

The Arc of Iowa

Policy and Advocacy Committee – Organizational Meeting

September 30, 2019

11:00 AM

Location – Mercy Hospital Caregivers Center and by Telephone

Attendees – Mike Wood, David Heaton, Julie Beckett, Delaine Petersen on site, Lisa Heddens and Doug Cunningham by telephone

Meeting Discussion and Notes Summarized by Delaine Petersen

Agenda

1. **Introductions** - The participants greeted one another and Mike and Delaine thanked everyone for their willingness to serve. Dave and Lisa will be very good resources and will provide legislative insight. Lisa encouraged The Arc to immediately begin to get information out that clearly describes The Arc of Iowa and to let other potential partners know who we are and how we might work together. She said The Arc has lost much of its name recognition and it is important to regain if we are to be taken seriously and ultimately be advocates for the people we serve. Dave shared that he serves on the board of Hope Haven and is seeing first-hand how they are dealing with their various challenges and how they must try to stay financially balanced with the many changes that have occurred since privatization. The entire group agreed that the Liz Matney statement on August 26 that as long as Kim Reynolds is governor and if the legislature is majority Republican we will have to work within that reality. Delaine and Mike shared that The Arc of Iowa had secured Julie Beckett's commitment to serve as its liaison. Julie shared that this type of activity is how she has spent the last 35 years. She began working at the Iowa State house but she has even more experience at the federal level. She is still on many committees and boards and travels to other states to assist in policy and advocacy. Dave shared that he is very willing to be a partner and has the flexibility to travel to Des Moines and elsewhere to assist in the development of relationships, uncover possible solutions and help with making connections and facilitating change.
2. **Who is Arc Iowa and why revitalize its presence and advocacy surround disability policy?** Under national association by law, state chapters are generally encouraged to be the connector with state policy makers and to be their I resource to the policy makers related to I/DD primarily but disability in general.
3. **Review Draft Committee Description** – the group reviewed the committee description and decided that , while it may need some update and modification, we will began the body of work and adjust it as more action is taken and then it can be reassessed. We will not get bogged down in verbiage.
4. **Decision to utilize a liaison at the session who will build relationships, be a resource to policy makers, and bridge between policy and people.** Work on timely alerts, good news, challenges and be a gatherer of information. How will we get this off the ground? The group decided they would begin immediately by a) making appointments with the MCO's, meet with key legislators who are close to the issue, DHS leadership, meet with Liz Matney and hopefully the Governor. Mike and Julie will coordinate meetings and reach out to Dave and Doug , Liza and Delaineto use them where appropriate.
5. **Discussion** – what is the most compelling and universal needs experienced by Iowans with intellectual and related disabilities. There was some really good discussion about what is the greatest barrier that people with disabilities, the elderly, and other human services are facing. The absolute consensus was the critical shortage of direct care workers. While blame could be pointed at many factors, it was agreed that it did not matter if the system was controlled by (DHS, MCO,s< school districts, etc) the problem was still there regardless of who was managing/in charge. AS long as staff is not available, it is impossible for providers (straight Medicaid providers, HCBS, hospitals,) there would be inadequate supports for Iowans who need it.

6. What can the policy committee achieve to address the needs? What 1 or 2 things can we do that will make a difference? The committee decide its primary focus will be;
 - A. Immediately set appointments with MCo's, legislators, DHS and Liz Matney
 - B. With information garnered from A, begin to build a plan to work with key elected officials starting at the 2020 session
 1. Julie will be at the State House to lead this effort
 2. Julie will help bring individuals or a group in to be subject matter experts to support particular legislative action
 3. Julie will be the coordinator for all resources needed by committees dealing with disability policy
 4. Julie will utilize committee members and other subject matter expert (such as a person with a disability) to emphasize a need for action
 - C. The policy committee will engage with The Arc of the United States and other key disability organizations as well as state organizations like Iowa Work Force, Department of Health, Iowa Department of Ed and DHS and help bring awareness, discussion and possible solutions to the direct care crisis