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Unlock Georgia, advocacy efforts, home and community based services, legislative session, rate increase, workforce stability, self-advocacy, guardianship, supported decision making, person-centered planning, privacy rights, representative payee, training workshops, technology access, business case.

SPEAKERS

Speaker 13, Speaker 3, Speaker 5, Speaker 1, Speaker 2, Speaker 9, Speaker 4, Speaker 6, Speaker 8, Speaker 10, Speaker 12, Speaker 7, Speaker 11

Speaker 1 00:11

Wonderful So welcome everyone to our May 7 unlock builder, unlock GA meeting. We're so glad that you're here, and we appreciate you taking this time to be with us. This is our third meeting of 2025 but our first of kind of like regularly scheduled meeting, so we'll meet the first Friday of every month at 11am so we really appreciate you being on here. And as I said in the several emails that we spent. Our goal is to start to coordinate these meetings around specific topics so that we can really coordinate our advocacy efforts around those topics as well. So if we wanted, if we want to, and if everyone's okay with it, go around and briefly introduce ourselves if you want to share your name, and then who who,

01:03 who


Speaker 1 01:04

you're affiliated with, if it makes sense to share who you're affiliated with, who would love to learn that. Or if you want to share your name, that would be great. So I'll start. My name is Caitlin Bailey. I am affiliated with the National Leadership Consortium, and the consortium has a grant from the Georgia TV council to support unlock Georgia. Did you provide like back end support, so things like getting resources, getting information out, facilitating meetings, building, rebuilding and updating the website, things like that. So I'm very glad to be here with you, and appreciate you all being here. And Sam, with that, I'll turn it over to you really quickly.

Speaker 2 01:47

 Speaker 2 01:47


Hi everyone. I'm Sam crane. I am a consultant with green advocacy consulting, and before that, I worked at the Autistic Self Advocacy Network as the Policy Director, and also at Quality Trust for individuals with disabilities in DC. As the Legal and Policy Director, I am really excited to be part of this project, and we'll be talking, you know, later on in this meeting about resources that we can develop on you know how people can learn about their rights in the context of home and community based services, among other things. And I am an autistic adult, I keep forgetting to say that. But yes, some I know this already. Um, hi, Pat, but I have lived experience, and so that's also another reason I'm very excited about this project.

 Speaker 1 02:51


Thanks so much. And so I should have said this, Sam and I will be co facilitating all these other monthly meetings and in person meetings and things like that going forward. And Sam, we're just so appreciated to have your expertise in everything policy and hcbs in our work. Would someone like to introduce themselves next? Or I can go around where people are on my screen, if that's more helpful. Yeah, okay, so Steven, I have you up next.

 Speaker 3 03:18

Okay, I'm Stephen Murray. I'm the organizing Director for the National Domestic Workers Alliance, and we dream of black chapter here in Georgia, and we are have some things in common working on home and community based services, we actually represent the workers that provide those services and represent those folks. And we're, you know, we have a very similar, you know, agenda, and I will, you know, I'm glad to be here, and I would love to continue to build our, you know, our relationship, and, you know, seeing how we can definitely stand in the gap for each other. So thank you.

 Speaker 1 04:04

Thank you so much. I'm so appreciative that you're here. Um, Rita Haggerty, you're on my screen. Hi

 Speaker 2 04:13

everyone. I'm Rita Haggerty. I am a parent advocate. My oldest, my daughter, is 27 years old and she has Down syndrome, or try some so many 21 and I've worked on the unlock campaign across many years so, and I think that I'm here because just it's, you know, we're going at a snail space, So see what we can do about

 04:41

that. Thank you,





Speaker 1 04:44

Andrew, you're on my screen Next, Andrew, I see you talking. You're on mute. I don't know if you're talking to us. I.



Speaker 4 05:02

Hello. I'm Sandra Wilcox from Fisher, Georgia. Thanks



05:10

so much for being here, Pat. You're on my screen this. Hi



Speaker 5 05:15

everybody. I'm Pat nobe. I am an unlock veteran. I worked for the DD Council for 12 years before I went to DC, and I am back now as a sort of limited consulting role, just supporting Caitlin and the gcdd to get rolling again. Sam, it's great to see you. There's, I know there's people online that I will be happy to reconnect with, Cindy sailors, another one of my buds from before, Katie Bailey. So really happy to be engaged in this again. And you're right, we are going at a snail's pace. We have to figure out how to make the case for getting people's support. And I also am a mom. I have a daughter with Down syndrome who's now 40. So keeping it on.



