

This is a summary of discussions at the meeting. Many points may need further clarification or discussion and do not reflect anything other than the discussions among the Advisory Group members.

**Grand Junction Regional Center Advisory Group
Meeting Summary
May 16, 2017**

Attendees:

GJRC AG Members:	Roberta Funk	Tim Hudner	David Monroe
	Michèle O'Toole	Gini Springmeyer	Tanya Skalecki
	Michael Thoma		
CDHS Representative:	Georgia Edson		
Presenter:	Bob Lawhead		
Observers:	Doug Berg	John Hamler	Tim Kreinberg
	Norbert Necker	Leanne Thoma	
Facilitator:	Will Singleton		

Meeting Outcomes and Next Steps:

- Members reviewed and were polled on their support for options
- Members were encouraged to make changes to their options to gain support from members who indicated that they would be willing to support the options with changes
- The options will be finalized and submitted to CDHS around May 20
- Bob Lawhead of Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council gave a presentation on developing vocational opportunities for the GJRC AG clients through developing an understanding of the skills of each individual and finding potential employers who can make accommodations.

Meeting objectives:

- Review options developed by advisory group members, discuss changes:
- Poll for support each of the options;
- Engage expert on developing enterprises for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Note: At the beginning of the meeting, an AG member asked to discuss his concerns about the process. A summary of this exchange is included at the end of this summary.

Review of options:

The group is at the stage where AG members will present their options to the group. Will worked with the sponsors of the options to put them into a common format. These were then compiled into a document and sent to the AG prior to the meeting (and handed out at the meeting).

After any needed discussion, AG members were asked to indicate their support for the option or discuss how the option could be made to gain their support. The intent of the discussion is also to provide members an opportunity to suggest changes to the options that would gain their support. Ideally the group would be working towards maximizing the number of options that have the support of the most members. There may also be options that have support of

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only one person (the sponsor). Those will also be included in the output to the Department. Each option will have a list of who supports, doesn't support, and who feels that they could support it with modifications.

The following is a brief summary of the discussion of each of the options. At the end of this section is a photograph with the tally of AG "votes" related to each of the options.

Option A: Implementation of the GJRC Advisory Group 2016 Report Recommendations

This option (put forward by Gini Springmeyer) was a re-articulation of the recommendations that were made by the AG in the report. No one had comments.

The AG polling was:

✓ Yes - 5	✗ No - 2	★ Might support if modified - 0
Roberta Funk, Tim Hudner, Michile O'Toole, Gini Springmeyer, Michael Thoma	David Monroe, Tanya Skalecki	-

Option B: Investigate multiple scenarios that maximize the integration of residences in a community setting

Tanya Skalecki of Arc Mesa had provided options that covered all aspects of ICF care for individuals who are moving off of the GJRC Campus. These were broken into three options so that the different aspects of ICF care could be addressed specifically. Option B is oriented towards providing multiple solutions for housing GJRC residents in small, safe homes that are in the community.

Comments, questions or suggested changes:

- Tanya agreed to make a change to #1 to recommend that remodeled existing homes should not be larger than four people each.
- Tanya said that she would prefer not to make suggested changes to #2 of the Arc Mesa County provisions discussing transition of clients. This was in response to the following comments from AG member/s:
 - It would be good to make a distinction between "ready to transition" and "choose to transition". Some advocates want to force people to transition – but no one should be forced. The policy should stay that the individuals and family decide if they want to transition. Make wording changes to #2 that emphasize that choice should be emphasized.
- Tanya agreed to make a suggested change to #3 so that new build homes would not be more than 4 people each. As well as to add "and staff" to "designed to maximize safety and security of GJRC residents."
- A comment sought to clarify that "transition" to group homes recognizes that there are no existing ICF homes, the transition would mean Relicensing from HCBS to ICF. As a part of this discussion the group talked about the factors of discussing a complete conversion to ICF. The re-licensure would take time, how could it be done by the July 2018 deadline. This

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change could include “possibly relicense” so that the inclusion would not obviate making the deadline.

The Advisory Group polling was:

✓ Yes - 2

David Monroe, Tanya Skalecki

✗ No - 2

Gini Springmeyer, Michael Thoma

★ Might support if modified - 3

Roberta Funk, Tim Hudner, Michèle O’Toole

Some said that they could support it if personal choice is honored.

