NACDD Board of Directors—January 11, 2021

Attendance: Steve Gieber (KS); Julie Horntvedt (ND); Kim Mercer-Schleider (IL); Eric Stoker (UT); Jeremy Norden-Paul (WA); Vicky Davidson (MO); Shannon Buller (WY); Val Bishop (SC); Beth Swedeen (WI); Aaron Carruthers (CA); Jean-Marie Lawrence (TN)

Guests: Kirsten Murphy (VT); Kristin Britton (MA); Darryle Powell (AL)

NACDD—Donna Meltzer, Robin Troutman, Sheryl Matney, Erin Prangley, Rafa Rolon-Muniz, Angela Castillo-Epps

Call to order at 1:10 pm ET

Motion to approve minutes—Vicky Davidson

* Val Bishop made motion
* Eric Stoker seconded
* Motion approved by unanimous vote at 1:11pm

President’s remarks—Steve Gieber

* Congratulation to NACDD staff for securing additional funding for DD Councils, especially considering many groups not getting increases or funding from Congress.
* We are waiting to hear any staff changes at ACL with the new Administration.
* Staff continue to work on the immediate needs of people with I/DD, their families, and caregivers.
* Wednesday Zoom calls continue to be popular and will continue if people keep attending.
* NACDD staff is continually working on as many issues as a small staff can do, and the Board is thankful to see great progress.

CEO remarks—Donna Meltzer

* In Q1, we continued to host the weekly Wednesday Zoom calls. We continue to use it as a platform to both “keep eyes” on everyone monitoring for concerns, needs, well-being, and the need for information. COVID-related policy and communications work continues to be the major topic.
* We hosted the EDLS in early December where we focused on gratitude, how to support our teams during these difficult times, and practiced using some of the new communications tools brought to Councils in November by ACL.
* Through our ITACC contract, led by Sheryl Matney and Angela Castillo-Epps, we began the Emerging Practices groups and Peer-To-Peer groups. We will be doing monthly peer groups on data collection and for Council Chairperson and other Council leaders. Additional groups will begin in Q2, focused on DICLC and systems change.
* We conducted a new survey of DD Councils on COVID-19 related issues, including on topics such as vaccine, respite care, and educational support services. We shared the results of the survey at the last Zoom network gathering before the end of the quarter. The survey information has been shared with ACL/AoD and the Biden Transition Team.
* Erin and I participated together in one meeting with the Transition Team where I had the opportunity to speak about our DD Act programs and wish-list for working with ACL/AoD. A meeting of the I/DD leadership will be happening tomorrow for which I took the liberty to spearhead. It will focus on vaccine and the I/DD and DSP populations.
* With financial support from United Healthcare, we have now finalized a paper called: Pushing Policy Levers: An Examination of the Critical Role of State DD Councils During the COVID-19 Pandemic. The paper outlines how DD Councils have stepped in during pandemic to solve critical issues for people with I/DD by pushing policy levers. We are now in production and hope to have it out to Councils by end of the month, or early February.
* AADMD – I was videotaped in December by AADMD, talking about the work of the DD Councils in solving issues and needs during the pandemic. Their video of several disability community leaders is being shared across the country as part of their advocacy work.
* NACDD continued to advocate for strong federal funding for DD councils for FY 2021. Efforts resulted in a $1 million increase in funding, and strong language to support TA. Sharing information on how DD Councils are solving COVID-19 issues, led to increased Congressional support.
* We have updated the ITACC website and staff has been working to update the NACDD website.  We have a goal to re-launch a much-improved website in Q2 FY21.
* DD Awareness Month - we are planning for our annual online March campaign and hope to weave some events into the DPS event in April. We will also utilize the DDAM to advocate for vaccines for people with I/DD, their families, and their caregivers and allies.
* Optum funded an opportunity for NACDD to develop a Peer-to-Peer Curriculum for training people with I/DD to work locally, supporting other people with I/DD who are seeking support from their waiver team to access the community.  The training will take place in North Carolina and the NCDDC is receiving a stipend through the grant to work to identify and support the first cohort.
* United Healthcare asked NACDD days before Christmas, to put together a proposal for a vaccine advocacy campaign designed to encourage people with I/DD, their families, and caregivers (with a focus on people who also identify with communities of color).
* NACDD pitched a proposal right after the new year and will met again with UHC this week to determine the depth and scope of the campaign and dollar amount.
* NACDD continues its SA Discussion Series. We held 3 sessions in Q1. October’s topic was on elections, November’s topic was building youth advocates, and December focused on policy.
* Throughout Q1, NACDD worked on its OneVoteNow campaign funded by the Craig Newmark Foundation. Our work reached advocates and self-advocates across the country and throughout the territories, to encourage more people with I/DD to vote in ways that were safe and secure. Additionally, because of the runoff race in Georgia, our work continued into the beginning of Q2. We are still compiling data from the campaign that we will share with the Board as soon as it is ready. We are working with Rutgers on the evaluation.
* During Q1, NACDD continued to work with our Hill champions to finalize the FY 2021 appropriations bill. After multiple Continuing Resolutions (CR), we ended up with a $1 million appropriation increase for our member Councils, language to protect a floor of $700,000 for TA to DD Councils, and new language encouraging ACL/AoD to collaboration with their stakeholders before putting out grant opportunities.
* The Public PPC approved the policy priorities document used in conjunction with the Disability Policy Seminar.
* DPS – during Q1, NACDD staff worked with the DPS planning committee to determine the DPS must be virtual this year. We developed a survey to learn more about what DPS attendees want and need from their experience and negotiated pricing for the event. More to come on the April DPS.
* With Rafa’s support, we have enhanced our communications messaging, improved our social media following, started meaningful work on a re-do of our NACDD website, and we are now beginning to implement a Strategic Communications Plan which we shared a very draft version of with the Board last year. The communications plan also dovetails with our DEI Strategic Action Plan which this Board approved of during our November meeting.
* NACDD finance committee explored options for enhancing our reserves and ensuring we are maximizing our opportunities to grow our money. This resulted in a meeting with our financial advisor, Chase Phillips of Merrill-Lynch (Chase also happens to be a person with DD) last week, the beginning of Q2.

