

**Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities Community Advisory Council Retreat
November 5, 2007, Memphis TN, 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

(Coffee and breakfast/Welcome and Introductions)

History of Boling Center/ADD/LEND – by Bill Wilson, (retired). Dr. Palmer gave an introduction to the DD Act Programs, acknowledged representatives from partner agencies and reviewed the charge for the day: *to ensure participation of people with disabilities and their families in the design of and access to the community and individual supports that BCDD staff provide to all its constituencies.* This will begin today, with a needs assessment discussion and review of current and planned BCDD activities, programs and services. Going forward, the CAC will determine how to review the new 5-Year Plan, and possible committee restructuring.

The TN DD Network Goals and priorities were used as a jumping off-point for the CAC to discuss their assessment of the needs of targeted community members.

Transition:

There was much discussion of how things are not working well as students with disabilities age out or graduate from secondary education. Self-determination training done by Center on Disability and Employment (CDE – Boling Center satellite at UT Knoxville) is a good start. CDE also is providing supports to school districts across the state to support best practices in transition.

CAC members encouraged the addition of siblings of students with disabilities to an IEP team (or on an informal basis) as a resource for parents, teachers and peers to assist. Siblings have strengths (knowledge of schools, peers, student) and are natural supports for students throughout transition into adulthood. A broader discussion of siblings brought up BCDD Sibshops, Face-book/other internet social groups for siblings who are “digital natives,” Vanderbilt efforts, the possibility of developing a mentoring program for children who do not have siblings, and the UCEDD role in the development of curriculum around these issues.

Many issues occurring after the school system’s obligation ends were brought up, such as: 1) lack of adult services (provider capacity and diversity of models); 2) state’s current lack of funding for MR or DD populations; 3) state agencies’ inability to work with students before end of school leads to ballooning of wait for services after – e.g. Vocational Rehabilitation, Div. of MR Services; and 4) transportation. There was a robust conversation about transportation issues for individuals with disabilities from a state-wide perspective, with local solutions and models cited. The need to address transportation via natural supports was suggested, as well as continuation of advocacy for accessible, affordable public transportation services. BCDD will continue to assist on transportation issues with advocacy/information support and dissemination of best practices, local solutions.

Transition Consensus: Build on CDE activities around self-determination, transition and employment, and support their dissemination across the state. Expand on work and activities being done with siblings and infuse sibling perspectives into planning and programs. BCDD might look into various ways that sibling and sibling-like relationships can enhance natural supports around youth with disabilities.

Emergency Preparedness:

Update on Statewide Collaboration (begun in 2006, lead by J. Phillips, Director of EMT’s in TN) which includes several DD Network partners. Training and education committee (curriculum development) is most pertinent to BCDD’s expertise, and the Center is represented on that committee. One project is funding Tip Cards for EMT’s in TN (one set per unit) to help

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them support persons with disabilities. Local links are critical, and there is a need to keep communication flowing between different stakeholder groups at this level. Discussion included models for keeping medical information accessible and available in times of emergency (Vial of Life, and electronic information models).

Consensus on Emergency Preparedness: BCDD will continue to support the exchange of information among local, state and national resources. BCDD will support curriculum development and dissemination with other DD Network partners and the general public.

Self-Advocacy Initiatives:

The TN Council on DD is funding a capacity building grant to People First (state chapter in TN of Self Advocates Becoming Empowered – S.A.B.E.) so all three grand regions in the state will have a full time regional coordinator to assist in training and expansion of increased chapters. Centers for Independent Living are very supportive of this. Vanderbilt and BCDD will have a role in curriculum development and training.

Consensus on Self-Advocacy Initiatives: BCDD and CAC members will continue to encourage participation in CDD Programs such as Partners in Policymaking and Youth Leadership Forum. (Several are graduates of these programs.) This is another area where siblings may be interested to participate and add support. TN UCEDDs will work on curriculum and training w/People 1st.

Employment:

There was healthy discussion around barriers to employment for persons with disabilities that echoed several points from the earlier discussion of Transition (lack of skill acquisition, transportation, and access to community practice), but went beyond. Again, CDE has programs and activities that address some of these issues, such as Corporate Connections, which supports employers who hire individuals with disabilities. Creative solutions are needed and welcomed. Physical accessibility is still a barrier almost 2 decades after ADA. Project Opportunity at Vanderbilt Children's Hospital was mentioned as a model, based on Cincinnati's program.

Consensus on Employment: LeBonheur (Memphis) Children's Hospital could be approached to replicate Project Opportunity. BCDD will continue to work on and support advocacy and integration of persons with disabilities into the workplace.

Hispanic Outreach:

Dr. Palmer shared demographics on the increasing Latino population in TN. One in 10 babies born in Shelby Co. is Latino. BCDD has been hosting a Multi-Agency Latino Outreach Committee since 2004. In 2005, a Health Issues survey was completed by this group and indicated that there was little knowledge in the local Latino community about resources for disabilities. In 2007, Vanderbilt and BCDD collaborated on a Hispanic Disability Services Conference which attracted almost 70 attendees. A Memphis Latino Listserv was created to build on this, and currently, the Council on DD is funding a project to replicate Vanderbilt's Nashville's Camino Seguro bilingual database project in Shelby County.

Consensus on Hispanic Outreach: Continue to work on Latino Outreach through Camino Seguro West Project and other venues. Partnership includes: Memphis 2-1-1; Latino Memphis, MCIL, and YWCA.

CAC agreed to create an ad-hoc "Operations Committee" to review needed by-laws revisions and propose dates for next years' meetings. Surveys collected, Meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.