

OLMSTEAD CONSUMER TASKFORCE MEETING
January 12, 2018

Meeting held by teleconference

Meeting Minutes

Taskforce Members Present:

Jenna Batten	Kay Marcel
Kevin Dalin	Gary McDermott
Randy Davis	Kathleen O’Leary
Dawn Francis	Harry Olmstead
Annie Gallagher	Mary Roberts
Tracy Keninger	Len Sandler
June Klein-Bacon	Bruce Teague
Ashlea Lantz	

Taskforce Members Absent: Roxanne Cogil; Kris Graves; Frank Greise; Paul Kiburz; Ingrid Wensel

State Agency Representatives Present:

Kim Barber <i>Department for the Blind</i>	Page Eastin <i>Department of Human Rights</i>
Katrina Carter <i>Department of Corrections</i>	Connie Fanselow <i>Department of Human Services</i>

Guests:

Pam Heagle <i>Managed Care Ombudsman’s Office</i>	John McCalley <i>AmeriGroup</i>
Emily Hockins <i>Advocacy Strategies, LLC</i>	Bob Welsh <i>Older Iowans Legislature</i>

Staff: Caitlin Owens

Welcome and Introductions

Kevin Dalin called the meeting to order at 10am. A quorum was established.

The agenda was modified to remove the agenda item “State Long Term Care Ombudsman” due to speaker illness. Harry motioned to approve the modified agenda, Tracy Keninger seconded. Motioned passed.

Dawn Francis motioned to approve the minutes of the November meeting, June Klein-Bacon seconded. Motion passed.

Legislative Issues and Advocacy Discussion – Emily Hockins

2018 Session Overview: Emily Hockins is the Manager of Public Affairs at Advocacy Strategies, and organization that provides lobbying services for a number of disability service organizations in Iowa including Epilepsy Foundation Iowa, Easter Seals, Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa, Multiple Sclerosis Society, Visiting Nurse Services, Occupational Therapy Association and several others. Threase Harms is the President and CEO of Advocacy Strategies but was unable to attend the meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

Emily shared that their organization represents 32 clients, about half of which are health related. Emily provided information regarding the start of the Iowa legislative session and important issues her organizations is tracking. Emily shared that the second year of the biennial legislative session began on January 8th and though the 100 day session would run through April 7th it is expected they will attempt to adjourn early due to the fact that it is an election year and because of ongoing budget constraints. Emily shared other important dates of the upcoming session which can be found on the 2018 Legislative Session Timetable ([link](#)).

The Iowa House of Representatives is controlled by the Republican Party this year with a 58 to 41 split and one empty seat. There will be a special election on January 16th to fill the seat vacated by now-Senator Carlin who was elected to the Iowa Senate after the retirement of Bill Anderson. The Speaker of the House is Linda Upmeyer of Clear Lake, the Majority Leader is Chris Hagenow of Windsor Heights, and the Minority Leader is Mark Smith of Marshalltown. The Iowa Senate is also controlled by the Republican Party with the majority party holding 29 seats of 50 seats. The Senate Majority Leader is Bill Dix of Shell Rock, and the Democratic Leader is Janet Peterson of Des Moines who is new to the position this year. Emily noted that Senator Peterson's background is in health and commerce and she is a good contact for disability and health related issues.

Emily shared that because this is an election year they do not expect much to happen on major policy issues this session. She said the session is beginning with a deficit for the current fiscal year which began on July 1, 2017 so a early focus will be a de-appropriations bill to cut \$90 million from the current fiscal year's budget.

Emily shared several big policy issues being monitored by her office including the budget, tax reform, water quality, and mental health. Regarding tax reform she said this will be difficult because of the budget shortfalls but there has been talk of taking a long term approach and addressing over the next few years. She shared that Governor Reynolds' State of the State address outlined several priorities including workforce issues, broadband access, mental health, and opioid addiction. Specific priorities outlined in the speech regarding mental health were appropriating funds to Des Moines University and NAMI to support their initiative to train health care professionals to identify and treat patients with mental health challenges; establishing residential access centers to provide short-term crisis services to help individuals stabilize and return to the community; and creating a long-term sustainable funding structure to support MHDS Regions and the creation of crisis access centers across the state.