06:09

Danny, you're up



Speaker 6 06:15

Good morning. Sorry for being late. My name. My name is Danny Hoover, I am a ally and supporter, and I also happen to be working in the field. I work for an agency in South Georgia called diversified enterprises, as the Chief Operating Officer and behavior support professional. I have been working alongside folks with United for Change as well. So I consider myself to be part of that leadership collective. And, yeah, I'm not brand new to unlock. I have joined some meetings previously, but I look forward to trying to, you know, build that coalition.



07:08

Patricia. I'm so sorry.



Speaker 7 07:14

Hi, I'm Patricia, and I'm with parent, parent of Georgia. I work as a data collection specialist. Prior to that I was a supporting parent and an ambassador of parent Georgia. I'm happy to be

prior to that, I was a supporting parent and an ambassador of parent Georgia. I'm happy to be here.



07:28

Thank you very much. Kelly.



Speaker 8 07:36

Oh, I'm Kelly Doomer, new to unlock, and I am a parent of a 19 year old autistic son, Gabby.



Speaker 9 07:49

Hey everybody. I'm Gabby Melnick. I work at Shanghai unity network, and we help support uniting for change, the self advocacy grassroots movement in Georgia.



Speaker 1 08:02

Great thanks, Corey, my colleague, let us know that not in a great mic spot, but thank you for putting your information in the chat. So Rena, you're up next on my screen.



Speaker 10 08:16

Hi everybody. I'm sparing everyone by staying off camera because I'm a little sick. I'm Reena Harris, and I work at the Georgia advocacy office, and I'm a member of the Georgia Council, and I am happy to see everybody. Thanks,



08:36

Cindy.



Speaker 11 08:41

Hi. I'm Cindy Saylor. I'm with Parent to Parent of Georgia. I'm the innovative services manager, and I'm so happy to see you, Pat and can't believe Mia is 40. Anyway, I've been familiar with unlock for a very long time, I had a brother with a traumatic brain injury who has passed away. He sustained his brain injury in 1996 and so he had the independent care waiver. So been very familiar with the waivers, you know, since then, and glad to be here, and I'm keeping my camera off because my internet is unstable and it keeps breaking up.



Speaker 12 09:35

All right, I'm going to move on to Cindy Doomer. She's also with Parent to Parent of Georgia. I'm

All right, hi everyone. My name is Chris Brown. I'm also with Parent to Parent of Georgia. I'm actually new to the organization I just started a few months ago. I'm the new director of innovation here. So why I'm here? I'm very new to unlock. They came across my desk today, so I thought I joined the meeting. Find out about it, learn some stuff previously. I worked as an exercise slash ot for kids with autism for eight years at a nonprofit organization or school. So I just love supporting the community and any way I can. So just here to learn, get soak up some information.



10:21

Thank you so much.



Speaker 13 10:25

Good morning, everyone. I also have a bit of unstable Internet, and I'm Katie Bailey, and I'm glad to have Pat back working in this arena with us. And so I used to be at the Georgia advocacy office for many years as the DD director, and was involved with the council and unlock initiatives. And now I'm at Sangha unity network with Gabby and together with Danny and a couple other folks, we support the self advocates through uniting for change. And then we also have a grant with not a grant, but a contract with dbhdd around supporting providers to really implement the expectations of the settings rule.



Speaker 1 11:08

Thank you so much. I think everyone has introduced themselves. Okay, perfect. So just a few things that I wanted to say, and then we can move right into our agenda. First, if you are new to unlock, welcome We're so glad that you are part of the work that we're doing. Unlock is an advocacy group that has been established for a good long time in Georgia and has made really, really big inroads in promoting and advancing home and community based services or HCBS in Georgia. There are people on this call with much, much more history than I and the national leadership consortium have with unlock Georgia. We are very, very happy to be a part of the work that you're doing with this and so, like I said, we're a bit newer to unlock Georgia. We started working with the with the group last year, and our job is to provide back end support and to support the great work that's already happening, and then also to continue to build momentum, continue to reinvigorate this effort toward promoting HCBS in Georgia, and continue to get out information and resources and support advocacy in ways that advance HCBS. So we just really appreciate everyone here, the perspectives that you bring, the work that you bring, that you're doing across Georgia, and we know that there's so much collaboration that's already happening, and we're really glad to get to be a part of this. So thank you so much. So I put the agenda in the chat, and I will drop it there again, just so that we all have it. The first thing that we have on our agenda is to talk about legislative session updates. I want to acknowledge that there are so many people on here who are so involved in legislative session. So the goal is not so much to talk about what's happening in legislative session, but to really answer any questions, or if there are any issues or conversations that this group is involved in that think that unlock needs to be more aware of, or more a part of want to open it up for that conversation. So many things around or that are related to HCBS, like the dignity Union Pay Act like the coalition that is being proposed, things like that are like, of course, the comp and now waivers are, there's so much work being done to move those

