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Disability Rights Center - NH

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Direct Support Provider

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*NH Council on
Developmental Disabilities*

Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre
*NH Council on
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Maria Sieper
Area Agency Board Member

Cathy Spinney
Area Agency Board Member

Date: February 8, 2022

To: Lori Shibinette, Commissioner, NH Department of Health and Human Services
Nancy Rollins, Associate Commissioner, NH Department of Health and Human Services
Sandy Hunt, Director, Bureau of Developmental Services, NH Department of Health and Human Services

Re: Role of Steering Committee in BDS System Work

Several months ago, the NH Developmental Services Quality Council wrote to you expressing significant concern about the process to make significant changes to the developmental disabilities services system as outlined in the A&M report. We appreciate that videos of committee meetings are now available on the DHHS website and you have begun to hold informational sessions for families.

However, we continue to be concerned about the substantive work that is happening at BDS to implement the A&M recommendations and the lack of willingness to respond to valid concerns raised by the steering committee and others.

By definition, a steering committee is “a managing or directing committee”.ⁱ Steering committees are created to set the priorities and direction for an initiative.

In the case of the “steering committee” for the BDS systems work, this is not happening. Over the course of the last several meetings, members’ concerns about changes to the DD waiver have been ignored. Decisions, like the decision to move to two waivers instead of one, continue to be made without asking the steering committee for input or even explaining the rationale for the decision when asked by committee members.

As such, at the January 19, 2022 meeting, the Quality Council voted to support changing the name of the committee from the Steering Committee to the Advisory Committee.

We hope that you appreciate the reason for this vote and our disappointment in the process to this point.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Patrick, Chair

Carrie Duran, Vice Chair

ⁱ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/steering%20committee>