

Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders

April 17, 2013 summary minutes

I. The members introduced themselves.

II. Tim Shea explained the purpose of the WINGS grant and the initial effort to hold a statewide summit on guardianship topics in November. He opened the meeting to a general discussion of the topics members thought were most important to address at the summit and beyond.

III. Topics identified included:

1. The importance of early recognition and prevention of Alzheimer's disease.
2. Identify medical evidence of cognitive decline in dementias, mental illness, etc. as part of the appointment of a guardian and evidence of regained capacity for termination of the appointment. Identify qualified medical professionals for better judicial decisions.
3. Improve monitoring of and help for guardians, possibly an ombudsman within the courts or Department of Human Services, or a network of agencies. The objective would be to connect vulnerable adults, guardians and caregivers to the resources available in the community, conduct investigations and provide ongoing monitoring.
4. Examine the role of the courts in monitoring guardians after appointment.
5. Develop a system of sharing medical records between hospitals, courts, and law enforcement. Create a uniform record for advance healthcare directives and similar documents that will be accessible through the system.
6. Expand "Safe Return" programs beyond Alzheimer's disease to include mental illness, developmental disabilities, etc. The program might provide a safety net by having a 24-hour toll-free number and registration in a national database.
7. Establish a pool of advocates for vulnerable adults, such as an Office of the Guardian Ad Litem for Incapacitated Adults.
8. Work with the Utah State Bar to provide representation and legal services for vulnerable adults.
9. Educate lawyers on guardianship proceedings with an emphasis on serving as the attorney for the respondent in such proceedings, developing person-centered plans and orders, and alternatives to guardianship.
10. Develop a mechanism that would assist law enforcement agencies in working with victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation who need guardianship services and in directing vulnerable adults with mental illnesses and substance abuse to the needed services.

11. Educate the public and stakeholder groups on alternatives to guardianship, person-centered planning, guardianship proceedings, and the guardian's responsibilities.
12. Attempt to involve relevant government agencies, especially those providing benefits to vulnerable and incapacitated adults, like the VA and the SSA.
13. Involve other stakeholder groups such as family caregivers and guardians and representatives from minority and ethnic communities, especially from the Hispanic community and the LGBT community.
14. Establish a framework to continue the effort to explore issues.

IV. The group agreed to develop a matrix from which to select summit topics. The matrix will identify the various stakeholder groups and how the specific interests, needs and issues identified in our discussion intersect across the guardianship continuum. Mary Jane Ciccarello and Sally Hurme will develop the initial draft and email it to the group.

V. The statewide guardianship summit was scheduled for Wednesday, November 6, 2013. A proposed WINGS meeting schedule was confirmed: June 19, August 21, September 18 and October 16, 2013.

VI. Meeting adjourned.