



Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities

Website: dhs.wisconsin.gov/gcpd ○ PO Box 2659, Madison, WI 53701

Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities (GCPD) Executive Committee Teleconference Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 19, 2025, from 2:05 P.M. to 3:30 P.M.

APPROVED May 21, 2025

Executive Committee Members Present:

- Dan Laatsch, Tiffany Payne, Dan Witt, and Ramsey Lee.

Executive Committee Members Absent:

- Ben Barrett.

GCPD Voting Members Present:

- Cindy Bentley, David Morstad and Ashley Mathy.

Guests Present:

- Rebecca Rabatin, Independence First.

DHS Support Staff Present:

- Zachary Davenport, Lisa Sobczyk, and Angela Brenna.

American Sign Language Interpreters Present:

- Amy Simonsen, Danielle Katers, and Maiah Broesch.

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Call to Order and Welcome

- Dan Laatsch, GCPD Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:10 PM. Introductions and rollcall were conducted. The meeting was made available via Zoom and phone with Meeting ID: 161 1786 1716.

Review and Approve Executive Committee Meeting Agenda

- Ramsey Lee made a motion to approve the Executive Committee meeting agenda. Dan Witt seconded the motion. Motion carried.



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Review and Approve the Minutes from the Previous Executive Committee Meeting

- Cindy Bentley made a motion to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes from the previous Executive Committee meeting. Dan Witt seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Review Action Items from Previous Meeting

- Ramsey Lee and Cindy Bentley will send information about the BPDD Medicaid Webinars to DHS Support Staff to share with full GCPD Membership. ***Item completed.***
- Dan Laatsch will draft a letter to the Governor and Lt. Governor in support of shifting Medicaid funding to Community-Based Services. ***Item pending.***
- Dan Laatsch will contact Nancy Leipzig regarding the Employment Workgroup schedule and work items. ***Item pending.***
- DHS Support will review the budget and provide a summary to Executive Committee at the next meeting. ***Item completed.***
- DHS Staff Support will send out calendar invitations to the next GCPD Quarterly Meeting. ***Item completed.***

Public Comment on Issues Affecting People with Disabilities (2:15 – 2:35 P.M.)

- Public comment received by email from Pam Bettinger.
 - **Action Item:** Tiffany Payne request DHS Staff invite Pam Bettinger to the next full GCPD meeting
- Ramsey Lee relayed to the group that the Joint Finance Committee Public Hearings are scheduled.
- David Morstad reported his participation in the Wisconsin Digital Equity and Inclusion Stakeholder Group meetings. David inquired about the possibility of modifying the GCPD Workplan to better reflect current concerns. He emphasized the need to expand on the Digital Equity goal within the workplan. Dan Laatsch requested the addition of an agenda item for the full committee to discuss these points at the upcoming quarterly meeting.
- Ashley Mathy shared that Medicaid mental health services ought to incorporate peer support, allowing individuals to connect with others who share similar life experiences.

Discuss Federal Legislative Updates

- DHS Staff Support provided a document with updates prior to the meeting.



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- On Friday, March 14th, the Senate passed the House's Continuing Resolution (C.R.) to keep the government funded until the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2025). President Trump signed it into law. The C.R. maintains funding for most federal programs at their current levels but leaves discretion for the Administration to make changes to some federal programs. SHC will provide more information as soon as it is available.
- Members discussed the necessity to update the current workplan to align with recent federal changes. It was emphasized that the GCPD should effectively communicate how these changes might affect individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin.
- A proposal was made to incorporate a new goal into the workplan aimed at educating legislators about the various programs available under Medicaid. This includes developing educational materials and strategies to inform legislators about Medicaid programs.

Discuss State Legislative Updates and Budget Proposal Items

- DHS support staff provided a document with updates prior to the meeting. See attached.
- The committee discussed and agreed to create a separate workgroup meeting to discuss in detail items GCPD supports in the Governor's budget and develop testimony to provide to the JFC.
- Members discussed the importance of continuing funding for WI Medicaid programs including Home and Community Based Services.
 - Action Item: DHS support staff will schedule a JFC Hearing Meeting on Friday, March 28, 2025, for GCPD.
- Member of the public Rebecca Rabatin shared that her agency sent a letter to the Joint Finance Committee requesting that each event be accessible and provided information about how to do so.

Continue Discussion of Medicaid Minimum Fee Schedule

- The Committee discussed minimum wage for direct care workers. Dan Witt shared that the Governor supports the cost to continue home and community-based services but that the current minimum fee does not adequately reflect the rising cost of living or the essential nature of the services the direct care workforce provides. Members emphasized the need for a more robust financial framework that ensures these workers receive fair compensation for their invaluable contributions. The discussion highlighted the importance of not only maintaining but also enhancing funding levels to attract and retain skilled caregivers, thereby ensuring high-quality care for individuals who rely on these services to live independently and with dignity.



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The committee agreed to further explore strategies for advocating for higher wages and better support for direct care workers in future meetings.

Reports from GCPD Committees and Workgroups

- Dan Laatsch provided updates from the United Councils workgroup. DHS Support emailed notes from the meeting to the full GCPD Membership. During the United Councils meeting, ILCW shared support for closing the three state centers and shifting that funding toward home and community-based services.
- No update from Transportation because they have not held a meeting since the last Executive Committee meeting. The Transportation workgroup meetings are held bi-monthly.
- Dan Laatsch provided updates on the Employment workgroup. Dan will follow-up with Nancy Leipzig to find out if the meetings are continuing and when they are happening.
- Tiffany Payne shared that the Awards Workgroup will meet on March 26, 2025, to determine locations for the event, and to finalize the solicitation of nominations letter.

Updates on Unified Voices: Engage for Change Summit

- Dan Laatsch and DHS Support provided updates on the Engage for Change Summit happening April 29 through May 1, 2025, at Independence First in Milwaukee. Tiffany Payne shared that she is unable to attend. Dan Laatsch shared that he will be there for two days.
- DHS Support requested volunteers to replace Tiffany for the GCPD led activity on day 3 of the Summit. Cindy Bentley and Ramsey Lee volunteered.

Review Action Items from Meeting

- Dan Laatsch will draft a letter to the Governor and Lt. Governor in support of shifting Medicaid funding from State Institutions to Community-Based Services.
- Dan Laatsch will contact Nancy Leipzig regarding the Employment Workgroup schedule and work items.
- DHS Staff will invite Pam Bettinger (member of public who submitted comment by email) to the GCPD Quarterly Meeting on April 23, 2025.
- DHS Staff Support will add an agenda item to the full GCPD quarterly meeting to discuss amending the GCPD Workplan.
- DHS Support Staff send out an invitation for GCPD members to attend a Policy workgroup meeting on March 28, 2025.



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Draft Next GCPD Executive Committee Meeting Agenda

- Members drafted the Executive Committee Meeting agenda. Dan Laatsch requested that members send DHS support staff agenda items by Wednesday, April 9, 2025.

Adjourn

- Cindy Bentley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ramsey Lee seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 P.M.