

Policy Committee Meeting 2/18/2022

Committee members in attendance: Roxanne Cogil, Hugh Kelly, Brady Werger, Mark Smith, Carol Cross

DD Council Staff: Bill Kallestad, Lindsay Hommer

Greeting:

Kallestad stated that we have two committees that are working together; and editorial board ran by Amy Campbell and then the Public Policy group. We have an editorial board that is looking at the InfoNET, information on our websites, and some of the materials we send out to make sure they are user friendly for everybody. Our intent for this public policy committee is to drive the legislative priorities of the DD Council. From January through April there is a lot going on at the capitol.

Give updates on Newsletter and Capital Snapshots – get impressions

We have been sending weekly emails, and the Capitol Snapshot videos. Any feedback? Smith enjoys the information and finds it easily digestible. He likes that people can get their information either by video or writing. Werger asked if he is talking about the DD magazine. Kallestad said that he is speaking about the weekly emails that go out that summarize what happened at the capitol that week. Cogil said the last thing on the ID Action website is from July 2021 and does not have updated information. Cogil said information is harder to find on the website than it used to be. Kallestad reminded everyone that we are going to integrate the three websites into one to make things easier. Cogil said she has not watched the videos. Kallestad shared the last email that was sent out. Kallestad stated the videos and weekly newsletter cover the same information. There are about 20 people viewing the video each week.

Updates on Capital Chats

We had a capitol chat last month and have another one on February 25th. Last year during the legislative season, we averaged about 20-25 people attending the capitol chats. We had 40 plus attendees in January, and over 80 registered. We are encouraged by the increase of number of people attending. Kelly attended the last capitol chat and said it was very good. Werger stated when he has attended the capitol chats, it has been exciting to speak to his representative and senator. Kallestad stated that they are pleased with legislative engagement and one thing we did different this year we strategically shared our legislative agenda and put one on every legislator's desk and Kallestad emailed the legislative agenda to the key committees' members. Capitol chats are once a month, and they review what has happened at the capitol in the last month. Cross said she believes our priorities are clear this year and thinks this makes a difference. Cross started a group last year called "Accessible Iowa" which focuses on accessibility of parks for people with disabilities. There are about 75-80 members of this group. A group of older adults that use wheelchairs joined her group and they are great advocates. Cross noticed they

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attended the last capitol chat. She wishes we could coordinate with them more. Kallestad stated he would like to do a deeper dive on each priority leading into the session next year. He would like to include this group that Cross mentioned when we do this next year.

Share on Capital Days – who we are assisting

We have three groups that we are working with that we have given scholarship dollars to. This is to help them advocate and come to the state capitol. The groups are First Resources, Life Connections, and the Iowa Family Leadership Training Institute. Kallestad meets with them and educates them on how to advocate and how to be a better advocate, then they head over to the capitol to meet with their legislators. Werger asked how to join these groups. Kallestad explained how to join the groups.

Discuss What to do on our Legislative Priorities

We want to start shaping the priorities for 2023 this summer. Discussed working on them in the summer and a goal could be to share the priorities at Make Your Mark in September. Cogil stated she agrees. Conversations with representatives and senators need to happen in the summer and fall before session starts. Cogil stated we really need to pay attention to how the one-year waiver review by Director Garcia is going due to the long wait lists that need to be addressed. Smith stated he was looking to see if the legislators addressed this during session and they did not. Cogil stated they are waiting until the one-year review is done. Cross said she heard during a human resources committee meeting, there was a bill to add more psychiatric beds, but it was brought up that this would go against the Department of Justice recommendations, and they needed to focus on the community-based support. Kallestad said at the MHDS meeting yesterday and there was a lot of concern from community providers that one of the plans of Glenwood and Woodward is that they are going to start providing community-based services at the higher rates for 24-hour care, but it would be in the community. Community providers are saying they can serve those people but please give us the rates that you would use instead of expanding your services to the community. Kallestad said in a larger sense would be for Glenwood and Woodward to offer services because that would mean people could get services in the community, but this would mean community-based providers would struggle due to their capped rates. There is a significant increase in the mental health and disability budget this year of about \$72 million. We don't know yet where this money is going to be spent. Another point is that there is a surplus in the budget due to persons with disabilities getting cared for by their family members and providers not being paid for this. The actual amount that should be paid for caretakers is not known due to family members not getting paid for this, so the budget is unknown for this service. Werger appreciates the waiting list topic being brought up because it needs addressed. Werger shared his story about his sister being moved to Oklahoma and Iowa wants to take her waiver away from her and make her re-apply for the waiver which could take years.

Continued advocacy

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Kallestad stated we have registered on 14 bills this year, and some are matched with companion bills. The bills had to do with insurance coverage for hearing aids face covering in schools, childcare assistance, service for people with autism, absentee ballots, Medicaid payments, beds at state hospital, cash reserves for mental health and disability services in their regions, newborn screening, facial coverings, and psychiatric bed expansion. Cross explained the newborn screening bill would update the newborn screening program and allow the state screening lab to set the fee for services. Also, it would require the newborn screening advisory council to review any disorders that are added in a timely manner. Cross is hopeful this bill will pass, and the bill has bipartisan support.

Kallestad stated he emailed the Secretary of State to find out how to get a pin number for voting as there is a bill that may require this.

Timeline for 2023

Cogil asked if Kallestad could request a meeting with Director Garcia about the waitlist once the one-year review is complete of the waiver waitlists.

Breakfast day at the Capital 2023

We would like to do a morning at the capitol on February 1, 2023, from 7:30am – 10:30am, it is a Wednesday morning. The plan is to have a table, hand out breakfasts, and discuss legislative priorities.

How often should the committee meet?

Kallestad inquired how often the committee should meet? Kallestad suggested a 30-minute zoom call weekly or every other week or monthly - and asked for input. Cross suggested every other week. Cross stated this could change dependent on the time of year and if session is in. Kallestad said that he thinks he could use this committee more because of the experience that is on this committee. Kallestad said that if there some bills that we need to make comment on or advocating for, to please let him and the group know.

Discuss our name

Kallestad asked if there should there be a name for our workgroup. Werger said he would think and would get back to him. Cogil stated that lots of groups use "Advocacy committee."

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