



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

2023 Year In Review

With the COVID-19 pandemic still impacting lives, services and staffing, we began 2023 as another year of “the new normal.” Zoom meetings, whether they involved the Department on Disability Services, DC Coalition sub-committees, or DC Council Performance Oversight/Budgetary Hearings were the norm for most of the year.

Community options for persons supported were limited for much of the year with the District’s re-engagement of day services not finding much traction until very late into 2023. The DC Coalition continually voiced member concerns about the fragile state of the District’s day services and community options for those receiving supports, requesting referral modifications and service coordinator corporation in the reconnection between service options and persons seeking programmatic day activities while ensuring that “choice” remained at the forefront of the discussion. There is still much work to be done in order to ensure that day service options can re-emerge from the three years of Covid impact, but we know that providers can find success with persistent and consistent advocacy.

Even as the Covid disruption persisted, the Coalition remained active and continued to meet its core objectives and initiatives in spite of the limited in-person interactions. **Training; Legislative & Policy Advocacy; Communication & Coordination Among Members; and Community Building.**

DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers

The Coalition represents **50+** member agencies, which in turn support over **2,100** persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and employ over **5,000** staff.

Associate Members

PLATINUM

Alco Pharmacy
HUB International
Station MD

GOLD

Quest Insurance
Therap
Training & E-Tracking Solutions

Training & Activities

As the winter 2023 gave way to spring, the DC Coalition resumed its highly regarded in-person Executive Leadership Conference. This all-day conference geared toward topics designed to equip provider leadership with the intel they need to manage their organizations, featured presentations on service trends, post-COVID best practices and operational opportunities for our members.



HUB International's Jody Buyalos shares some costs trending at the Executive Leadership Conference

Sponsored by Associate Members from **Alco Pharmacy, TIE/HUB International, Station MD, Quest Insurance, and Training & e-Tracking** Given our success with our Executive Conference, we boldly resumed the in-person version of our Annual Direct Support Professionals Conference in September. It is worth noting that the zoom version of the DSP Conference held in years 2020 to 2022 enabled 4x more attendees to participate, however, the Coalition opted to promote the return to pre-Covid activities and sought the connection and intimacy of the Kellogg Center at Gallaudet University for 2023.

This all day conference featured a variety of topics including an historical retrospective featuring the voices of DC residents telling their own stories about what it was like to live at Forest Haven; training on how best to support people so that they can learn about their sexu-

ality and healthy relationships; person-centered thinking, planning, and practice; technology and innovation in the field of supports; and a panel discussion involving some of the District's most seasoned DSPs, sharing their insights and best practices.

DDS Director Andrew Reese welcomes the 150 DSPs in attendance.



Alco Pharmacy's Ruth Miller recognizes DSPs and presents on TME skill sets



An (over) full house at the DSP Conference... but no Covid troubles.

Legislative & Policy Advocacy

2023 Implementation of Direct Support Professional Rate Payment Act of 2019

Our **signature** non-COVID **accomplishment** for 2020 was the unanimous passage of the **Direct Support Professional Payment Rate Act** by the DC Council in March 2020, but it took a great deal of discussion and advocacy to actually get the funding promised by that legislation into the hands of the workforce. Pursuant to the terms

of the Act, funding for Direct support staff wages would reach 117.6% of the DC Living Wage so that providers could create salary bands in order to offer heightened hourly rates for longer tenured and more experienced DSPs. In July 2023, the first 10% of the total 17.6% allocation was distributed by the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF) and the remaining 7.6% is slated for early 2024. It was a long time coming, but, Mission Accomplished!

The DC Coalition also weighed-in on the post-Public Health Emergency (PHE) policies generated by DDS and forewarned of the dangers of returning to pre-Covid funding and support structures too quickly after the end of the PHE. Unfortunately, DHCF opted not to extend any PHE allowances so we anticipate that 2024 will be a difficult year as it relates to provider sustainability.

Communication & Coordination Among Members

The DC Coalition's sub-committees remained vibrant with an expansion of the Residential Committee to include a quarterly Coalition Nurses zoom roundtable. With continuing pressures related to recruitment and retention, the HR Committee was revived. Other sub-committees - Day Services, Legislative, and Provider Leadership - offered forums for provider needs so that ideas and recommendations could be brought forward to DDS, DOH and DHCF.



Equally important were dozens of email communications directed to Coalition members only, featuring upcoming policy changes, fund-

ing opportunities, data submission, enhanced wage eligibility and distribution expectations. Live ad hoc meetings designed to help providers accomplish the goals of DDS and DHCF initiatives were mixed into important Coalition messaging, many times ahead of the policy or practice guidance provided by governmental units.

Community Building

The Coalition has identified additional policy allies within the DC services community. In addition to being involved in the Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities; the DC Medical Care Advisory Committee; the Mayor's Healthcare Workforce Taskforce; the DC Health Care Workforce Partnership; the DDS PCO Residential Committee; and DDS Culture of Quality Committee, the Coalition participates in bi-weekly calls with behavioral health executives, hospital associations, physicians groups and other medical leaders to foster deeper collaboration and awareness of DD issues within the medical community.

Similarly, the Coalition meets bi-weekly with the larger DD advocacy community, sharing needs as well as developing a rapport and mutual understanding with groups that traditionally have sought solutions that might adversely impact provider operations and processes. Many of these advocacy groups provide written and testimonial support for our objectives.

In an effort to further expand our reach beyond the District, in November, the Coalition co-hosted a full day program with Federal CMS policy leaders along with state HCBS service leaders from DC, Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania, in order to gather some best practice knowledge among our neighboring states.

2023 Members of the DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers

1 Axiom	Galaxy Healthcare Solutions	RCM of Washington
Alight Supports	Global Resources and Supports	St. Coletta
American Health Care Services	Health & Joy	St. John's Community Services
Anna Healthcare, Inc.	Hope Foundation	SEEC
Art Enables	Individual Advocacy Group	Supreme Healthcare Services
Associated Community Services	Innovative Life Solutions	Symbral Foundation
Behavioral Research Assoc.	Integrated Community Services	The Van Mar
Capital Care Inc.	L'Arche of Greater Washington	Total Care Services
Community Multi-Services	Lifeline Inc.	Total Quality Residential Services
Comprehensive Care II	Metro Homes	We Care DMV
DC Healthcare	Multi-Therapeutic Services, Inc.	Volunteers of America Chesapeake & Carolinas
DC Residential Services	My Own Place	Ward & Ward
Finsby, Inc.	National Children's Center	Wholistic Services, Inc.
First Metropolitan Comm Svcs	Premier Health Services	Wholistic Day
Frontline Community Services	Project Redirect	

2024 DC Coalition Board of Directors

Maheni John—President, Wholistic Services
Precious Myers-Brown - Vice President, Health & Joy Services
Kathleen Bjerknes, Treasurer, RCM of Washington
Eva-Elizabeth Chisholm, Secretary, L'Arche of Greater DC
Danielle Darby - Immediate Past President, RCM of Washington

Aditi Berry, Frontline Community Services
David Carrington, Innovative Life Solutions
Harold King, Project ReDirect
Kim Scott, My Own Place
Valdez Snipes, WeCareDMV
Gracy Stephen, DC Healthcare

Our Mission

Empowering a diverse and dynamic membership to enhance meaningful community engagement for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities

DC Coalition of Disability Service Providers

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