

Olmstead Plan Stakeholder Advisory

Quarterly Meeting

June 25, 2024; 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM Online

Minutes

Welcome. Holly Riddle, Assistant Director for the Olmstead Plan, opened the meeting, announcing that Co-Chair Betsy MacMichael was not able to be with the group and sent regrets. She then introduced Deputy Secretary Debra Farrington. The Deputy Secretary noted that there had been protesters at the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) on June 24. The protesters, members of ADAPT, were demonstrating in favor of community living over nursing home care. In discussing the what had occurred, Deputy Secretary Farrington took note of the work the NCDHHS has done in this area, much of it through the Olmstead Plan Stakeholder Advisory (OPSA). She agreed that there were outstanding needs; emphasized the importance of continued collaboration; and, in this spirit, commended the leadership provided the Olmstead Plan by the Olmstead Plan Stakeholder Advisory (OPSA) Co-Chairs Betsy MacMichael and Bryan Dooley, Ms. Riddle, and the OPSA members in the promulgation of strategies for addressing these needs. The Deputy Secretary concluded by stating that the NCDHHS respected the right to protest, had encouraged and would continue to encourage an open, solutions-oriented dialogue.

Olmstead Turns 25. Ms. Riddle welcomed OPSA Co-Chair Bryan Dooley, noting that he had presented last week at the White House as part of the Administration's celebration of the 25th anniversary of the *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision. She was pleased, she noted, that Mr. Dooley, in addition to introducing himself as Chair of the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities, had told the national audience he was also Co-Chair of the state's Olmstead Plan Stakeholder Advisory.

In his remarks to the OPSA, Mr. Dooley described meeting at the White House one of the primary drafters of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Tony Coelho, and meeting, back in North Carolina, with the Governor. In Washington, Mr. Dooley said he had described his advocacy for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and his personal experience of being without one for an extended period. He commended, in his remarks on the occasion, North Carolina's wage increases for DSPs and the state's efforts to improve recruitment and retention of this vital workforce. Mr. Dooley's remarks in Washington and before the OPSA addressed his interest in continuing to work for greater inclusion for people with disabilities, which he does professionally as a community inclusion specialist.

Highlights of NC's Progress to Date. The OPSA heard from presenters Becky Boss and Megan Lee of the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC). Ms. Boss opened by echoing previous congratulations to Mr. Dooley. She thanked the NCDHHS' agencies and staff of the Office for Olmstead and Transitions to Community Living (TCL) for assisting the TAC in the development of the latest quarterly report. The TAC's current update on plan implementation covered actions that carried over from the Calendar Year 2022 –

2023 Olmstead Plan into the first quarter of 2024. She reminded the OPSA that the 2024 – 2025 Plan did not take effect until April of 2024 and advised that, in its presentation, the TAC would cover key takeaways from the first quarter of this year, along with next steps to implementation.

TAC's Megan Lee then described the streamlining of the reporting process, noting the new tool that TAC has begun using. This tool moves away from and simplifies the previous, lengthy, narrative reporting on progress and provides each division with notice of what they are being asked to address for the plan reporting period. She reminded the OPSA that the previous plan had 11 priority areas, while the new plan has six. She then reviewed highlights of the new quarterly report, which has been posted online. Takeaways for January 1 through March 31, 2024 are activities that fall under the 2022 - 2023 Olmstead Plan.

Examples of progress reported in the update include:

- The development of a remote supports service definition for the Community Living and Support and Supported Living services under the Medicaid waiver.
- TCL's support of participants interested in becoming certified peer support specialists.
- The Division of State Operated Healthcare Facilities' survey to learn about the barriers to transitions to community setting among developmental center residents and families and that division's work to inform its constituents about available community services and supports.
- The Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services' (DMH/DD/SUS) development and use of Individual Reentry Plans for people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) released from prison.
- Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organizations' (LME/MCOs) use of peers to provide in-reach to those in psychiatric facilities and the adoption of the NC Collaborative for Ongoing Recovery through Employment (NC CORE).
- The advancement of the online site *Inclusion Works* in the intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) community.
- The development of an action plan to guide implementation of the Strategic Housing Plan.
- NC's selection for participation in the Housing and Services Partnership Accelerator.
- The launch of the online site *Inclusion Connects* to assist people with I/DD and families with community-based services.
- The establishment of the unlicensed kinship reimbursement program to promote "Kin First Culture."
- A secretarial directive charging the NCDHHS to expand intentional involvement with its stakeholder communities.

Next steps include the release of the Plan in Spanish and continuation of work to align priorities, action steps and measures to support the state in assessing its progress towards creating inclusive communities.

Please refer to the TAC's PowerPoint slides for June 25, 2024 for more information.