Questions

* Kim Mercer-Schleider and Beth Swedeen asked to know specifically what was discussed for changes at ACL with the Biden Transition team. Jeremy Norden-Paul added to the question wanting to know if there is a list of “top priorities” that we want the new Administration to focus on and can we coordinate our messaging on those top priorities.
* Answers
  + Donna answered the first question by saying that the discussion focused on the following items:
  + The need for another reorganization to elevate DD programs to their former status and facilitate better communications between the ACL/AoD staff and the national organization staff from the DD program;
  + Better facilitation of information flow between grantees, national organization, and the federal agency staff; and
  + Also discussed was the need for increased knowledge and attention paid to the DD program funding formula by ACL and OGM. Having only one career staff person knowledgeable about the formula is inadequate and unsafe.
    - Donna answered the second part of the question by saying that once the agency has all of the new people in place we will be prioritizing our requests to them. Issues like a reorganization will likely not be taken up during the first year of the new Administration as they will need time to become oriented with the issues and have an Administrator/Assistant Secretary in place.
    - Collaboration
* Beth Swedeen asked if there is benefit in having the Board of Directors send a formal communication to the transition team about the need to reinstate the original ACL organization of the network?

Donna agreed that a letter could be useful. She said she would also discuss this idea with AUCD and NDRN as a joint letter could be very strong.

Beth Swedeen moved to have the Board draft a letter to the transition team. Vicky Davidson seconded. Motion passed unanimously vote at 2:01 pm.

Audit Committee—Dan Shannon, Chair

Dan Shannon, chair of the committee, discussed the process of the NACDD Audit. We will be using the same firm but with different teams who will be doing the legwork. Which is a common practice amongst non-profits to keep the same firm but change auditor staff who complete the audit.

The committee will review the final draft and recommendations with the auditors once the auditors have completed the work, mostly likely in mid-February.

The audit will start on January 19th and will be completed virtually.

We expect the committee to meet with the auditors to go over the draft in mid-late February so that we are able to meet our March 31st Indirect cost rate proposal deadline.

SAC Committee—Eric Stoker, Chair

The Self-Advocacy Committee met on November 10, 2020 via Zoom. The SAC was invited to attend the NACDD SA Discussion series on Youth Self-Advocacy and to share the information widely. The SAC provided valuable information to NACDD staff on the election process, which included challenges for advocates with in-person and voting by mail. NACDD’s Public Policy Director, Erin Prangley along with Donna Meltzer, led a discussion with the SAC on policy priorities. The SAC noted several issues important to them, including, Minimum wage issues, Flu shots and COVID-19 vaccines, Marriage penalty, ASL Interpreters need to be at all WH briefings and have more accessible materials for all, Post-Secondary Education issues with regard to accessibility, Workforce issues/Direct Support Professionals or DSPs/DSWs, Medicaid transformation and the waitlists and Transportation.  The next SAC meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2021 at 4:00pm Eastern

Questions: Jeremy Norden-Paul—On the topic of COVID-19, were there any comments or discussion about the vaccine and what messaging we need to be promoting.

Angela and Eric said that the discussions on the vaccine have been more recent than the last meeting and most of the conversations have been around the need for accessible information so that they can share that information with their communities.

Finance Committee—Julie Horntvedt, Chair

Julie reported that the Committee met with Chase Philips of Merrill Lynch on what we can do better to increase of our operating funds. We have two accounts with Merrill Lynch and we discussed how to accelerate our investments in a safe way that will grow our reserves. The recommendation by the committee is to move money from the operating reserves account (where there is no interest gained), to our investment account (stocks), to increase the size of the investments.  Chase agreed that this was a feasible and recommended option.

Dan Shannon made a motion to take $60,000 from the CD account and add it to the investment account over a 6 month period ($10,000 a month for 6 months).

Motion by finance committee—Kim Mercer-Schleider seconded. No discussion. Motion passes unanimously at 2:10 pm.