Option C: Develop vocational services as businesses that will employ individuals with all abilities

Tanya Skalecki suggested this option that seeks to establish one or more businesses to employ GJRC residents and others in Mesa County.

Tanya said that businesses should be for people with all abilities, not just for those with developmental disabilities. The Arc Thrift Store could be a model that is very profitable. Other options could be a coffee shop or some modified version of the laundry. This is not day programming – it should be separate.

Comments, questions or suggested changes:

- Tanya was asked to clarify that the businesses would be in separate buildings from day services. She said that she wants to make sure that people must be paid.
- Individuals doing vocational activities do get paid.
- Some said that the option could be supportable if it would be linked to day services in some way that would allow for working to build off of the day services location/activity. Tanya said that she is concerned that people should not be working for free. It could be too convenient to make individuals work for free.
- Proximity is an issue because some might work for such a short period of time 30 minutes to an hour – that if the business was separated from the day services, it may not be an option for logistical reasons. If there are too many barriers to participation, the option may not work. Separation could prove to be cost-prohibitive because of costs of transportation.
- The option may not fully recognize the limitations of capabilities for some of the GJRC residents. The option could be workable if it recognizes the varied skill levels of potential workers.
- The option would be oriented towards providing work for the capabilities and lengths of time that would work for the individuals – even for a very short period of time.
- This may be had to link to the Regional Center, although it would be great if Arc would do it.
- This could be a good option but it would need to be realistic about the 22 individuals with their capabilities and be designed with that recognition as opposed to something that might be more appropriate for a different population.
- One member said that the option could end up being run by staff or by the employees without disabilities. It turns into their business and is no longer meeting the purpose that was intended – to provide vocational services for the GJRC campus clients.

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The Advisory Group polling was:

✓ Yes - 2

David Monroe, Tanya Skalecki

✗ No - 1

Michèle O'Toole

★ Might support if modified - 4

Roberta Funk, Tim Hudner, Gini Springmeyer, Michael Thoma

Option D: Orient all non-residential services to maximize community engagement

The intent of this option (put forward by Tanya Skalecki) is to enable clients to access community service providers. This option emphasizes choice for individuals. This includes day services, medical and psychiatric services, and social opportunities. The option also advocates that administrative office space be integrated with day service location or homes.

Comments, questions or suggested changes:

- Non-service related administrative staff working in homes could be problematic in people's homes. Direct care staff should be able to have working space.

The group spent some time trying to understand each other's definition of who would be able to office in people's homes. Some expressed concern related to "unrelated work space". Others expressed a desire to make sure that administrative GJRC personnel have a connections, relations and understanding of the individuals under GJRC ICF care.

- It was clarified that clients can use anyone they want in the community for doctors, etc. However the ICF licensure puts the responsibility on the state to provide services as well.

The Advisory Group polling was:

✓ Yes - 2

David Monroe, Tanya Skalecki

✗ No - 4

Roberta Funk, Michèle O'Toole, Gini Springmeyer, Michael Thoma

★ Might support if modified - 1

Tim Hudner

Option E: Create a "HUB" for day, vocational and other services

This option (put forward by Michèle O'Toole) would purchase a specific site (the Allen site) and locate all day, vocational and administrative services as well as social facilities on the site. With the closing of the campus and the distribution of homes around the community, this option would maintain centralized non-residential services. Getting the site up and running in advance of the July 2018 deadline would ease the move from campus to homes because of the stability that it could provide.

Comments, questions or suggested changes:

- This option provides everything that is lost with the move away from campus.
- Would this option be predicated on this specific site? It does not have to be Allen's Auto but it does have advantages as an existing building because transition efforts could begin ASAP.

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This would ease the transition. There are also qualities about the facility that might not be replicable with other options.

The Advisory Group polling was:

✓ Yes - 5
Roberta Funk, Tim Hudner, Michile
O'Toole, Gini Springmeyer, Michael
Thoma

✗ No - 0

★ Might support if modified - 2
David Monroe, Tanya Skalecki

Some expressed support for the vocational part but not the hub part of this option. Others were supportive of aspects of the option but would prefer that some services (like medical) be obtained in the community.