forward, but If the group has any updates or questions that they have that they want to share about legislative session. Happy to have those posed or shared now, before I mute myself and then open it up to anybody or to the group as well, I do want to say about every week, every weekend, a couple of days, we're putting out a what we're calling a somewhat weekly update on what's happening with unmarked filter that includes some references or some updates related to legislative session. We're also putting updates on legislative session on the unmarked filter website as well. So if there are things that you want to know more about, you can find those in that email or on the website, or you're welcome to let us know, and we're happy to dig into them and provide resources as well. Okay, now I will stop talking. I apologize, Steven, please go ahead.

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Speaker 3 14:33

Alright. So no, I've just wanted to give an update on, like, what, what we actually working on so just a follow up to the 100 and 20 million plus that was approved for last year's budget to increase the rates for HCBS services. And so we are now, you know, we have been, you know, trying to, like survey, you know, the workers that do this work, you know, just to see if the actual increase, which was the spirit of the increase was to try to solidify the workforce, right, and kind of, like, stabilize it, so that, you know, more people will actually, like, get into profession, or stay in the profession, right to provide these services. Because, like, the average, I think salary was like \$10 an hour. And so we are now. We have got a data bill that we presented, Senate Bill 287, which we are now going to be going to the health Senate, health and relations committee to basically, but gather that data that's already out there about, You know, from agencies, those data points that include demographics, you know, ranges of salaries since the increase went into effect as of July 1 last year. And so you know now we're trying to follow up to see if the actual funds are making it to the workers. But as we, you know, survey, because, you know, one of the obstacles is that the workers are very siloed. And you know, it's to actually get in touch with these workers. It's like it takes a lot of leg work, right? And so. And you know, when you think about the structure that was built into the increase is going to be another year or so before the actual body that's going to be studying the race is created in 2026 July 1, is when that the they have to create a a panel to study the rates for those services, the foot, you know, because of The for the increases to follow up with the 100 and \$20 million that was invested into it. So then you have the reporting structure is 11 months behind, and so it's a lag in reporting. So by then it's three years have gone by. We don't know where the money is going, like, because, like, the rates have increased, but it was like no immediate follow up with how the funds are going to be distributed to the workers and or at what rate or frequency, so to speak. So we're trying to get some transparency. And, you know, because these are public funds that are going to take care of, you know, folks that really need this care. And so, you know, we really want to, you know, make sure that folks are getting this character. If you look at this list for people that are on the waiting list, it's 7000 it was 7000 people last year. So it last session, and now, as of this session, we are 1000 plus more people on the list right that are waiting to get these services, you know, and so, you know, this is why we need to know if these increases are, you know, actually going to the workers that that provided this vital service. So that's what we're doing. You know, we're definitely would love to hear any you know, questions or anybody else that have comments or feel like they can support what we're doing, because right now, we're just trying to target the committee members on that on a committee to get the bill through to the to the Senate floor. So, yeah, yes. So now. That's where we are. We have Senator hell burn that's actually presenting the bill. She's on that committee. And you know, we're going to be strategically trying to move Ben Watson, Dr Watson, who is the chair of the, this the community based services, I think, seeing

Yes, community based services board, and so he's the key. And so, like, if we can get him to get on board, is it, you know, we should not have a hard time, but that's, that's, that's our strategy, as of, you know, big picture, to try to get it through. But we are, you know, anybody that have any connections that we could talk about, I would love to discuss that, you know, and I'm here to extend any insight that I can.

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Speaker 5 21:20

So, yeah, quick quest, Hi, Steven. It's Pat. Um, so this has just dropped, obviously, didn't go through crossover day, so this will be a two year process.

