

Olmstead Subcabinet Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 25, 2021 • 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

1) Call to Order

The meeting was held using GoTo Webinar. Commissioner Ho welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

Subcabinet members present: Jennifer Lemaile Ho, Minnesota Housing (MHFA); Larry Herke, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA); Jodi Harpstead, Department of Human Services (DHS); Paul Schnell, Department of Corrections (DOC); Roberta Opheim, Office of Ombudsman for Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (OMHDD); Colleen Wieck, Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD); Mary Catherine Ricker, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) joined at 3:51 p.m.

Designees present: Tim Henkel, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT); Blake Chaffee, Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED); Mary Manning, Minnesota Department of Health (MDH); Scott Buetel, Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR); Michelle Smith (DOC); Wendy Wulff, Metropolitan Council (MetC); Bruce West, Department of Public Safety (DPS); Daron Korte, Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) joined at 3:20 p.m.

Guests present: Mike Tessneer, Rosalie Vollmar, Shelley Madore, Diane Doolittle, Chloe Ahlf, Carolyn Sampson and Sue Hite-Kirk, Olmstead Implementation Office (OIO); John Patterson and Ryan Baumtrog (MHFA); Kristie Billiar (MnDOT); Erin Sullivan Sutton, Catherine Courcy, Dan Baker, Gloria Smith, Whitney Terrill, and Shireen Gandhi (DHS); Tom Delaney and Holly Andersen (MDE); Ann Schulte (MDH); Dee Torgerson, Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED); Kate Erickson, Department of Corrections (DOC); Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council (MetC); Beth Bibus, Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB); and Daniel Gulya, North Dakota Olmstead Commission

Note: In the interest of time, all attendees to the GoToWebinar were not identified.

CART provider: Paradigm Captioning and Reporting Services, Inc.

2) Roll Call / Question

Commissioner Ho asked the agency attendee (Commissioner or designee) to identify themselves and answer the question below.

With the new COVID Relief Plan offered by President Biden, what piece of the plan best supports your agency as it relates to people with disabilities?

- **Commissioner Ho (MHFA):** For Minnesota Housing, this would add an additional \$25 Billion of emergency funds on top of \$25 billion from the last stimulus bill signed in December 2020. This would provide more help for renters.
- **Commissioner Harpstead (DHS):** Extension of the federal emergency throughout 2021 will allow DHS to extend health care coverage for Medicaid and Minnesota Care for everyone, including people with disabilities.
- **Deputy Commissioner Chaffee (DEED):** With all the unemployment work during COVID emergency, he has not focused on the stimulus bill, however he will review it.
- **Assistant Commissioner Henkel (MNDOT):** The agency is hopeful to see additional funding in the form of transit that would allow for the provision of transit services and thereby provide the accessibility that is in dire need.
- **Commissioner Schnell (DOC):** Investment in vaccine relief as there are so many in the DOC system that are very ill.
- **Assistant Commissioner Manning (MDH):** Beyond what is in the Biden legislation, MDH is continuing to look at how to make distribution of the vaccine equitable.
- **Assistant Commissioner Buetel (MDHR):** What has been said by others about the vaccine distribution will impact agency work, such as extending leave options.
- **Commissioner Herke (MDVA):** Temporary housing has been a great help in regard to homelessness, and additional vaccines will help in the area of caregivers.
- **Deputy Commissioner West (DPS):** The expansion and broadening of vaccine distribution is very important to DPS.
- **Council Member Wulff (MetC):** Echoes comments by Deputy Commissioner Henkel with MNDOT.
- **Roberta Opheim (OMHDD):** The impact on other agencies and their work, such as housing, transportation, medical care, no evictions, etc., really help people with disabilities that OMHDD serves.
- **Colleen Wieck (GCDD):** While there is nothing in the bill regarding developmental disabilities, GCDD supports all the provisions.

3) Agenda Review

Commissioner Ho reviewed the agenda. There were no requested changes.

4) Approval of Minutes

a) Subcabinet meeting on December 21, 2020

Commissioner Ho asked if there are any changes needed to the minutes for the December meeting. There were no requested changes.