Option F: Permanently close and dispose of the 29 Road House

This option (put forward by Tim Hudner) seeks to prevent the 29 Road house from being used for the GJRC residents. Since the home was built, 29 Road has become one of the busiest streets in GJ. It is expected to get busier when GJ makes 29 Road the link between I-70 and US 50. The location is no longer for a home.

The Advisory Group polling was:

✓ Yes - 7
Roberta Funk, Tim Hudner, David
Monroe, Michile O'Toole,
Tanya Skalecki, Gini Springmeyer,
Michael Thoma

✗ No - 0

★ Might support if modified - 0

Option G: Build six new four-person houses for the people being displaced by the closure of the GJRC Campus

This option (put forward by Tim Hudner) seeks to avoid having GJRC clients moved homes that would have eight people in them. The existing homes are also old. The option advocates for planning for the next few decades by designing new homes to reflect state of the art. If there ends up being too much capacity because of changes in the number of GJRC clients, the older homes can be phased out.

Comments, questions or suggested changes:

- The deadline could be a factor that should be considered.
 - In drafting the bill, the legislature sought to avoid foot dragging but wanted the process to be thoughtful. On funding, we should not let fear of asking for money lead to an undesirable outcome.
- One AG member said that he wanted the homes to be clustered together. Others said that clustering would be problematic.
 - This option does not address the issue of clustering.

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The Advisory Group polling was:

✓ Yes - 7

Roberta Funk, Tim Hudner, David

Monroe, Michile O'Toole, Tanya

Skalecki, Gini Springmeyer, Michael

Thoma

✗ No - 0

-

★ Might support if modified - 0

-

Option H: Secure a hospital wing as specialized housing for medically fragile GJRC residents while also building appropriate housing for other GJRC clients.

This option (put forward by Gini Springmeyer) would secure a hospital wing for medically fragile clients while also building new housing for other clients. Medically fragile clients may need more specific facilities. Gini said that she put the option forward thinking that only two homes would be built. She also said that she did not know whether such a facility is available. The group needs special facilities for equipment.

Comments, questions or suggested changes:

- The STRIVE Victoria House has the tracks on the ceiling including baths. The halls are wide. The garage is designed to enable easy access. It might be better to have homes specifically built.
 - It would be preferable to build specific homes.
- The danger is that in the future, there could be the possibility of placing others in an inappropriate setting. It would be better to stick to smaller settings.
 - I would prefer to have small settings as well, this option was only to ensure that there is a specific type of setting for medically fragile if small homes are not approved.
- Two of the homes in Option G could be oriented towards medically fragile.
- The Department plans that homes that would be built would be designed to be able to accommodate individuals with different needs.
 - These homes are very specific and could be very expensive. Would this mean that all of the homes would be medically fragile?

The Advisory Group polling was:

✓ Yes - 3

Tim Hudner, Gini Springmeyer,

Michael Thoma

✗ No - 2

David Monroe, Tanya Skalecki

★ Might support if modified - 2

Roberta Funk, Michile O'Toole

Option I: Configure new homes in a "best practice" clustered setting

This option (put forward by Mike Thoma) proposes that new homes should be built in a clustered setting based on the best practices of other similar developments around the country. The option draws from a development in Jacksonville, Florida built by Arc.

Comments, questions or suggested changes:

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- The example given in the option of the Arc development is controversial. There are Arcs across the nation that are service providers, like STRIVE. When looking at the option, it is important to realize that it is a regular apartment. One has a lease and one needs to be able to live independently. With research, one would see that it is like an apartment complex.
- Despite the appearance of the model, it is an HCBS home. The individuals are choosing to live in that community – among like people. There is a waiting list of people hoping to become residents. While in Colorado, there is concern about whether CMS would allow clustering, across the country there are different perspectives being implemented.
- The option is appealing because it is an idea that is out there and being implemented.
- A clustered setting has been a success on the campus in part because it is vital to the socialization of clients.
- The new homes should be 4 person homes maximum.