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Speaker 3 21:32

Yeah, so we, we just got it last week because, like, we did a live a day on a 26 and so we just got the the bill number as of now. So okay,

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Speaker 5 21:50

so it's, it'll be also a next session, yes, so we have time over the summer to build support. Yeah, exactly. Um, just a quick update. I just took a look at the budget yesterday, so we still only got 100 slots in the budget and then an annualization of the 500 that were given last year. So you know, that's kind of where we're stuck. And crossover day was Tuesday, so anything that didn't cross over is on hold until next year. So

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Speaker 1 22:28

so it sounds like for both of those things, we can talk about a strategy. Steven, what are the things like stories from from CSP, some direct care support can be helpful around the work that they're doing, stories from people with disabilities about the importance of of director or of DSPs and and and transparency and making sure that these funds are going to them. I know that that was one of the questions that I had, and the others have had about that 100 \$20 million the where it's actually going, and whether it's going directly to people. And Pat to your point, it sounds like this summer, then or this spring and summer, another action plan related to the now comp labor spots would be essential. I mean, knowing that there's so much that's been done already, but yeah, yeah, so

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Speaker 5 23:22

And Steven, I will say I had a conversation with the provider in Athens, when I was getting going with Caitlin and everybody on just kind of seeing where things were. And she said, since the rate increase, she was able to hire 21 new workers. Wow, retained 17 of them by the end of January, so And previously to that, this is a provider that I was seeking, you know, to hire for my daughter. She had told me she couldn't serve me because she didn't have enough people, because she couldn't afford to pay them any more than, like, 1170 or whatever the the base was then. And then, when I talked to her, you know, after the rate increase kicked in, he had,

really, she has 95 staff now, one of the biggest employers in Athens. So I know Caitlin and the DDC, we're going to meet later on today. I think we're trying to figure out the business case for people getting waivers, you know, it's not a feel good story. It's not a human service. It's it's a business case people to have support so they can work, so their parents can work, so their caregivers are well supported, etc. So that that's kind of the line of thinking that we're trying to pursue, like, how do we make that business case? And if any of you that were at the waiver Advocacy Day at the Capitol, we quick got together a flyer that the business case for my daughter to have support and how. Much money she gives back to the community as a result of having waiver support. She's working 25 hours a week. She employs several people. She pays taxes, she shops, she pays rent, you know, so more than half the value of her waiver goes back to the Georgia economy. And so trying to figure out how we make that, how we make a business case for people having support, yeah,

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Speaker 2 25:30

I think that we also, you know, just to sort of jump in. I think it could also really help to give a business case for reducing turnover in workers, absolutely. So it takes so long to train up new DSPs. You know, we can get data on, you know, how many hours of training do people need, and and you know when, while New DSPs are being trained right? Family members are are going to need to be there, you know, to provide supervision and guidance. People aren't really getting the kinds of support that they need in order to work while they're in the process of training their DSP and you know, just that little increase in in wages that reduces turnover can really help so much

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Speaker 5 26:34

it's expensive for organizations to constantly be retraining people.

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Speaker 1 26:42

There's good data on that already. I think that's something that we can help. Sam, to your point, building that out. Danny, please

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Speaker 6 26:55

go ahead. Yeah, so as a provider agency, I can speak a little bit to this. So 2023, was the last time that we actually did a cost analysis on our onboarding. So at that time, was around \$4,000 and so since that time, the wage for our our starting wage for DSPs, is going from \$9 to \$13.50 since increasing the wage to \$13.50 in December. We did it after our initial hiring in December. So we're not going to count that. I'm just going to talk about net gains. So we have a net gain of five employees in January, and we had a net gain of two employees in February, and we're, look, we've hired, I think it's eight employees that will be that are starting this month. We do a monthly cycle, because it does take so long to onboard people, and it takes, we typically do about eight, between 80 and 96, hours of training. So I mean, I can give you some of that data as you want it or need it, and then, you know, then you have to factor in the cost of the trainers and blah, blah, blah, so there's, there's more than just their their wages for the

