

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING HARTFORD,
CT 06106-1591

Healthcare Workforce Safety Working Group

Meeting Summary

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

2:30 PM on Zoom and YouTube Live

I. Welcome

- The meeting was convened by Sasa Harriott at 2:32 PM.
- Members present: Rep. Cristin McCarthy-Vahey, Sasa Harriott, Tracy Wodatch, Teri Henning, Jenn LeDuc, Chris Pankratz, Stephen Magro, Tyler Booth, Kim Sandor, John Clark, John Brady, Julianne Giard, Rhianna Gingras, Ronald Cotta, Barbara Cass, David Bothwell, Matthew Festa, Lauren Nadeau, Angel Quiros, Anna Karabin, Auden C. Grogins, Barbara Pearce, Carl Schiessl, Sarah Gadsby, Eric Smullen
- Guests: Ralph Dagostine, Deanna Shukis, DeVaughn Ward, Sandra Assanowicz
- Tracy Wodatch asked for members when presenting to talk about training that may be provided to staff in advance to mitigate risk in the community.

II. Presentations

- Judicial Branch website: Ralph Dagostine
 - Ralph Dagostine introduced himself and did an overview of the Judicial Branch Website regarding case look up.
 - Tracy Wodatch asked Ralph Dagostine how long it would take a response from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) for a record check.
 - Ralph Dagostine stated that he does not know the exact time and would follow up with more information.
 - Sasa Harriott asked Ralph Dagostine if there is a department or person for who can be reached for live support for information that may not be present on the website now.
 - Ralph Dagostine responded that petitioners are always able to call the court of jurisdiction if they have a question, but the main issue is that they can't state for certainty that the Judicial Branch is giving the full record to the petitioner.
 - Sasa Harriott asked Ralph Dagostine about cases involving minors.
 - Ralph Dagostine responded that cases adjudicated as a youthful offender are not disclosable.
 - Sasa Harriott asked Ralph Dagostine if they have out of state records of individuals.
 - Ralph Dagostine responded that they only deal with Connecticut records and won't be able to ascertain whether someone had convictions in another state.
 - Chris Pankratz asked Ralph Dagostine if restraining orders and domestic violence are in the judicial system.
 - Ralph Dagostine responded that there are protective orders and restraining orders. Protective orders are often times issued after an arrest which would be under their jurisdiction while restraining orders are issued in a family or civil matters which is something the criminal division doesn't handle. Petitioners can receive a redacted copy of the protective order.
 - Chris Pankratz asked if items regarding domestic violence are in the

judicial system.

- Ralph Dagostine answered that family violence cases are disclosable.
- Tracy Wodatch asked Ralph Dagostine how long does it take to get that information and that if they have the correct identifying information, then they should be able to access the case information on the website.
- Ralph Dagostine responded to Tracy Wodatch that they should be able to access the information on the website.
- Kim Sandor asked Ralph Dagostine when an individual is out on probation if they have an obligation to disclose that to people.
- Ralph Dagostine responded that the website will not give the condition of probation as you will need a copy of the file and anecdotally he has not seen that as a condition of probation.
- Kim Sandor stated that the environment and people are difficult to control and wondered if it could be a condition of probation to disclose their probation.
- Ralph Dagostine stated that a statutory change can change that and the Courts Support Division might be able to give more information.
- Kim Sandor asked Ralph Dagostine when someone is released from the system if there is any transferable health records or communication between health systems and the Judicial Branch.
- Ralph Dagostine answered that he records the order of the court and doesn't have communication with other databases or insurers.
- Kim Sandor stated that they can ask the Department of Corrections (DOC) when people get released back into the community what does that look like. She stated that they do not want to create new systemic and structural conditions that can be a burden.
- Auden C. Grogins thanked Ralph Dagostine for presenting.
- DOC Parole and Community Services: Rhianna Gingras
 - Rhianna Gingras gave an outline of parole and outreach that the DOC does.

