

*The scope of our work at South Dakota Advocacy Services (SDAS) is guided by priorities and goals. Our goals and priorities are drafted by the program directors with regard to their respective program. During the summer, our program directors meet to discuss areas of commonality and how the programs can work together to initiate systemic change. The SDAS Board of Directors then reviews and approves the goals and priorities.*

*The priorities of our programs “set the stage” for the upcoming fiscal year. Our intake, case service and outreach personnel target agency efforts toward the greatest areas of need.*

### **Resources for obtaining public input**

The PADD program utilizes a variety of resources to identify and quantify the concerns of people with developmental disabilities in South Dakota.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of the resources that PADD staff utilized in to determine our goals and priorities for FY16:

- **Public Listening Sessions** – SDAS believes it is vital to receive input from the people we serve. We conduct several listening sessions throughout the year gathering input on disability-related issues in South Dakota. Listening sessions are held in a variety of arenas. These include: Partners in Policymaking graduation/continuing education weekend, on Native American reservations at SDAS hosted events, and events at outpatient mental health facilities. SDAS mails surveys to Partners in Policymaking graduates, and makes a survey available on the SDAS website. We also provide survey information in the *SD Report*, the SDAS published newsletter. Some of the key issues identified during the listening sessions include:
  - “Denial of FAPE – discipline related to emotional disturbance – child is being kicked out of school because of their emotional disability with proper due process procedures”
  - “Education on proper CPI holds would be beneficial. Parents and educators would have a better understanding of what is ok (sic) and what’s not.”
  - “More outreach on the Reservations – people do not get to go to bigger communities to find resources and know anything about them.”
  - “In rural areas, Native American reservations, there are no resources or supports for an individual with a disability.”
  - “Rights and responsibilities for participants of waiver services”
  - “Verbal abuse; name calling from others in the community”
- **Public Reports** – Governmental and non-profit agencies continually publish reports on changes to regulations, laws, or as a result of public demand. PADD staff utilize these reports to determine areas of need in South Dakota and how the P & A can assist in making positive changes for clients or other South Dakotans. Public reports the PADD program used to develop the FY16 SGP include:
  - South Dakota Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Statewide Transition Plan - To prepare for the transition to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Final Rule for Home and Community Based Settings (HCBS), the Department of Social Services and

Division of Developmental Disabilities conducted an assessment of people living in HCBS settings. The assessment evaluated compliance to the CMS Final Rule. This report noted two areas of deficit: Community Integration and Living Arrangements. Based on this report, SDAS has focused a portion of our case services in this area.

- ProPublica.org report, “Violent and Legal: The Shocking Ways School Kids are Being Pinned Down, Isolated Against Their Will” - We know that instances of seclusion and restraint are heavily underreported throughout the country. This is very concerning and bares a significant safety risk to students with disabilities. The PADD program will gather more data on this problem. We intend to provide case services to clients reporting occurrences of seclusion and restraint.
- South Dakota Department of Education data on seclusion, restraint, suspension, and expulsion - The South Dakota Department of Education reported that in the 2012-13 school year 60% of IDEA-eligible students did not receive educational services during expulsion. This does not include the unreported percentage of IDEA-eligible students who were illegally excluded from school and did not receive educational services during their exclusion. We feel that it is important to gather data on this continued problem and provide case services to students who experience suspension, expulsion, or illegal exclusion.
- ProPublica.org report, “Can Schools in Your State Pin Kids Down? Probably” – This report outlines the state laws regarding seclusion and restraint in the United States. Currently, South Dakota earned a score of “0” based on key elements from reform bills and how closely U.S. Department of Education non-mandatory guidance is followed. This poses a safety threat to students with disabilities. It is important to focus SDAS efforts in this area.
- United States Census data – The US census supplies important demographical information. Oglala Lakota, *previously Shannon* (55.1% in poverty), Ziebach (48.7%), Todd (44%), Corson (43%), and Buffalo (41%) were listed as the five most poverty-stricken counties in South Dakota. Coincidentally, all five of these counties fall on or near a Native America Nation and are extremely rural. SDAS intends to focus outreach efforts in these areas due to the inability of the residents to reach our services.
- **Intakes** – SDAS continually monitors the type of intake calls we receive. If an issue seems especially pervasive or systemic, PADD staff will investigate further and determine if the P & A can assist by focusing our efforts in that area.
- **Input from stakeholders** – PADD staff participate in many professional organizations and boards. We utilize the information learned to work collaboratively with other agencies and to assist our clients.

### Timeline

The activities listed above occur throughout the fiscal year. Below is the timeline that PADD staff use to help develop the goals and priorities for the next fiscal year:

- **October** – Begin work on new priority issues.
- **April** – Beginning in Fiscal Year 2016, the PADD goals and priorities will be more readily available for public comment. The kickoff to present the upcoming fiscal year's goals and priorities will take place at Partners in Policymaking graduation in April.
- **April and September** – Provide the board of directors a PADD program update of activities of the program. This report includes PADD projects, case examples, and systemic issues. PADD staff will also meet with the Partners in Policymaking graduates to inform them of the work in the PADD program and also gather information from them regarding statewide issues.
- **Summer** – Attend the SDAS program directors meeting to discuss areas of concern in our respective programs. This is also the opportunity for program directors to discuss how our programs will work collaboratively to initiate systemic change.
- **September** – Share the proposed priorities for the next fiscal year with the South Dakota Developmental Disabilities Council and the University of South Dakota Center for Disabilities.
- **Continually** – Read studies and surveys done by stakeholders throughout the state to help notice trends and systemic issues that affect the people we serve.
- **Continually** - Assess work on priorities and other urgent emerging issues.

### **New and Exciting Changes – FY16**

SDAS constantly works to improve our procedure for obtaining public input to refine our priority-setting process. In FY16, we anticipate these resources will assist us as we develop our priorities and focus on the concerns of people with disabilities in South Dakota. We intend to include information gathered from these activities in our FY17 SGP.

- **National Core Indicators** – South Dakota's Division of Developmental Disabilities recently participated in the National Core Indicators Project. This initiative collected information from families and people with developmental disabilities who receive HCBS waivers. SDAS plans to use the information to target systemic areas of need in South Dakota.
- **Social Media** – SDAS seeks to enhance our online presence utilizing social media. We are forming a team of "tech-savvy" employees to strategize how to reach out to people with disabilities in South Dakota utilizing social media platforms. This initiative is meant to be reciprocal in that we plan to inform people about various disability-related issues along with receive information about issues people are experiencing.
- **Survey Monkey** – SDAS understands the benefit of surveys. It is a challenge to keep track of the information that the surveys give us and to set goals and priorities based on this information. Because of this, SDAS purchased a subscription to SurveyMonkey. We will electronically analyze the information from respondents to better understand their needs. The information from SurveyMonkey will be a data-driven initiative in order to target systemic issues.
- **Intake team** – SDAS is creating an intake team to handle or address the contacts we receive at the agency beginning in FY16. The team is made up of the intake specialist and an attorney. A program director or directors may be asked to attend if there may be a question on priorities or a particular program-related question on an intake. The team will meet twice weekly to review

the intakes from the week. They will determine if the caller should receive information and referral or be assigned to an advocate or an attorney. This team fulfills three purposes:

- To ensure that the information that we share with the public is sound and based on applicable laws.
- To target or match case services to SDAS specific priority issues.
- To track systemic issues if we see an increase in a type of issue, at a certain service provider, or location.