Motion: Approve December meeting minutes

Action: Motion – Chaffee Second – Buetel

In Favor: Vote was taken with 12 Ayes and 0 Nays

- MHFA – Aye
- DHS – Aye
- DEED – Aye
- MNDOT – Aye
- DOC – Aye
- MDH – Aye
- MDHR – Aye
- MDVA – Aye
- DPS - Aye
- Met Council – Aye
- OMHDD – Aye
- GCDD – Aye

5) Reports

a) **Chair** – There was no report from the Chair.

b) Director

Shelley Madore reviewed the Director’s Report on page 13 of the packet. The report provided an overview of the work being completed by OIO.

c) **Compliance Office** – There was no report from the Compliance Office.

6) Agenda Items

a) 2021 Olmstead draft Plan amendments

Mike Tessneer gave a brief overview of the Plan amendment process. He presented the first round of amendments included in the packet. The proposed changes to the measurable goals were indicated with blackline and the reason for the change was also included. Mike reviewed the summary document on page 17. Upon acceptance of the amendments, they will be posted for public comment.

Motion: Accept the proposed amendments to be posted for public comment.

Action: Motion – Schnell Second – Harpstead

In Favor: Vote was taken with 12 Ayes and 0 Nays

- MHFA – Aye
- DHS – Aye
- DEED – Aye
- MNDOT – Aye
- DOC – Aye
- MDH – Aye
- MDHR – Aye
- MDVA – Aye
- DPS - Aye
- Met Council – Aye
- OMHDD – Aye
- GCDD – Aye

b) Public input process on 2021 Plan amendments

Shelley Madore reported on the upcoming Plan amendment public input process as part of the website presentation.

Questions/Comments

Roberta Opheim (OMHDD) asked about the use of the Tennesen Warning on the website when asking individuals to provide their comments, and when collecting other identifying information. Ms. Madore stated the Tennesen Warning will be added. If an individual does not agree to let us use their information, then the process stops.

Colleen Wieck (GCDD) stated that some individuals want to comment but do not want to be identified. They therefore go through a third party like GCDD. She asked if that process would continue, and if individuals could contact OIO staff via email. Ms. Madore responded yes to both.

c) Overview of Olmstead Implementation Office website

Shelley Madore provided an overview of the OIO website that is scheduled to launch on January 26, 2021.

Questions/Comments

Roberta Opheim (OMHDD) expressed concern about the Tell your Story part of the website. She asked for clarification if these would be interpreted as asking for a facilitated outcome of issues. She also wanted to know if the stories would be shared with agencies and/or published on the website for the general public to see.

Shelley Madore responded that stories would never be published on the website, although a person might be contacted to use a quote from their story. No identifying data such as zip code or county will be retrievable once an individual submits their story.

Commissioner Schnell (DOC) asked if the OIO website link will be shared with the Subcabinet agencies to be embedded in their websites. Ms. Madore responded, yes. She also indicated that as the communications team monitors website traffic, posts, and other activities, this will be shared with agency leads as appropriate.

d) Update on Big 6 workgroups

Shelley Madore provided an update on the Big 6 workgroups. There will be web pages dedicated to each of the workgroups. Meetings will start in April 2021. There will be a social media campaign tied to the rollout of the workgroups.

Questions/Comments

Commissioner Ho stated it will be good to have this work pushed to the next level as this is where the Subcabinet identified priority collaborative work.

7) Discussion Item

Mike Tessneer introduced the discussion and provided the background information. A separate handout was sent out with this information.

1) How can we improve the 2022 Olmstead Plan that results in outcomes that reflect the desires of people with disabilities?

Commissioner Schnell (DOC)

- Change our organization to really focus on much more person-centered approach as opposed to doing what the correction system expects. Recognize individual strengths and unique challenges.
- We want to look at this person-centered focus and really trying to understand the needs of people that come into our system and in this case really talking about those who have a range of disabilities. We need to make sure that we have programs that are responsive to them and their needs and don't leave them behind.
- We need to find out from the people we serve where we are hitting the mark and where we are not and add strategies to address the shortfalls.

Roberta Opheim (OMHDD)

- It's important for the public to understand the goals and how it builds on the future and what they really mean.

Colleen Wieck (GCDD)

- Having public input before the agencies propose amendments is a good idea.
- Early results from the Quality of Life study indicate declines in several areas. Post pandemic we should again focus on relationships, integration, rights and decision making.

Commissioner Harpstead (DHS)

- There is a lot of ongoing national discussion on getting people to a living wage. This also raises a question about subminimum wage for people with disabilities which is probably going to be a national issue in the next few years.