A brief question and answer session ensued. Representative Carla Cunningham emphasized the importance of job coaching. Michael Maybee discussed the Work Opportunity Tax Credit¹; and Jessica Aguilar's concerns prompted Ginger Yarbrough to articulate the need to cross train staff to support children with I/DD and behavioral health issues.

Update: Measuring Progress. Kent Davis of Mathematica discussed his team's work to map measures relevant to the new priority areas in the plan, including the priority measures that Mathematica had shared in December of 2023. He described the process as a "spring cleaning," designed to keep those measures that support the goals in the 2024 - 2025 Plan, while dropping those that do not support the new strategies or priorities.

Mathematica's work on the NCDHHS' priority measures involves working with the NCDHHS to evaluate LME/MCO waitlist data consistency and standardize the data underlying the Innovations waiting list; and aligning measures undergirding the Plan with measures informing the Innovations Waiver dashboard. Other work involves the exploration of existing reports to determine such descriptive measures as the number of recipients of long-term services and supports and work with data on competitive integrated employment. Certain diversion from institutional settings and transition to community measures in the Olmstead Plan overlap with the measures determined by the I/DD *Samantha R.* consent order. The later measures are being pulled into the Olmstead Plan with support from the DMH/DD/SUS, ensuring alignment.

Mr. Davis reported that Mathematica continues to progress on the development of a monitoring dashboard for the Olmstead Plan. The current version is less technical than the prior version and is designed to be "a one-stop shop" for the NCDHHS staff to use for all Olmstead-related measures and relevant plan activities. Eventually, the tool will allow the NCDHHS to use the dashboard's outcome and performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness of Olmstead Plan strategies. User testing of the dashboard will begin in late June with the launch to follow shortly thereafter.

Going forward, Mathematica will update the dashboard with new data; refresh the waitlist data; pull in new sources of data; and develop or solicit new measures. The team will also consider with the NCDHHS how best to keep the public apprised of progress on the Olmstead Plan.

Discussion. In response to the question, "How do we know that a strategy was completed," Mr. Davis discussed the importance of capturing progress with measures and reminded the group of the 30 priority measures on which the NCDHHS is focusing: population descriptors (e.g., across waivers, the Medicaid 1915(i) services, and long-term service settings) and measures related to I/DD, competitive integrated employment, children in psychiatric rehabilitation treatment facilities, workforce, and the waiting list, among others. He reiterated that Mathematica is supporting a standardization of data coming from the four Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations (LME/MCOs) to ensure that the data is high quality; developing new measures for the Plan as the need arises; and making sure

¹ For more information, see <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/work-opportunity-tax-credit>.

that their “counts” are matching up with those of the state. Mathematica is pleased with the collaboration and support it is getting from the NCDHHS.

The dashboard tool that Mathematica is developing is internal, for use by state agencies, Mr. Davis said. The Olmstead team is working on an approach to provide information on progress to the public. Such information would combine, guided by the NCDHHS’s Olmstead policy goals, the narrative information generated by the TAC with Mathematica’s data.

The NC Council on Developmental Disabilities’ (NCCDD) Talley Wells briefly described the contract that the NCCDD has with the Duke-Margolis Center, supported by a team led by Duke’s Michelle Franklin, Ph.D. He noted that Ms. Riddle and Mr. Davis had attended NCCDD’s kick-off meeting with Duke-Margolis and thanked the NCDHHS for its interest in assisting the Council.

The NCDHHS’ Angela Bryant and Representative Cunningham each asked if staff would provide their offices with information on the priority measures for the Olmstead Plan. Mr. Davis stated that staff could find this material in his December presentation. Ms. Riddle will resend it to Ms. Bryant and Representative Cunningham.

Next Steps. Ms. Riddle announced her retirement, effective at the end of July. She described it as both invaluable to her professional growth and an honor to have worked for over four decades with the state’s finest leadership from among the diverse communities of those with lived experience. She also applauded the current leadership of the NCDHHS for their steadfast commitment to the work of community inclusion, represented by the Olmstead Plan and other closely related endeavors. This will be her last meeting with the OPSA in her role as its lead staff.

Public Comment. There was none.

Next Steps. Olmstead and Transitions to Community Living Director Deb Goda stated that she and her staff will continue to lead the work on the Olmstead Plan subsequent to Ms. Riddle’s retirement. She closed the meeting by noting that the state’s Strategic Housing Plan is being formatted to be “section 508 compliant” and is due to be posted on July 1. The NCDHHS took down the Spanish version of the plan, she said, to conduct a quality review and will re-post it as soon as possible. Lastly, Ms. Goda announced that the Medicaid Tailored Plans launch next week.

With the permission of Co-Chair Bryan Dooley, Ms. Riddle adjourned the meeting. The next OPSA meeting will occur in September of 2024.