The Advisory Group polling was:

✓ Yes - 5

Roberta Funk, Tim Hudner, Michèle O'Toole Gini Springmeyer, Michael Thoma

✗ No - 2

David Monroe, Tanya Skalecki

★ Might support if modified - 0

-

Next steps for the options and submitting them to CDHS

The notes will be used to make changes to the options to make final drafts. Some changes to options may be changed to get greater support from those who are signified in the “might support if modified” columns (or star in the photo). The packet and an introductory one-pager will be sent as a draft to the Advisory Group. Changes and corrections can be suggested. After seven days, the options and memo will be finalized and sent to the Department executive leadership (and cc'ed to the AG members).

The hope is that the Department leadership will use the options as a basis for feedback about their perspective and help build understanding of what is possible/viable. The hope is to get feedback from the Department on the options. Will said that he would try to ask Reggie Bicha to attend the next meeting to provide direct feedback and an opportunity for dialogue. If that is not possible, Will said that he would seek specific feedback on the options with the preferences of the Department related to what they think will be programmatically and operationally preferable.

DLC will submit its options separately because it would not be able to meet the timeline described in the process. Once the DLC options are sent to CDHS, they will be shared with the AG members.

Comments from the AG members:

- Some of the AG members have a personal stake. The situation is very real for them. For others, this is a different type of issue. The AG member said that he would do whatever it takes to make sure that his child is in a safe and appropriate situation.

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Best Practice Employment Services for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Bob Lawhead, policy advisor for the Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council gave a presentation to the Advisory Group on considerations for vocational programs. Readers can access the presentation by clicking this [link](#). Some of the key points of Bob's presentation include:

- Bob's son is an individual with down syndrome who has been a student in the Boulder County School District. With his schooling finished, Bob and his wife are going to be looking for employment opportunities for him. They believe that with the right accommodations, he will have a job in a regular business in the community.
- Individualized employment is the best way to provide vocational opportunities for people.
- Every person needs accommodations to enable him or her to be successful in the workplace.
- With the right accommodations, anyone can work and be productive at their own level. Even those with profound disabilities can gain employment by recognizing and find the things that individuals can do. This entails changing one's point of view of disability:
 - "The person with a disability is characterized by the level of accommodation needed for him or her to live, learn, and work in society, not by limitations typically described as disability."
 - "The quality of life for a person with a disability, and the height of their functioning is determined by the availability of accommodations and the amount of resources society is willing to allocate and not by significant limitations in biological potential."
- Supported employment seeks to accommodate the capabilities of employees. This entails career planning, development, and support. It involves a great deal of coordination and seeks to maximize interactions with persons who are not disabled.
- Customized employment individualizes the relationship between the employee and the employer to create a match between the strengths, needs and interest of the job candidate and the needs of the employer.
 - Customized employment entails discovery of the capabilities and preferences of the individual and getting to know them.
 - The creation of a job development plan includes identifying the contributions and gifts of the individual and identifying sub jobs that the person can do. Potential employers are identified who meet location needs and allow natural coworker support.
- Employment is highly valued in our society and is a central part of being integrated into society.

Questions and comments:

Advisory Group members gave the following questions and comments.

Q: Is anyone doing this?

A: Yes, but not in Colorado. Where it is being done, it involves systematic applied behavioral analysis intervention. There are systematic ways to teach people jobs and address behavioral issues. Many of the behavioral problems decrease with integration in

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the community. Here in Colorado, we need to learn how to do the systematic behavioral analysis and families need to get educated on what is possible.

Q: Why is this not being done in Colorado?

A: Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council will give recommendations through the Employment First Advisory Partnership to the Legislature on implementation best practices so that the state's policies and resources can help make this possible. In the meantime, people need to get out into a community setting to observe what people's preferences are. Volunteering in the community can be very informative.

Q: Are there examples of success with this approach?

A: There was an individual with autism at IBM who was kicking holes in a wall because he did not understand what he was supposed to be doing. He was often times non-verbal. He had good skills but his behaviors meant that he lost his job. His next job was at a bank. Over time his co-workers could see when he needed a break. With some accommodations, he has been working at Wells Fargo for over 20 years.

Another example is a person who can smile. Magnavox set him up with a co-worker and a coffee machine. He smiles at people who come for coffee – that is his contribution.

Public Comment

Choice is key to freedom. However, how do you determine the choice of a person who is non-verbal? Choice implies the participation of the individual. The staff at the Regional Center is outstanding. They are excellent teachers. They have successfully taught skills, keeping a positive attitude, and have brought out the personality and capabilities of the clients.