Assistant Commissioner Beutel (MDHR)

- Good opportunity to take some lessons learned during COVID on engagement activities with online tools. This has actually increased our reach to people statewide who may otherwise have trouble travelling to attend a meeting.

Commissioner Ho (MHFA)

- The COVID-19 Housing assistance effort was built to work online, and we learned that you need to have a strategy and alternate method for those who do not have online access or have other barriers such as non-English speaking people.

Deputy Commissioner Henkel (MNDOT)

- Transportation access is a desire of people with disabilities.
- We need to continue the work of partnerships between the agencies and the work of knowledge building and interagency data sharing. This will help to determine the strategic approaches for investment in this state.

- We need to continue working with the regional transportation coordinating councils to understand the accessibility needs and seeking strategies and investments across agencies and across the entire state in an effort to provide accessibility.

Assistant Commissioner Korte (MDE)

- We need to make sure to engage families, parents and students directly.
- There is a good example with the unified sports campaign through Special Olympics, which is extracurricular sports and other activities where students with disabilities and non-disabled peers play together. Students themselves are doing some great integration and inclusion for their fellow students with disabilities and helping them be a part of the whole school experience. This is a great model that we as agencies could learn from.

Commissioner Harpstead (DHS)

- The Blue Ribbon Commission created a proposal for examining equity in disability services, and as we continue to disaggregate data through COVID, it's very clear that a disproportionate number of white Minnesotans with disabilities are offered group home waivers and day services and a disproportionate number of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) individuals are offered Personal Care Assistance (PCA) services. We need to take a look at that to examine how that occurs.

Commissioner Herke (MDVA)

- With the veterans in our state home system, we do a very good job of listening and reacting and taking care of the needs. We probably need to listen a little closer to the veterans who are not in the system and find a way to be able to hear what they may need assistance with. About a third are helped by the Federal VA, so there's a large number of people that still need assistance.

2) How can we improve the 2022 Olmstead Plan to show systemic improvements over time?

Roberta Opheim (OMHDD)

- It would be nice to provide a broad outline where we're headed in the goals and then show specific goals of specific years. Use more general language to express the goals in terms of wanting people to live more independently, and have a place of their own.

Director Manning (MDH)

- Measurable goals in health often include data that have a negative outcome. It's difficult to put it into a positive context. It's hard to positively say that a little bit less of something bad is a good thing. It's difficult to show progress when progress is at such an individual level.

Commissioner Ho (MHFA)

- Many times the cumulative measures look like not much progress was made because they are flat or because something else impacts them. Sometimes you have to look at the metrics within the performance to see the improvement.

- How do we highlight where the system is performing better than it used to, even if it hasn't solved everything for everybody?

Commissioner Harpstead (DHS)

- What can we learn from our disability services during COVID? There were a lot more remote services which could support people living in their own homes and getting support without having to live in congregate care setting and we still have affordable housing issues to deal with for people with disabilities to enable all of that.

Commissioner Ho (MHFA)

- It might be a good idea to use one of our meetings to reflect on what adaptations did we make during the pandemic that should inform how we proceed after the pandemic.

Council Member Wulff (MetC)

- One of the weird things about disability is your rights depend on what program you qualify for. We need to look at people as people and what their needs are rather than what programs they are in. And that should include looking at the actual needs in a culturally competent setting.

Roberta Opheim (OMHDD)

- We need to embed the philosophy that each person is a unique individual that they may have a disability, they may have an income problems, they may have a housing problem, but they have a life experience to that point that we should honor and listen to.

Commissioner Herke (MDVA)

- With homelessness, if we continue to provide the information that we have up, then we can start going at specific areas. Success for us is to be able to look at different groups of people and look at them, not by the color of their skin, but to look at them as it relates to age and some of other ways that can help us to determine how we can best serve people at the time.

8) Adjournment:

Commissioner Ho stated the next Subcabinet meeting is March 22, 2021. With the Governor's first term halfway over, thinking about the two questions above, helps us to think about the Subcabinet's legacy in meeting the desires of people with disabilities and showing systematic improvements over time. She encouraged members to continue to think about what their agency has contributed and how the Subcabinet has collectively changed the way it listens and incorporates the perspective of people with disabilities. She further asked how to make sure the Subcabinet can take real action steps to make sure it is moving in the direction of specific goals of the plan, as well as the bigger picture items.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 p.m.