Emily shared that there hasn't been specific talk of putting resources towards the HCBS Waiver waitlist this session, but there are two bills that have been introduced that propose removing the long term services and supports population from managed care though it is unlikely they will gain traction.

Advocacy Tips: Emily shared suggestions on how to advocate and engage with legislators noting that health and disability policy issues won't be resolved or changed if people with lived experience aren't sharing their voice, opinions, and solutions. Emily suggested putting partisan politics aside and having open conversations and making sure policy makers know who you are, what issues matter to you, and how you can be used as a resource. She said establishing a method of ongoing communication is helpful, especially during session breaks and it is wise to make these connections before needing their assistance. She suggested attending town halls, forums, and other meetings, and also inviting policy makers to attend meetings, sending them relevant articles and information, and prioritizing face-to-face communication when possible. She underscored the key is open communication and relationship building.

Emily shared several resources for advocates, which are linked above. She also requested her and Threase Harms' contact information be shared in the minutes and encouraged individuals to reach out with questions. Emily's email address is emily@advocacyiowa.com and Threase's is threase@advocacyiowa.com.

Comments/Action Items:

Harry Olmstead suggested getting active in campaigns to get a deeper understanding of where elected officials stand on issues before they take office.

Department of Human Services Update – Connie Fanselow

Connie Fanselow shared that the Olmstead Plan was adopted by the Council on Human Services and they are working to get it posted on the DHS website. She shared that she is working on adding outcomes from the Personal Experience Survey to the plan, which initially they had not included but recently found out they would be able to gather that data. She said this information will give a useful perspective from people utilizing services and their satisfaction.

She said they will be scheduling public meetings around the state to get more feedback on the plan in the spring to avoid scheduling during the unpredictable winter months.

Connie shared that the Complex Service Needs Workgroup report was submitted to the legislature in December. She said the group met for quite a few sessions this last year and developed a report with recommendations on how to improve the mental health system in Iowa. The report is available online. The report contained five major recommendations for actual service centers of types of services to be available across the state. The recommendations were:

- Six Access Centers where individuals who are medically stable can receive crisis and subacute residential services. This would be for individuals who do not need an inpatient psychiatric hospital level of care.
- 11 more Assertive Community Treatment Teams. Services are team-based intensive, individualized, flexible supports to individuals with mental illness in their homes and community. ACT teams include psychiatry, social work, nursing, substance use disorder treatment, and vocational rehabilitation.
- A full array of mental health crisis response and sub-acute residential services, including a 24-hour crisis line.
- Intensive Residential Service Homes that provide intensive, coordinated, residential supported community living services for individuals with the most intensive serious and persistent mental illness.
- Tertiary Care Psychiatric Hospitals that treat individuals other mental health providers find too difficult or dangerous to treat, and ensure a seamless and successful integration back into the community.

Comments/Action Items:

Kay Marcel asked if there were recommendations for new appropriations or redirection of current funds to implement these recommendations. Connie said the workgroup acknowledged there would be funding needed, but the report didn't address where that might come from. Connie said the report included recommendations for legislative action.

June asked where the Taskforce should submit comments in support of the recommendations. Connie said she wasn't sure if the group was meeting again but comments could be submitted to Rick Shults or directly to the legislature. June made a motion for the executive committee to review the complex needs report and submit comments, Dawn seconded. Motion passed.

Taskforce Committee Reports

Executive Committee (Kevin Dalin): Kevin shared that the executive committee discussed pushing and terms to later in the year to avoid overlap with start of legislative session. In the past the March meeting has been the last meeting for outgoing members and May is the first meeting for new members, though terms technically don't end until May there is usually a bit of a grey period between March and May. By pushing it back a few months there won't be diverted attention during the legislative session, and new members won't be starting right as the session is ending. The executive committee is proposing the July meeting be the last meeting for outgoing members and new members beginning in September. This also fits well with the annual awards typically handed out in July. This means applications would open in late April or early May and new members would be approved at the July meeting.

