when the membership committee was active, she focused on increasing the membership to 50% of individuals with lived experience and did not focus on filling other representatives identified by the federal grant and the Administration for Community Living (ACL). DARS Leadership is reviewing ACL requirements and will share a proposal for membership that includes both 50% of individuals with brain injury and the agencies/organizations required by the federal grant. Members supported having a new DMAS representative as a member of Council.

Committee and Workgroup Reports

- Nominations and Elections Committee Report
 - *Election of Committee Chair* – Committee Chair Nick Rudisill asked Susan Moon to give the report at this meeting.
 - *Election of Officers* – Two officer positions are open during this cycle: Secretary and Family Ombudsman.
 - Patrik Sandas is eligible to serve another term as Secretary and the Committee proposed that he be re-elected to serve.
 - Sandy Parker is the current Family Ombudsman; she is not seeking re-election. There is not currently someone on Council who can fill this role who is not already serving in another capacity; therefore, the Committee suggests that this position remain vacant for the next year, to allow time to develop a formal "role-description" and to recruit for an individual to serve in that role.
 - The proposed slate of officers is Patrik Sandas as Secretary. Kara Beatty motioned and Deborah Johnson seconded to accept the Slate.
 - The motion was approved unanimously with Patrik Sandas abstaining.
 - *Application Process for New Members* – This election-cycle, Council needs to fill 6 positions: 3 survivors, 2 family members, and 1 individual who is a licensed/certified healthcare provider.
 - Staff is developing a fillable application and a recruitment/marketing flyer and will be asking members to work within their networks to recruit applicants to fill these positions.
 - Council is committed to increasing diversity to include representatives from around the State, emphasizing the need to recruit from the Eastern and Southwest regions of the State. Members are encouraged to expand their searches to include racial and ethnic minorities and individuals representing older and/or youth populations.
 - Last year, the Committee implemented a vetting process with prospective applicants, and this year, they are considering how effective that was and if adjustments need to be made.
 - VBIC members are encouraged to reach out to their networks and recruitment materials are sent to the State funded programs, Centers for Independent Living, Area Agencies on Aging, and other disability organizations to try to reach a

- diverse audience. The Committee is open to any suggestions members have for recruiting and reaching a wider audience.
- Once applications are reviewed and candidates selected, a Slate of Candidates will be proposed and voted on at the January meeting.
 - VBIC will submit an approved Slate to the Commissioner of DARS and she will make her formal appointments at that time. New members will assume their roles at the April, 2024 meeting.
- Housing Workgroup Update
 - Kelly Lang, Housing Workgroup Chair, presented.
 - Members of this Committee include: David DeBaisi, Chris Miller, Susan Moon, Sandy Parker, Marcia DuBois, Jason Young, and Elizabeth Horn.
 - The Housing Workgroup is meeting every other week through the end of the year to gather information on existing housing opportunities for individuals living with brain injury in Virginia.
 - During this quarter, the Workgroup heard from Ann Bevin at the Department for Medical Assistance Services and Stephanie Peaco from Virginia Supportive Housing about how their programs work and how similar services might serve to support individuals living with brain injury.
 - It is the workgroup's intention to develop recommendations to present to Council in early 2024.
 - Priorities Committee Appointments
 - The Priorities Committee is responsible for developing the Council's Annual Priorities which are shared with the DARS. The Priorities identify areas or efforts related to brain injury that Council wants to see the agency and the Commissioner focus on for the coming year. The Priorities Committee may consider information from a variety of sources including surveys, reports, research and/or information from the Alliance of Brain Injury Services Providers or the Brain Injury Association of Virginia in developing its priorities.
 - Members appointed: Kristen Galles, Derek O'Neal, Amol Karmarkar, Jason Young, Patrik Sandas. A Chair will be appointed at the first meeting.

Updates from Director of Brain Injury Services

Chris Miller provided an update on the development of Medicaid Targeted Case Management services, brain injury waivers and a history and status of State Funding for brain injury services in Virginia. Attachments are provided with these minutes.

Virginia General Assembly Session, Legislative Updates

Jason Young, Chair of the Virginia Alliance of Brain Injury Services Providers, and David DeBiasi, Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association of Virginia, gave updates on their organizations' legislative priorities for the 2024 General Assembly Session. They have 3 primary requests this session.

Top Priority: Workforce Retention:

State contracted brain injury programs are seeking a 10% cost of living increase to recruit and retain a qualified workforce. Brain injury programs report high attrition and difficulty filling open positions because of non-competitive salaries and less than robust benefits. With this funding, service providers would be able to raise staff salaries to levels at which they could fairly compete for qualified staff and retain them.

Strengthen Safety Net Community Based Service System:

This funding would facilitate the hiring of an additional staff within our state funded safety net brain injury services system, including additional case managers, mental health counselors and supports, assistive technology specialists, and employment and community support specialists to meet the growing demands for services across the state.

Cost of Living Adjustment

Add state funded brain injury programs to the Central Appropriations language: Full-time employees of *state funded brain injury programs*, Community Services Boards, Centers for Independent Living, secure detention centers supported by Juvenile Block Grants, juvenile delinquency prevention and local court service units, local social services boards, local pretrial services act and Comprehensive Community Corrections Act employees, and local health departments where a memorandum of understanding exists with the Virginia Department of Health.

New Business

Kristen asked about the status of the State Brain Injury Plan. This Committee will begin its work in January, 2024

Mike thanked members for their participation in today's meeting and reminded them that the next meeting will be held virtually on Friday, January 26, 2024.

Mike called for a motion and a second to adjourn the meeting. Amber Walter made the motion and Nick Rudisill Seconded. Mike adjourned the meeting at 3:50.

NEXT MEETING: Friday, January 26, 2024, Virtual