METRO REGIONAL QUALITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Friday, February 10, 2023
9:00 am – 11:00 am

The Regional Quality Councils shall:

1. Support efforts and initiatives that drive overall systems and social change to promote inclusion of people who have disabilities in the state of Minnesota
2. Improve person-centered outcomes in disability services; and
3. Identify or enhance quality of life indicators for people who have disabilities.

(Please Note: As the associate, Jeffrey has requested that if you do not understand him please ask that he types out his statement or reply for understanding…do not pretend).

Meeting Attendance

Members: Bradford, Diane, Mohamed, Melissa, Frank, Judi Marie, Chelsea, Rachel, Rod, Lindsey Jo, Cassandra and Robin

Invited Guest Speaker(s): Julia Page (Arc MN Public Policy Director) and Gene Martinez (Arc MN Legislative Advocacy Coordinator)

Arc MN Staff: Kerri, JoAnn, Jeffrey, Kristin (captions), Rebecca, Donna and Olivia

Attendees: Rod, Rachel, Mohamed, Judie Marie, Frank, Cassie and Scott

Not Attended: Bradford, Chelsea, Diane, Robin and Ryan Anderson

Meeting Overview

1) Introductions & Meeting Overview (5-10 min) @9:00am

2) Presentation on Arc MN 2023 Legislative Agenda (50 min) @9:10am

Julia Page gave a short presentation on the Arc MN 2023 Legislative Agenda relating to housing and employment.

The following are summaries of the topics addressed in the Legislative Agenda:

- **Housing Legislative Proposals**
    1. Increase affordable and accessible housing

House file-302/ Senate file-1094

Advocating for housing infrastructure bonds (largest source of capital funded by the State) that offer loans and grants to fund the creation or preservation of affordable and accessible housing. Only 5% of funds go towards accessible units, but building codes actually don't require units to be truly accessible like including a roll-in shower. Arc wants to ensure 5% of accessible units include roll-in showers and truly accessible features. Arc also wants 5% of units to include sensory accessible features. Arc wants to expand housing eligibility requirements to include affordable housing and not just supportive housing.

2. <u>Help people live in their own home</u>

   House file-716/ Senate file-654

   Arc wants to expand shared services

   Consumer Directed Community Services (CDCS)- allows for shared services (one staff providing services for multiple people at one time) but Arc wants shared services to be available across all disability waivers. This would allow for more consumer choice and less staffing.

   Individual home supports training (IHST)- allows for people to maintain living in their own homes and live independently. Arc wants to allow IHST workers to travel anywhere consumers need to go even if it is out of state.

   Billing for Indirect Time- allows for IHST workers to bill for time spent directly servicing consumers. Arc wants to expand this and allow for IHST workers to bill for time not spent directly with consumers but time spent serving on behalf of consumers such as coordinating consumers' doctor's appointments.

3. <u>Improve Rates for In-home Services</u>

   House file-696,584,585/ Senate file-695,902,903

   Arc wants PCA and waiver rates to be increased based on inflationary changes and not just based on set scheduled 2-year increments. Arc also wants increased rates for home care staff such as home care nursing and homemaking. And increased billing time for care assessments.

4. <u>Strengthening Housing Support</u>

   House file-732

   Recipients of Housing Support are only allotted $121 per month to spend on personal needs. Arc and Catholic Charities wants 30% or less of people's incomes to be spent towards housing and allow them to keep the rest to spend on other needed expenses.

5. Julia mentioned “take action” which is asking $2Billlion to spend for housing
   Down below is the link to the website
   https://mhponline.org/take-action-now-2-billion-for-housing-in-2023/

Attendees raised concerns about housing and Julia responded with the following:

1. DSP and PCA-
   They have different rates and we want all areas of disability services to be invested and not competing with each other for funding.
2. Infrastructure bonds-
   Public housing is federally funded and Geo bonds are used to refurbish public housing not build more public housing. To create more housing, housing infrastructure bonds are used to fill in the gaps in housing. They can fund for instance mobile home parks. Arc wants funding increases for more affordable housing within big rental units.
3. Shared care-
   Only 2 people can share the same staff. Arc wants to increase it 3 people sharing the same staff. The rate of pay would stay the same.
4. Cost of living and benefits for DSPs-
   This relates to advocating for the increase of home service rates which would in turn increase DSP wages. However an increase in wages could make DSPs ineligible for low cost health benefits such as MNCare. A new bill being presented “retention and recruitment grant” would be given to providers to spend how they see fit. Providers for example could use this grant to provide benefits (childcare, loans payments, etc..) for their DSPs as a way to retain them. The ability for DSPs to get benefits (healthcare) through their employer (service provider) depends on agency policies which usually requires DSPs to have been fully employed for a whole year in order to be eligible for health benefits.
5. Accessible housing-
   Many housing options for pwds tend to be segregated and separated from the community. We want to ensure pwds are fully integrated in their community to live people of all ages, cultures, abilities, etc.. Arc’s desire to increase affordable housing (non-supportive) that meet accessibility requirements and this would hopefully address this issue of undesired segregation.

