Year Two of Rethinking Guardianship Making Alternatives a Reality (RG-MAR) was a busy year! The year began with a revision of the initiative's Common Agenda. We provided “best practice” training materials to the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and the Division of Aging and Adult Services; created a train-the-trainer PowerPoint presentation with suggested narrative; made numerous presentations; made detailed recommendations to the State Olmstead Plan; produced a video titled An Introduction to Supported Decision-Making plus three additional videos featuring individuals with I/DD and their stories of guardianship and less restrictive alternatives; published twelve educational handouts on less restrictive alternatives to guardianship; published a compilation of the educational materials in "Supporting Choice & Self-Determination in NC: A Guide" in both English and Spanish; analyzed an approach to Supported Decision-Making legislation; and, drafted statutory reform language.

Twelve Educational Handouts
Our website now features downloadable, printable handouts in English and Spanish on twelve options for supporting choice and self-determination. The options include: Supported Decision-Making Formal and Informal; Power of Attorney; Healthcare Power of Attorney; Living Will; Living Trust; Special needs Trust; Simple Financial Tools; Foster Care 18-21; Representative Payee for Social Security Benefits; Fiduciary for Veterans Benefits; and Psychiatric Advance Directives.

Conference Presentations
Linda Kendall Fields and Jonathan Martinis made a presentation at the 2021 Exceptional Children Conference, where their materials were distributed to the 1,550 conference attendees. Linda also presented at the the Statewide DSS Adult Services Meeting with 550 attendees and the MFP Roundtable with 320 attendees.
New Training for NC Adult Social Workers & Corporate Guardians

UNC Cares created a new pre-service training on guardianship for the Division of Aging and Adult Services. The training, which is now required for all DSS adult social workers and corporate guardians, includes three on-line, on demand, self-paced modules that begin with the concepts of choice and self-determination, and introduce Supported Decision-Making and other less-restrictive alternatives to guardianship.

Local Education Agency Benefits from RG-MAR

A Local Education Agency (school district) turned to Rethinking Guardianship for input on their brochure for families about the transfer of rights. RG-MAR was able to suggest best practice revisions.

RG-MAR Contributes to the NC Olmstead Plan

RG-MAR made detailed recommendations to the Olmstead Plan, which was finalized in January 2022. As a result, the plan includes "Exploring other ways, besides guardianship, to help people make decisions" as one of its eleven priorities.

Statute-Writing and -Review Teams Tackle Statutory Reform Language

The RG MAR-NC Statute Team completed a 79-page draft that spells out important reforms to General Statute 35A, the law that governs adult guardianship in North Carolina. The group is continuing to refine this draft with key representatives of the NC Bar, Conference of Clerks of Superior Court, Indigent Defense Services, Administrative Office of the Courts, and others, so that legislation can be introduced during the 2023 long session of the NC General Assembly.

Example of track-change edits to General Statute 35A

With information and consultation provided by national SDM advocate, Jonathan Martinis, the 35A statute draft lays out changes that will increase choice and autonomy for individuals encountering the guardianship system, and achieves an important objective of the RG MAR-NC grant to “Evaluate state interest and readiness for possible Supported Decision-Making legislation”
RG-MAR produced four videos featuring the following stories:

- Janie and Suvya and their experience living independently with supported decision-making.
- Jason and his experience regaining his rights after being subject to guardianship.
- Carol and her mother’s story of a predatory guardianship.
- Jeremy and his parents and their experience using Supported Decision-Making. Check out these stories on our YouTube channel below!

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCh0oJj2I9P19ckL5O8ZLuVNg
To our many Statewide Partners:

And to our Backbone Entity:

Thank you!

To our Consultant, Jonathan Martinis
Senior Director for Law and Policy in the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) at Syracuse University

To our Funders at the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities

RG-MAR By the Numbers

159 members of the RG-MAR Statewide Workgroup
26 individuals on the RG-MAR Steering Team
28 individuals contributing to RG-MAR statute writing work
4 individuals with I/DD participating in RG-MAR
12 families of individuals with I/DD participating in RG-MAR
60 NC Clerks of Court trained on Supported Decision-Making
5,377 unique website views
137 DSS social workers and public guardians enrolled in or completed Fundamentals of Guardianship training
2000+ individuals reached through trainings since June 2020