expense of the training, because sometimes we have to train off site, so we may have to do other things. So anyway, I can check with our director and see if she wants to do another cost analysis, like I said, Well, we would, we were planning on doing one, maybe at the beginning of before the next fiscal year, to get that going. And you know, we are wanting to grow as an organization, as a as an as an agency, and we'll find out if we're if that's possible. We've kind of been stagnant for about four years because of the turnover rate. So I don't have this fiscal year's data. I'm assuming it's going to be a little bit better, but I think last year we were, we were right at like, 110% turnover rate. So it's, that's a lot to try to, you know, and we have staff that have been here for 20 years. So, I mean, we don't have, you know, all brand new staff is just the same positions will turn and turn and turn and turn to create that percentage to be so high, we are still maintaining at about 25 staff short of being fully staffed. So our overtime runs. Last month it was 14% so you know that is also affecting the wage, we would increase the wage of once we can get the we can get our stabilization with our overtime, but until we can get that overtime stabilized, we can, we can't justify paying a higher wage because we're investing so much in the overtime so so I'll be glad to you know speak more on the. Provider side, but and I also do the self advocacy side. I see where Sandra is here. She's one of our really strong self advocates. And we can, we can add more of those self advocates to this group as well. So just let us know, from the United for Change perspective, if we want more, more of them, I'll do what I can to to get good their voices on here, because, of course, they're the most important people.

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Speaker 1 30:31

Well, this is so great. I'm wondering if it's a overarching business case with some I'm going to say case studies, because I have a research background, but like some specific examples of organizations and specific examples of people, Pat to the point that you did for your daughter, Danny, if your organization does it, and even if we don't name names, but really just kind of get out, this is what this looks like for for an organization. This is what this looks like for a person. I think that's really, really powerful. Yeah, this is so helpful. I think

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Speaker 5 31:03

it'd be great to profile some organizations that are in more rural parts of the state, because they tend to be a little bit more siloed. And those are families, you know, that may be a lower income and you can I think there's a strong case to be made for keeping those families stable. The statistics that Danny cited are pretty pervasive across the country. Yeah, so I know there's a lot of data there that we could use as examples,

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Speaker 2 31:42

and that way we can also sort of get to different parts of the legislature, right, you know? So we've got people, you know, who are like, Well, what about my dis, you know, my legislative district, and try and get as many of those as possible. I

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Speaker 1 32:04

even what a great conversation you opened up. Thank you to be really aware of time. Any

even what a great conversation you opened up. Thank you to be really aware of time. Any other updates from legislative session before then you talk about advocacy information? I advocacy information,

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Speaker 2 32:27

alright, so one of the resources we're looking to create is some information, know your rights information, and I wanted to take a moment to to have that be part of the discussion in terms of what the community thinks would be the most important issues to address in like a Know Your Rights video or a Know Your Rights resource you know are what, what things people you know already seem to know, and what seems to be like the biggest gaps in information? Um, so if, if people don't mind, I was just going to open up the floor, um, and ask, you know, three questions, what do people kind of already seem to know about their rights for communicate, home and community based services? What don't people know and what are the challenges that people are facing the most in terms of having their rights actually be respected that they would need to spend more, you know, learn more about how to advocate for the rights in those contexts. So does anyone have thoughts on that? Rena,

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Speaker 10 33:59

thank you. I, oh, you said Rena, right. I,

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Speaker 2 34:06

it says Rena, okay, yeah,

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Speaker 10 34:12

I'm finding through my work that people don't don't know to the extent which choice is their right, and that, I think, is through for various reasons right, not the least of which is lack of understanding among support coordination, who have an incredible influence over the direction of a person's life. So I would love for for self advocates families to truly understand a. Um, how much choice and informed choice is a right for the type of services that they're going to be receiving and settings in which they receive them?

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Speaker 2 35:16

I totally, I, you know, I think that overall, the you know, among other things, the settings will, in my experience, not being local to Georgia, just nationwide, is something that people really don't seem to know as much about. And in particular, like these choice elements.

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35:44

And add to that, I



Speaker 10 35:46

also some who do know Don't, don't respect it. Frankly, sorry, I'm done. Go ahead. Pat



Speaker 5 35:58

Yeah, no, Reena and I had a long conversation about this. So So yes, I don't think people really do understand the the rights and opportunities they have under the settings rule. Person centered planning as intended in in the sort of precursor to the settings rule is not generally practiced by support coordinators. It's pretty perfunctory, and Georgia does not have enough residential options for people. I mean, and I've been telling them this for 20 years, you have host homes, group homes, or you live with your parents, and supporting people in their own homes and apartments is very difficult to arrange and very difficult to sustain. They don't have supported living. They don't have shared living. I mean, it's it's just there's not enough infrastructure for people to have a really informed choice, and that's something that Caitlin and I talked about putting in front of the Commission, the IDD Commission, which seems to be stalled, but, but that's a development thing. It needs to be a multi year process to get more providers in the field that really understand the opportunities provided by the settings rule and how person centered planning supports that. So I think people need to really, I mean getting out in the field and just kind of educating people on the settings rule. I mean, one of the things Georgia got away with in their setting, in their their statewide Transition Plan was community like settings, which, when I was at ACL and we were reviewing all the statewide transition plans, we were striking that out of all this transition, it's not a community like setting. It's community, right? Somehow Georgia got away with getting that approved by community,



Speaker 2 38:03

community esque, flavored with artificial and natural community flavors.