Policy Committee—Kristin Britton, Chair

Kristin provided brief synopses of the last several meetings as the PPC meets monthly.

In November the PPC focused on the agendas of the two task forces: State Budget Emergency (SBE) and Emergency Medicaid Waivers (EMW), and creation of a new task force on Medicaid in the territories. The PPC also reviewed the 117th public policy priorities.

* At the December meeting, we approved the 117th policy priorities and referred them to the Board of Directors for a final vote.

* SBE Task Force: Work continues on identifying and replicating best practices to protect DD and Medicaid programs in all states and territories. The task force will make a recommendation to the committee to broaden their scope to all state policy issues. Please contact Jeremy Norden-Paul for more information about this task force.
  + Jeremy Norden-Paul shared that the group is looking to expand its agenda to include more state policy issues. The board agrees as long as this is not a big concern for staff in consideration of staff capacity.

* EMW Task Force: The task force continued to engage with CMS and had our second meeting with leadership from CMS to present recommendations on K waiver extensions, and waivers for Medicaid to pay for internet and devices. Contact Tamara Jackson for more information about this task force. *Outcome: Because of our advocacy, CMS extended the end dates for K waivers to 6 months after the end of the public health emergency***.**The task force will continue to follow up with CMS to press for guidance on how to convert K waivers to more permanent waivers. The task force is working with the State Policy Task Force to hold a webinar to educate members.
* **Public Policy Committee Recommendation for Board Action**

Kristin shared that the Board must approve the public policy priorities for the 117th Congress which is part of the joint agenda for the Disability Policy Seminar. Kristin noted that the PPC has already approved the priorities and they are not open for amendment. She did offer that she or Erin would be happy to answer any questions about the priorities. The PPC met twice to review and approve the priorities. She further stated that the current priorities are not substantially different from last year but there are some additions made relative to the pandemic.

Additionally NACDD included a new priority specific to support for Territories on Medicaid, CHIP, and Social Security.

Questions—

Will there be a plain language version of the priorities? Yes.

Yes

Will there be fact sheets as usual? Yes

Motion by policy committee to approve the policy priorities document. Dan moved to endorse and adopt the policy priorities document. Eric Stoker seconded. Motion passed unanimously at 2:22 pm.

Member Services—Kirsten Murphy, Chair

Kirstin reported that the recent Member Services Committee meeting focused on planning for the TAI. The Committee specifically discussed timing for the sessions on State Plan development because those sessions need to happen in the Spring as July is too late given the deadline of August 15, 2021.

The Committee also shared idea on other topics beyond TAI and Annual Conference. Suggestions included:

Discussion on what understanding what coalitions NACDD belongs to and what is the impact of engagement with those coalitions;

DICLC -discussion on emerging practices and how to use plain language effectively;

Impact of COVID-19 on services and supports for people with I/DD during pandemic and afterward including discussion on caregiving (parents as paid support workers), preparing for future pandemics, lessons learned from hospital situations, dignity of risk and decision-making.

Update on DEI Strategic Action Plan—Kim Mercer-Schleider

* On December 1, 2020, there was a meeting that included Julie Horntvedt, Kim Mercer-Schleider, Angela Castillo-Epps and Donna Meltzer, to discuss steps for moving forward with an NACDD Strategic Action Plan on DEI. Together we discussed some basics about DEI and its definition (as opposed to DICLC), and walked through the proposed plan agreed upon by the Board at the meeting in November. Together we agreed that the plan is manageable and appropriate for NACDD, but also agreed that everyone needs more opportunities to become educated about DEI, and separate what it means at the Council level, and think about it from the perspective of our national organization.
* We agreed that the first step will be to put together a small group of individuals from the Board, the DICLC workgroup, and representative of the full membership of the NACDD, to prepare a DEI statement that will be on our website, and will guide the other objectives in the DEI Strategic Action Plan. Currently we are gathering samples of other organization’s DEI statements to see what resonates with our organization, and what feels important. We agreed that we want our statement to be “evergreen” and not tied to an event such as the murder of George Floyd.
* We agreed that while major events (both good and bad) can motivate us or call us to action, our statement should be simple and timeless.
* It must be in plain language for all to understand, and representative of the full scope of the organization. Some words/phrases we discussed include:
  + Nothing about us without us;
  + NACDD is an Equal Opportunity Employer;
  + We work without regard to: race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or genetics;
  + All are welcome; and
  + Inclusive organization working to build inclusive communities.
* We will be pulling together this group, and sharing some draft language for a statement that will shared back with the board for approval. We will continue to work with the NACDD staff on the other objectives in the Strategic Action Plan and provide guidance to the staff team as needed.

Discussion on next meeting—Robin Troutman said the next full official meeting will be in April. Dan Shannon asked if we were still doing the more frequent meetings. We agreed that if something comes up, then we will have a special meeting. For example, the Board will need to approve the audit and plans for the Annual Conference before April, so we will plan to have a special call earlier.

Dan Shannon moved to adjourn and Eric Stoker seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 2:51 pm.