- **Employment Legislative Proposals:**
  1. MAEPD reform-
     Arc wants to eliminate MAEPD premiums and its asset limit (20k). The cost of the premium is not actually paying to cover the cost of the insurance and keep pwds poor. By eliminating these things, it would make it easier for consumers to

understand and manage their benefits due decrease requirements for and retaining eligibility. Also it would decrease administrative work and costs for tracking and collecting consumer premiums and assets.

2. Phasing out subminimum wage

Attendees raised concerns about employment and Julia responded with the following:

1. MAEPD-
   It is difficult for county case workers to attend all their client's meetings.
   By eliminating premiums and asset requirements, it would lessen administrative costs and unnecessary paperwork. There is currently a taskforce trying to make it easier for pwds to access benefits and services by simplifying the system so it is more manageable and easier to understand. The easier it is to access, the more pwds can get what they need and want (jobs, housing, healthcare, etc.).

Join Breakout Room Workgroups (40 min) @10:10am

Workgroups

- **Employment Workgroup:**
  Continue working on quality improvement projects.

- **Housing Workgroup:**
  Continue working on quality improvement projects.

- **Culture of Safety/Data Action Group (DAG) Workgroup:**
  This workgroup meets separately.
  The Metro Regional Quality Council has a "data action group (DAG)" that meets the first Thursday of each month from 9-11am via Zoom. The DAG's purpose is to review systemic critical incident data from DHS' Culture of Safety reviews in an effort to generate considerations for disability services system change. In other words, this group is charged with summarizing the systemic issues that surface from the incident review data and provide recommendations to DHS about how the system could improve to better serve people with disabilities. Expectations of people who join the DAG includes reviewing data between meetings, engaging in discussions about the incident data and considerations, and using a "culture of safety" mindset.
  For more information, click on link below.
  https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/news-initiatives-reports-workgroups/long-term-services-and-supports/culture-of-safety/

The next meeting will be on **Thursday, March 2, 2023 from 9-11am**. This workgroup would like more members. Please notify an RQC staff if you are interested in joining.
Down below is the zoom link for the meeting on March 2, 2023.
Join Zoom Meeting
https://arcminnesota.zoom.us/j/81121977247?pwd=SDBmVW1RQWFlVHBHKy96a1JESElEUT09
Meeting ID: 811 2197 7247
Passcode: 678410

- **Staffing (DSPs & PCAs) Shortage workgroup:**
  - This workgroup meets separately. They meet 2x every month.
    They meet the 2nd Thursday of every month from 10-11:30am
    and the 4th Thursday of every month from 11am-12:30pm
    The next meeting is on **February 23, 2023 from 11am-12:30pm**
    Down below is the zoom link for the meeting.
    Join Zoom Meeting
    https://arcminnesota.zoom.us/j/81885206657?pwd=emMvYVhjUWtEangvbE5mTUNJdFZCUT09
    Meeting ID: 818 8520 6657
    Passcode: 330275

3) Group Discussion (10 min) @10:50am

Each workgroup shared what they worked on with the rest of the attendees.

- **Employment Workgroup**
  We want to connect with job seekers. We created questions on how to do this. We want to create focus groups (5 groups of 5 people) to foster conversations with job seekers. We have self-advocacy spreadsheets and communication templates to help us in our connection efforts. We can partner with Arc staff members Olivia and Rebecca when we start working on holding focus groups. We hope to start holding focus groups right away and continue till June 2023. Afterwards, we can provide resources and trainings to job seekers who want competitive employment.
- **Housing Workgroup**
  We discussed the gaps in housing. We want to create an informational sheet that includes facts and personal stories. We want address the issues of those who want to live in groups but can't and how the staffing shortage makes this hard. Also we want to make DSPs a more desirable job.

4) Other Things to Share & Reminders (5 min) @10:55am

- Upcoming Event: Disability Advocacy Rally at the Capital
  Held on **February 14, 2023** ♡
  Click on the link below for more information.
  https://arcminnesota.org/event/2023-disability-advocacy-rally-at-the-capitol/
- Next council meeting is on **Friday, March 10, 2023 from 9-11am**.
- Learn all about the MN legislator and what they do and how you can get involved. I watched it and found it very informative.
  Click below and watch: "Lunch & Learn: Legislative 101"
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZDC-bukrfV0
- Actively seeking new council members.
  If anyone knows someone to recommend to serve as a potential member for the council, please email Arc staff, JoAnn. Or if anyone has suggestions on how or where to seek potential members, feel free to share your ideas.