Speaker 5 38:17

So yeah, yeah, there's a lot of education there, that's that should be



Speaker 4 38:30

when we go down to the store, go out again.



Speaker 2 38:37

Sandra, were you I didn't hear what you just said,



38:42

um, what was y'all talking about? Oh,

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Speaker 2 38:44

yeah, we're talking about what, what? Like, know your rights issues. So what are some rights that you think that people do know about, and what are some rights that you think people could use to learn more about?

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Speaker 4 39:00

Well, right through their own, you have a right to their own belong, personal belonging. Yeah,

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Speaker 2 39:06

that's an important one, so I'll put that on the list. So part of the settings rule,

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Speaker 6 39:16

Sandra, Can you also tell this group what you're doing about that? Because you are actually doing something about helping people know their rights.

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39:27

That's one thing I advocate.

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Speaker 6 39:31

Yeah. And how many trainings have you done? How many trainings have you done in the last couple years about people's rights and how many self advocates have you talked to?

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Speaker 4 39:42

Well, thank you. I don't know how many, but I have done several in the past few years. I'd love to last week was it last Friday? Last Friday? I had to go to a I went to a meeting last Friday, where we where I was, where we had to speak.

⦿

40:10

Yeah,

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Speaker 4 40:14

you know it's like with the community strong, where we would have all of us had to get up there and present.

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Speaker 2 40:24

Yes, I think let's talk. I'd love to hear more about that. Um, maybe we can meet after this meeting at some point, because I want to make sure. Yeah, I want to make sure that that we coordinate. When you said, people write to their own belongings, like, can you tell me more about what, what kind of thing, kind of behavior we're seeing from providers like they're not letting people keep their own belongings or privacy.

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Speaker 4 41:12

Well, they have a right to their own privacy like they like. Every a month when we have people first meeting, we always go over our rights. So like, sometimes, like you go over like our rights to like, if you have your wife, you also have the right to be responsible. But you know what, you'll do stuff like that. Are you seeing so over our rights? Yeah, when we have our people,

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Speaker 2 41:51

are you seeing situations where you know someone tries to take away those rights? Oh, I think you froze.

S

Speaker 6 42:15

So Sandra lives in a very rural area of South Georgia. To her, yeah, her service may drop in and out. Looks like she's traveling a pretty good bit. Yeah,

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Speaker 2 42:25

um, but I was, I was maybe I can open it up. Um, Sandra seems to have owned frozen but I was just sort of wondering if there's like situations where people try to take away those rights that she's seen, or that other people have seen, that we need to, like, talk about in our training, yeah.

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Speaker 4 42:47

Well, then we also, like, go over one of our rights is, like, you have the right to live, to pick and chose where you want to live and who you want to spend your time with. Mm, um. So those rights are very important up to us. So that's why we go over every month when we have our people first meeting, right?

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Speaker 2 43:10

But people are like, are people being told they can't do that? Um, by their providers?

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Speaker 4 43:19

Well, I don't know if they're being told, told not, they can't do that. But I just know that, you know, right? Some of them, you know, violate they Right, right,

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Speaker 2 43:31

yeah. So like they're told, you know, you you can't go out right now, or you can't have that in here, that kind of thing,

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Speaker 4 43:44

some somewhere like that. I mean, you got some that lives with that, with host, home provider, and then other rights we go. We have, like you have the right to see people with respect, you know, things like that. But every month, that's what we do every month. And our people first meeting, we always, you know, go over our rights. That's

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44:19

really good, good to know. I'm going to want to go ahead

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Speaker 13 44:26

and Sandra also you guys and some of the other leaders from uniting for change, they teach a zoom workshop around the settings rule. There's one coming up next week's is about supported decision making, but the one after that is the HCBS workshop, right, right?