Please keep an open mind for the clients (kids). They are not able to do the jobs that are being discussed.

Response: Employment may not be for everyone but everyone should be able to work if they want to.

DLC concerns *(this section summarizes the objections that were raised at the beginning of the meeting)*

David Monroe, the representative from Disability Law Colorado (DLC) asked to make comments to the group. He said that he was asked to go to the AG meeting and discuss his organization's position on continuing with the AG and its requirements for continued.

DLC has great respect for the group and the organization wants to submit its own options. It can communicate through the group or go directly to the Department. If the group can agree to communicate exclusively through the group, DLC can provide its input as part of the process. DLC could be prepared to provide its options by the end of May. If there are direct communications of options with the Department, DLC will communicate directly with CDHS.

Comments from the other members:

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- In the first phase of the AG, the group agreed to keep communications exclusively through the AG. DLC and Arc Mesa broke with the process by sending letters, and as a result, parents and staff felt like they lost their opportunity to have their voice heard. Because of this, the AG member said the he would not agree to limit who he talks to.
- Last year, discussions were totally within the group and it felt like the group's efforts were ambushed at the end. It would be preferable to have total advocacy and agreement within the group.
- Another member said the he was going to do what is best for his child and would not be constrained by others desires to limit communications.
- STRIVE is writing a letter – there is active advocacy going on. To say that AG members should not engage in advocacy because of the process puts members in an unfair position.
- Each of the 22 people are very different. The group is trying to do the right thing for each of the 22 individuals. No one from DLC or other agencies know the 22 individuals as some of the parents and staff do.
- Our task was to come up with options. It is OK for everyone to not be in complete agreement. The process should move along by getting the options submitted to the Department.

Because the group appears to want to engage outside of the group, David said that this likely means that DLC would begin direct engagement with the Department.

Will said that the previous phase sought to have drafts be sequestered because of the fear that written materials that were not reviewed and understood by the AG could be taken out of context. In addition to the dynamics that this created with the Arc and DLC – that lead to the letters – the phase also prevented dialogue with the Department. This meant that the group did not have the ability to adjust the product of the group to be responsive to information from the Department. When the second phase was being planned, Will said that he interviewed AG members and they said that they did not want to have the product of the AG be private or embargoed.

Will said that the essential part is to try to get a sense of the concerns of the Department so that the recommendations could be responsive to their perspective. As a result, an intent of the current process is to have a communicative and iterative process. This new phase includes: the participation of Georgia Edson, director of the state's regional centers; Reggie Bicha and other senior staff members came to the April AG meeting; and regular updates to the Department's senior staff and Executive Director. At the previous update meeting, two options that had been actively shared – were reviewed.

David read an April 21 email to him from Will. David read a portion of the email to the group. The context of the email was whether it was OK to share a proposal (one of the options mentioned above) put forward by an AG member. The full text of the email is:

Hi David and Tanya-

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If you do share other AG member communications with your Denver HQs, I would hope that you will be careful to preface the sharing with this being a work in progress and that we need to let the group discuss the various packages of options. My concern is that ideas in writing take on an appearance of finality that is not intended.

If, for instance your Denver offices called the department about ideas that are still in formation, that would be a shame because it would truncate the discussions in the group and would be going around the process that we are in.

Context is everything in these processes. I would just ask that you be careful to make sure that the context is understood by your folks in Denver.

Thanks,

W

David said that he believed that it was clearly an attempt to prevent DLC from talking to the Department outside of the group. Will countered that the email was seeking to make sure that all are aware that shared options were a work in progress. Will also said that he wanted for the group to be able to have a conversation about options and ideas – rather than jump to conclusions about what the end of the process would be, recognize that this part of a process that is not complete. Will said that he knew that there is actually nothing that he can do to prevent anyone from contacting people at the Department.

David said that he had understood that he was not supposed to share materials with his Department and he said that he felt like his position had not been respected.

Will referenced the March 17th meeting in which he shared the plan for this phase. He handed out a slide deck. On the slide titled “2017 Advisory Group – Communications” a bullet said: *“There will be no “report”, no expectation of secrecy or embargo of information.”*

David said that he did not believe that he misunderstood the email but that there was a difference in interpretation of what had happened and he asked that the meeting move on from the issue.