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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF DELAWARE
LEGISLATIVE HALL
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DDDS Task Force
Direct Support Professionals Subcommittee Minutes
October 18, 2019

Chair Kendra Johnson called the subcommittee meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. Member present included: Susannah Eaton-Ryan, Cynthia Campbell, Dana Curry-Hamler, Lisa Elias, Gary Cassedy, Diliana Henry, Shane White, Yemi Awodiya, Temeka Thompson, and John McNeal.

Rep. K Johnson welcomed the subcommittee members and asked each member to introduce themselves.

Rep. K Johnson transitioned to the scope and assigned tasks of the Direct Support Professionals Subcommittee. In doing so, she referenced SCR 62, which established the Division of Developmental Disabilities Service Task Force. She recognized lines 18-21 of the SCR as the subcommittees charge, specifically being:

- (1) Starting and average hourly wages for all direct support professionals (“DSPs”), including the starting 19 average wages for DSPs who are designated as “shift leads.”*
- (2) Turnover rates for all DSP positions, including “shift leads.”*
- (3) Duration and number of full-time equivalents, also known as FTEs, of each DSP vacancy.*

Members of the subcommittee agreed to stick to the language provided by the SCR to keep the subcommittee’s discussion focused.

Gary Cassedy noted that it may be difficult to obtain turnover data and salary data from the many providers.

Susannah Eaton-Ryan mirrored Gary’s concerns and emphasized that most providers do not only receive funds from DDDS, but rather a combination of state, federal, and fundraising funds.

Gary Cassedy emphasized when obtaining wage data, the basis of the funding system is an average not a starting wage, which in some cases make providers look better or worse off than they may be in actual terms.

Tameka Thompson suggested the subcommittee compiles a list of providers and then begin asking each provider their starting direct support professional wages.

Susannah Eaton-Ryan said she has a list of all day and residential providers in the state and agreed to send the information to the subcommittee members.

John McNeal emphasized the legislation's language says to make recommendations for a starting and hourly wage. He suggests that the subcommittee may not need to gather information from individual providers rather study some of the nation's best practices.

Susannah Eaton-Ryan mentioned that DDDS can recommend any starting or hourly wage, however each provider has the autonomy to pay each direct support professional as they please.

Diliana Henry noted that if DDDS recommended a much higher hourly wage many providers would be unable to operate financially.

Rep. K Johnson emphasized the subcommittee's role is to provide recommendations to the taskforce, which will ultimately provide recommendations to DDDS.

Gary Cassedy expressed his concerns regarding the task force's recommendations, given funding is decided by the General Assembly and not DDDS.

Yemi Awodiya asked what the timeline of this subcommittee is.

Rep. Johnson answered the question, stating the final report from the task force is due by the end of December.

Gary Cassedy mentioned there was a study conducted by Thomas Cook regarding wages.

Susannah Eaton-Ryan explained there was such a low turnout of reliable data that the report was unable to provide statewide conclusions.

Rep. K Johnson asked the subcommittee members to circle back to their provider agencies and ask the executive director or human resources department what salary data they would be willing to provide to the subcommittee.

The subcommittee members agreed this is a good starting point.

Shane White shared with the subcommittee that the organization she works for raised their hourly wages and since then they have experienced better outcomes in turnover rates.

Gary Cassedy noted that DDDS contracts require providers to send staff turnover data every six months. DDDS should be able to provide this data, but many providers do not send the information.

Rep. K Johnson said she will ask DDDS to send the subcommittee the turnover data that is required by contract.

Dana Curry-Hamler asked for clarification regarding “shift leads” in the subcommittee’s charge.

Cynthia Campbell explained that the term shift lead is not common among direct support professionals.

Dana Curry-Hamler emphasized that KenCrest uses managers and assistant managers not shift leads.

Rep. K Johnson closed the meeting summarizing action items required by the subcommittee. First, for Susannah to send provider resources, second for the providers to go back and discuss with decision makers what salary data they would be willing to share and third for Rep. K. Johnson to reach out to DDDS for turnover data and Thomas Cook for report information.

Rep. K Johnson adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

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Public Comment:

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