S

Speaker 6 44:47

And I'm, I'm not the provider for that works with Sandra, but we collaborate with that provider. They're very close to us. We call each other sister agencies down here in South Georgia, but. Her provider, if they it's called the Jess place, and, yeah, Sandra Shepherd is their director, and then they have several really strong allies in in her organization. And that's why Sandra is a great teacher of this, because she's been insisting on it for as well. I've known her for what, how long? What about 11 years, and known each other. So she's always been standing up for and really doing a good job of demanding that not only she has her rights met, but then if she hears or other or about other people that don't have their rights being met, then she will advocate for their for their rights.

S

Speaker 2 45:44

And Caitlin put this in chat. I wanted to read it aloud. This is it okay if we share a link to the workshop in our events and our email to the unlock Georgia group. So I'm coming up here something going down my throat,

S

Speaker 4 46:01

and I'm also part of you. Have y'all been heard of this committee called Georgia white paper, technology,

S

Speaker 2 46:12

alright? I'm not familiar. Has Ever have others people heard of this? Yeah,

S

Speaker 13 46:16

they also, it's Mark Friedman. They have a grant from the DD Council as well, around the first year, was around really assessing the needs of technology and what people were getting access to, and then from there, now they're doing, and Sandra's on the committee. She's on the steering committee, I think it's called Sandra, is that right? Well, and they're, they're teaching technology workshops for self advocates to learn more about how to use it and then how to access it, and then even within the waiver in Georgia at is now a possibility. It's just finding a provider to fund it. But yes, right in the waiver, y'all just had a workshop last week.

U

47:01

Sandra, yeah, yeah, we did.

U

47:06

These are on Zoom, and the Council sent it out.

U

47:11

Oh, yeah. Then we had one yesterday. Oh,

U

47:13

it was yesterday. That's right, my week, sir.

S

Speaker 2 47:20

Um, okay, what other do do people have other thoughts on, you know, issues with like rights that people don't know. What about, you know, rights in terms of like, their level of services and decided, you know, challenging decisions about how much services they get. Do, do people seem to know a lot about that, or is this something that people also might need help with?

S

Speaker 4 47:56

Well, some people might need help with that. You know, understanding their rights and knowing what their rights are. So we still got some people that don't understand their rights and don't know what their rights are. So that's why it's up to us to you know,

P

48:20

maybe privacy also, yeah,

P

48:29

um,

S

Speaker 2 48:31

there's in the in the settings rule, there's this, you know, a lot of really very specific things for settings, like post homes or group homes, where you you're supposed to actually have extra rights, right like you're supposed to have there's they're very specific that, like People can't tell you when you know where you go, what, how you spend your time. You've got to have a door that locks. You gotta be able to eat whatever you want at any time. And people you know, would it help to sort of talk about that kind of thing More as well.

P

49:26

Yeah, it's very important,

P

49:33

yeah.

S

Speaker 2 49:40

Um, Pat, you were talking about person centered planning. You said it's not really practiced by support coordinators. Do you want to elaborate on that at all?

S

Speaker 5 49:55

Um, yeah, it's just very i. Cursory, you know, it's more about establishing the hours based on the budget, and not a whole lot of creativity in terms of, you know, what the individual really wants to do and needs to do. And, you know, as far as Mia goes, I mean, me is fairly easy to support. And so year after year, we just kind of, you know, it takes less than an hour to just do her thing, but, but she just had to move this year. So that was a huge change. And and I've been going back and forth with the provider about a bunch of stuff, just trying to figure out why. There's seems to be one limitations. I was self directing. I got out of that. I might have to go back to that. So anyway, I just think, you know, having reviewed every statewide Transition Plan and everybody's person centered planning documents, I just think, right, it could be

S

Speaker 2 51:02

they've got to talk about people's goals, yeah, yeah. They've got to talk about what people like to do, yeah.

S

Speaker 5 51:11

And then try to look out into the community and see what's available that people can join, be a part of, be a member of, etc, right before I need to get off to get ready to go downtown. But one other thing that came up in a lot of my conversations Sam was guardianship. Yeah, and Reena and I also had a long conversation about this. I talked to the Department of Ed Georgia actually has a very good guide to guardianship, which is included in the statewide Transition Plan process. But if this transition coordinator at high school is not aware of it or familiar with it, and parents ask, you know, should I seek guardianship for my person that's graduating high school or whatever, they just say yes. And there's so many preliminary steps you can take to help support someone before going to guardianship. And people don't realize once you get guardianship, first of all, it's expensive, it's very hard to undo, and then it significantly limits the ability of someone to sign a contract, you know, get married, you know, get a lease, 100% vote, you know, etc. So I think, I think that would