Dawn noted it would also make sense to shift officer elections to match the nominations cycle. She asked if there was anything in the bylaws that would conflict with moving the nominations and officer elections. Caitlin Owens said the only conflict was wording in the bylaws that state the annual meeting is in March. She suggested the executive committee review the bylaws more carefully and discuss the need for any amendments and report back at the March meeting.

Medicaid Committee (Harry Olmstead): Harry shared that several members of the executive committee, including the co-chairs of the Medicaid committee met with the new of DHS, Jerry Foxhoven, on December 20th. In attendance were Roxanne Cogil, Jerry Foxhoven, Dawn Francis, Caitlin Owens, Harry Olmstead, and Rick Shults.

The main focus of the meeting was introducing Director Foxhoven to the Taskforce, hearing about his areas of focus and background, discussing the Olmstead Plan, and discussing ways the Taskforce can partner with DHS. Director Foxhoven shared that he is a data driven person, likes to know what they are doing wrong but also what they are doing right. Values lived experience perspectives.

Another major topic of discussion was the Olmstead Plan which has been adopted by the Council on Human Services. Rick and Director Foxhoven shared that it will continue to be refined and improved. Director Foxhoven said he wants to collect the data outlined in the plan, share it with the Taskforce, and hear what we are doing well/need to work on. Regarding how often data from the Olmstead Plan will be reported, some of the data sources have existing schedules (quarterly, annually, etc). Some of the data will be dependent on those set schedules, but they would like to try to at least review the data quarterly. They are aiming to start reviewing in March and quarterly thereafter.

When asked how the Taskforce can partner with DHS on the Olmstead Plan Director Foxhoven and Rick said continuing to provide feedback is helpful. DHS will continue to share information with the Taskforce and hopes to get feedback on each part of it. It's a big plan with a lot of data and it might be beneficial to make a plan to review it one part at a time as it is not realistic to go through the whole plan regularly at meetings. They said they also need to consider how to pull all of the individual data sources together in a way that is meaningful. Director Foxhoven said he would like the Taskforce provide feedback to help make sure the data they are highlighting is meaningful.

When asked how the Taskforce can partner with DHS to address the needs of the LTSS population Director Foxhoven and Rick said they need to identify what services are important, what needs to be done, and what is missing. It is not useful to complain about without proposing solutions. If Taskforce members are seeing people who need services they are not receiving DHS needs to know about it, they need to put a price tag on it, tell the legislature about it, and put it in the MCO contracts.

State Agency Updates

Iowa Department for the Blind (Kim Barber): The Department for the Blind has opened up positions to fill for temporary summer youth counselors who will mentor youth ages 14-21 during IDB's two month residential summer program. Youth counselors will be assisting to teach alternative techniques of blindness through classes such as braille, cane travel, assistive technology, home and personal management and woodshop, or teaching alternative techniques of blindness through assisting students in their apartments and during evening and weekend activities.

Kim reported they are still in the hiring process for securing an independent living rehabilitation teacher for their program to serve northeast and eastern Iowa. This position will replace vacancy left by the teacher who retired in October. She said they currently have a substitute teacher who has worked for the Department for many years, and so far there are several applicants who have applied to this position. She said they feel confident that they will find a qualified job candidate from the current pool of applicants. Kim said she is excited to share that their director recently announced her support to replace one Independent Living Teacher position due to various cost savings strategies they have taken over this past year. This position will be domiciled out of Polk county; available to serve statewide; however, will be assigned a service region after the job applicant is hired and trained. She said they do need more boots on the ground to provide timely and effective direct statewide services so this will certainly help.

Kim shared that there is an upcoming American Foundation for the Blind Leadership Conference in Oakland, California that she will be attending in early April. The conference attracts established and emerging leaders in the blindness field. This leadership conference will cover the most pressing and relevant topics in the field of blindness and will offer many opportunities to learn from the best and brightest minds in our field. Kim has been invited to speak about the Department's Regional Cluster Model that they have been piloting for about six months. Other program managers are said to be excited to hear about their results and to see if some of the same principles can be applied in their states in order to increase success rates for blind citizens.