- Tracy Wodatch asked Rhianna Gingras about the training that parole workers receive as home health care workers don't have a standard training.
- Rhianna Gingras answered that they have a standard academy curriculum, and they have additional training like de-escalation. They have some additional trainings that they send staff too where it is not required unlike de-escalation.
- Sasa Harriott asked Rhianna Gingras when someone is being released do they receive mental health services or continued support and for how long.
- Rhianna Gingras answered that for parole if they are receiving services inside then if they are discharged into parole supervision and if they identified a need or has a condition for parole conditions that require mental health services then they would make the referral. If the individual is receiving specialized supervision based on mental health needs, then the mental health unit will do a referral before leaving and try to enact a smooth transition for the individual.
- Sasa Harriott asked how many individuals who get released would need to come back home and still take care of family members.
- Rhianna Gingras answered that there is less than more. She explained that they don't release someone to a home where it is their responsibility as a returning citizen to provide care for their loved ones. So, while their family member may not be compromised when they get home, but the condition of a family member might have progressed and home health care can be assessed if that is needed.
- Tracy Wodatch went over a situation where there was a provider giving support to a child at a home and found out due to news that a family member was out on bail for a shooting and only became aware as the family member was going to live at the home. She asked the Working Group if there is anything in place to try to clarify or support if that happens.
- Rhianna Gingras answered that she cannot speak about individuals who come out on bail unless they are on parole supervision. She answered that if the question is about improving communication then before an individual is released to a residence to reside with somebody then that person is made aware that the individual is under supervision as well as their conditions.

- Tracy Wodatch appreciates Rhianna Gingras explanation and is worried about the child being taken care for by a home health agency and not knowing the situation and if they evaluate who else is living in the home and if any other services are going into the home that can present a risk.
- Rhianna Gingras answered that if they know about the people or services than yes. She stated that they have twenty people receiving home health care that are under supervision and every person she has asked they are in close communication with workers who go into the home. She followed up that if the person they are supervising isn't receiving care and is someone else in the residence then they are limited.
- Commissioner Angel Quiros added there is a larger group of individuals that are in for serious charges that do end up bonding out of parole then they are not under the supervision of the DOC. Not every individual who bonds out are not under the supervision of DOC.
- Tracy Wodatch asked that the only way to knowing that would be looking at the Judicial Branch Website.
- Ralph Dagostine asked for clarification when the individual is released from bail on a pending case.
- Tracy Wodatch answered that somebody that had been in jail and released may not have their conditions of parole.
- Commissioner Angel Quiros stated that there is a large population in county jails that are pending arrested and pending adjudication in the court system that many times bond out and they do not have parole supervision over them.
- Tracy Wodatch asked Ralph Dagostine if that population would be visible on the website.
- Ralph Dagostine answered that will be displayed on the website however they can only enter what they know and will enter bond information when they receive it. He suggests that searching a pending case on the website you can select to be notified for any update on the case. He cautions that persons who bond out of a correctional center then they have to wait to get that information from the correctional center.
- Board of Pardons and Paroles: David Bothwell

- David Bothwell introduced himself and went over an overview of the Board of Pardons and Paroles.
- Sasa Harriott asked David Bothwell regarding people on parole what resources are available to them if they need end of life care.
- David Bothwell asked if she is talking about individuals who are incarcerated who are ill and are released back into the community.
- Sasa Harriott answered that is correct.
- David Bothwell answered that the board has the authority to release individuals under a medical or compassionate parole. Medical paroles are a statutory release mechanism for individuals with terminal illnesses that can pose no risk to society. Compassionate parole is the statutory release mechanism for individuals that they determine are so infirm as to be physically unable to pose a risk to society. Those applications normally come from medical staff and are accompanied by a medical report that the board reviews and they do hold a hearing on these applications. He stated that those individuals are released to skilled nursing facilities and if anything changes there is the potential to return to incarceration. He stated that when an individual is out in the community then the board does not supervise them.
- Sasa Harriott asked when someone is sent home, and they require end of life care or compassionate care then what is the process.
- Rhianna Gingras answered that it can happen from the facility and health care health services would make a referral to the service that is determined for their level of need when they are being discharged.
- Jenn LeDuc asked what the board composition is.
- David Bothwell answered that the board is an executive branch agency and that all board members are appointed by the Governor. They are statutorily allowed ten full-time members and five part-time members of the board. He stated that the board has a former schoolteacher, two former social workers, former police officer, college educator and the chair of the board used to be a social worker.
- Kim Sandor asked from their position what comes to mind that they would think would support home care worker safety.
- David Bothwell believes that they should be able to gain information

about some of the individuals that they will be providing care to and believes that there are mechanisms that blocked them from doing that. Regarding the pardon process it erases the persons criminal record, and the clean slate law can block their ability to acquire information. He doesn't know the answer about getting a comprehensive look at individuals and believes there could be constitutional issues.