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Speaker 2 52:33

be absolutely and, as you know, Quality Trust like that was all I did. No, I know,

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52:40

I know,

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Speaker 5 52:42

and it goes along with supported decision making. Supported decision making, Georgia does have a civic team, children for youth, voice Youth Center for and there are youth advocates in Georgia that have been trained on supported decision making. So I think tapping into that

Georgia that have been trained on supported decision making. So I think tapping into that resource, and including those guys, they're they're all self advocates, and they're great,

S

Speaker 13 53:09

yes, that's right, Pat, and they're supported with through the grant at the Georgia advocacy office. Has Dana Lloyd runs that one. It's also from the council, and I just put the website in there for I decide Georgia. And then there's a page about the youth ambassadors who were trained via civic right the first year and the second year, we had the Youth Ambassadors train new youth ambassadors. So we did it on our own, like the second year to try and get more young people spreading the word about alternatives to guardianship and SDM,

S

Speaker 2 53:46

that's great. I think I I've been following civic for a while because it's Morgan who was at Quality Trust, ended up going to Syracuse and being a big part of that. So they're amazing. And so that's that's we'll definitely want to to mention them at the very least, and or coordinate with them. Yeah,

S

Speaker 13 54:16

Morgan was one of the we, we paired a youth ambassador with a subject matter expert to teach the workshops for the new folks. And Morgan was one of the CO teachers. She's amazing. She's great. I like,

S

Speaker 2 54:32

okay, so I think that that's a good number of things that we can definitely make sure to address in our training. Does anyone else have additional thoughts? I want to make sure that we get it's a chance to at least briefly talk about advocacy priorities before we close.

U

54:51

Um, excuse me, I'd like to say one other thing. Let's take the into like if i. You receiving service from the Justice place, right?

U

55:06

I'm sorry. What

S

Speaker 4 55:09

if you're receiving services through the judgment place, right through operator and they over your checking account like if if you wants to change them and take them off your checking

your checking account, like it, if you wants to change them and take them on your checking account and reveal your own checking account, would that hurt your services of being would that hurt you being in the service?

S

Speaker 2 55:41

Yeah, that's a good question. So if I understand, you're getting services from a place and they're basically take control of your checking account, like as a representative payee, do you know if it's that way?

S

Speaker 4 55:58

Yeah, yeah, it's that way?

S

Speaker 2 56:01

Yeah, and they're requiring, like, some places, I do know that, like, I've seen people in situations where their provider tries to say, we'll only provide services if were your representative payee. And I do think that that's a problem. Operate

U

56:20

on mobile. On.

U

56:23

I think we should talk about that too.

S

Speaker 6 56:27

Yeah, Sandra's been working on that for about three years. So she's about to be her own payee again. Her provider is not making that proposition to drop her as a provider if they're not the rep payee. It's just a matter of training and getting the right it's and I think to Sandra's point, it's just really difficult to make that transition from having a payee to not having a payee. So she's been working really hard and proving that she can keep up with and maintain her own finances. The other piece, and again, I was late, and I've had to jump off to talk with a couple other people during this Did we mention the HB 36 that moved out of the house that adds that guardianship, the ability for guardianship, to be done by more providers? I

U

57:18

don't think we did.



Speaker 1 57:21

It's something we should pay attention to. Oops, sorry, Cinder



Speaker 4 57:26

about they're saying that my number because I'm still getting SSI check, and that goes to them, but I am not previous check, my social security check, oh, five, one, and so they're saying that, and only for me, 1950 to be over my own checking account that I won't be able to receive services with them. No more 197



57:48

that's a problem. Was



57:51

that that too?



Speaker 6 57:54

Yeah, so Sandra, I'll, I'll, I'll help you with that. So just you can contact me, off, offline, on this, okay, okay, yeah, she's got my number. Yeah, just call me Sandra. That



Speaker 2 58:07

is the type of thing that we should talk about and know your rights, though. So I think that's totally fair, that you know people should know that they have a right to self determination, and you know the provider, certainly, you know, has a right to, you know, try and make sure that they get paid. But they shouldn't have to, you know, they they shouldn't be requiring people to be their representative payee.



Speaker 4 58:39

Yeah, because see, to me. It sounds like when I went up there today, it sounds like they were trying to discourage me from that. You know, I.