Kim shared that Director Wharton holds a monthly Director's Forum where the general public can join her by phone or in person at the Department. The next public forum will be held Monday, January 22 from 5:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Anyone interested in participating is encouraged to attend. For more information about the location or the call in number to participate by phone can call the Iowa Department for the Blind at (800)362-2587 or (515)281-1333.

Department of Human Rights (Page Eastin): Page reported the APSE Day on the Hill is January 18th. There is an advocacy training from noon-1 at Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) and the reception is from 1-4 at the Capitol Rotunda. Page is working on a subminimum wage publication that will be released in spring, 2018. This will be available

in English and Spanish, in print and electronically and analyzes the common arguments in favor of subminimum wage employment for persons with disabilities and resources to support competitive integrated employment.

Page reported that the Employment First Executive Order she has previously discussed with the Taskforce is currently stalled, possibly due to it being an election year.

Page shared updates from IVRS, including that Steve Faulkner is the new VR Services Bureau Chief. She said the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is hosting a legislative reception is February 14th from 7am-9am at the Capitol Rotunda. The SRC and IVRS are beginning a comprehensive review of the VR policy manual. Comments from the public can be sent to Page or other SRC members, including Taskforce members Gary McDermott and Randy Davis.

Iowa Finance Authority (Terri Rosonke): Kevin Dalin shared an update on behalf of Terri who was unable to attend today's meeting. IFA has implemented the HCBS Rent Subsidy Program administrative rules change allowing persons receiving Habilitation Services to apply as potentially eligible recipients under the rental assistance program. December 4, 2017, was the first date Habilitation recipients could submit an application for HCBS Rent Subsidy Program assistance. Earlier this week they had only received two applications from HAB participants, though an additional six came in yesterday from one provider. Terri said they have done everything they could think of to get the word out, and are surprised to have not received more applications to date.

Overall, IFA currently has 123 individuals on the waiting list for HCBS Rent Subsidy, which means about a 5 to 7 month wait before anyone comes off that list to be added to the program. So any new applicants will only serve to expand the waiting list, but they hoped that a more robust waiting list might also reflect the great need for rental assistance funding that we know exists across Iowa for HCBS Waiver participants. Terri said she is not sure such an argument would yield any increased budget results, but receiving only a few applications after expanding the program to HAB participants certainly does not make the case for increased funding either. Please feel free to send any thoughts from the OTF my way on this issue. Any suggestions from the Taskforce are welcome.

Public Comment

Bob Welsh shared that he is interested in reading the comments the Taskforce submitted to the Health Policy Oversight Committee, and would like to call attention to a few related issues the Older Iowans Legislature is addressing. They have been talking about the reliability and availability of qualified staff and concern about the direct care workforce. He said they had a meeting with Beth Townsend from Iowa Workforce Development and were disturbed by the fact that they are concentrating on registered nurses in the Future Ready Iowa initiative but not CNAs or other direct care professionals. He said another area they are concerned about is the Ombudsman's Office, particularly travel being cut. He said OIL is working on a bill seeking to have those funds restored. He said they are running into the issue that the Department on Aging did not request an increase in the budget they submitted to the governor, and asked if this is an issue the Taskforce would be interested in working with OIL to address. Dawn noted that Bob attended a recent IDAAN and she thinks both the Taskforce and IDAAN should work with OIL to address the issues brought up. June shared that she shares Bob's concerns and has brought them to the attention of the executive committee. She said she was hoping Cynthia Pederson would be able to attend today's meeting to address some of these issues.

Kay Marcel shared information about a parent group that recently formed, spurred by concern with the AmeriHealth Caritas withdrawal about the uncertainties and lack of choice that their adult children have. She said most members are parents of adult children with disabilities and share concerns about what happens when their parents can no longer provide the care they need. She said the group identified four priority areas which are: carving HCBS out of managed care; requiring case management services be provided by independent service providers not the MCOs; providing greater roles for parents and direct care service providers in the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) assessment process and tier assignment; and establishing experience, training, and minimum compensation levels for direct support staff. Kay shared that anyone interested in more information about the group can contact her.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:32pm.