- Kim Sandor clarified that she wanted to think about what might raise the red flag.
- Rhianna Gingras added that she believes might help is putting certain questions into policy so that people have the knowledge before going into a home. She added that any kind of support for those who are going into the home could be helpful like check ins. She believes there will be no easy fix but believes that the communication helps as well as the awareness.
- Eric Smullen stated that they are not releasing individuals into the community that they are deeming dangerous. He asked what elements of information that they consider when they are doing their risk judgement on an individual and to help guide the Working Group on the risk stratification that they do.
- David Bothwell explained that six months from an individual's parole eligibility date a parole officer starts the process for parole and one of the things gathered is the Statewide Collaborative Offender Risk Assessment.
- Rhianna Gingras expounded on the risk assessment as they look at criminal history, violence, what kind of support systems they have in place, employment, education level, mental health concerns and substance abuse concerns. They would look at these factors plus the length of confinement of the individual and if they are not covered by the Board, they would look at factors typically looked at by the Board.
- Eric Smullen appreciates the answer and asks if that information would ever be public for people to consider.
- David Bothwell stated that you would need to make a Freedom of Information request to get that information. He added that all the Boards hearings are videotaped, and people can see it on the Board of Pardons and Paroles website. He also added that the Board prepares for a parole hearing six months in advance and they gather several documents that help Board members decide in

comprehensive hearings where the individual presents themselves and the Board decides if the individual will be granted parole.

- Eric Smullen thanked them for speaking about the tools.
 - Tracy Wodatch asked David Bothwell if they would be able to receive the results of the Scores tool as home health doesn't have a common risk assessment tool and if the tool is transferable to use in some way.
 - David Bothwell stated that it would be useful for providers to have but that would be a question posed to the DOC and believes that they should have a database to get general information.
 - Tracy Wodatch stated that the information that providers are now required to obtain seems to be already collected through this tool at DOC and this information is hard to obtain when you will be seeing the patient in a few days.
 - David Bothwell stated that he would like to see a solution to that problem, and he added that if they have any questions regarding the Board to contact him.
 - Rhianna Gingras added that it is a risk need assessment and it is used to guide supervision of individuals to determine what programs they need. She asked if a violent risk assessment is more applicable to what they are looking for as they use their risk assessment for guidance.
- DOC Ombudsman Program: DeVaughn L. Ward
 - DMHAS: Julianne Girard
 - Julianne Girard introduced herself and gave an overview of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and their community programs.
 - Intercommunity: Tyler Booth
 - Tyler Booth introduced himself and gave an overview of the services that are provided to the community.
 - Mobile Crisis: Sarah Gadsby
 - Sarah Gadsby introduced herself and gave an overview of a mobile response team.

- Tracy Wodatch asked if anyone can call them.
- Tyler Booth answered that it is statewide, and they serve all people.
- Tracy Wodatch asked if they are seeing caregivers who are burned out and how can they communicate with mobile crisis about those types of issues.
- Sarah Gadsby responded that some traveling nurses already utilize mobile crisis, and they support adults, not children.
- Tracy Wodatch asked if a family member called would they screen the family member if other services are in the home.
- Sarah Gadsby answered that it would depend on the situation.
- Sasa Harriott asked what the average response time for mobile crisis and what barriers would they face when they might not be able to find the person that they are being called for.
- Julianne Girard responded that they are doing well in keeping the response time under ninety minutes.
- Sarah Gadsby added that barriers that could add to the response time being ninety minutes is the geographic distribution of the region and a mobile response time could already be handling a case in the field.
- Sasa Harriott asked Tyler Booth that their team has a ratio of eight members to thirty people or if they are only servicing thirty people.
- Tyler Booth answered that ACT level of care is a grant funded program, so they are required to take care of thirty people and it requires eight people to service thirty people based on three times per week contact.
- Day Kimball Nurturing Families Network and Laboratory Services: Sandra Assanowicz and Deanna Shukis
 - Deanna Shukis introduced herself and gave an overview of their offsite laboratory services and they are experiencing similar

situations to home health care workers even though they are only in the home for a short period of time.

- Sandra Assanowicz introduced herself and gave an overview of the Nurturing Families Network service that is provided by Day Kimball.

- CHA: Hospital at Home
- DPH: Community Services/Surveys

III. Potential recommendations for PHC discussion

IV. Adjournment

- Sasa Harriott announced that the CHA and DPH presentations will be moved to the next meeting.
- Tracy Wodatch added that they are still waiting to hear from DCF and DSS. She also stated that they have to start coming up with recommendations as time is running out. She thanked the presenters for educating and sharing with the Working Group. She asked the Working Group if November 12th from 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM will work.
- Sasa Harriott thanked the presenters today as well as hoping that they will look at equitable solutions to the problem and added that they should add the Department of Transportation to the next meeting.
- The meeting adjourned at 4:28 PM.