



Jodi M. Rell
Governor

Final Minutes ~ January 8, 2009

Members In Attendance:

Jennifer Carroll - Chair, Lou Richards – Vice Chair, Jack Frost – Secretary, John Pelegano, Kevin Morey, Jim Heffernan, Sheila Mulvey, Ted Walen, Peter H. O’Meara - Ex-Officio

DDS Staff:

Kathryn du Pree – Deputy Commissioner
Christine Pollio – Director of Legislative & Executive Affairs
Michael Woodson – Director of Investigations
Kathryn Reddington – Director of Autism Division

Jennifer Carroll- Chair opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Public Participation:

- Pat Johnson, Executive Director of CIB presented his concerns about the future of the private sector given historic underfunding (lack of COLAs) and the current economic circumstances. The number of people able to donate to CIB and the size of donations are decreasing. The agency is doing everything it can to reduce costs including reducing community outings. If revenue is not increased next year, CIB may need to close programs. Pat thanked the Council for its continued support and noted the cooperative relationship with the Commissioner and staff of DDS.
- Alyssa Goduti, Vice President of CCPA spoke to underscore the financial difficulties faced by the provider community. She shared CCPA’s legislative agenda including a funding increase, the need for a community provider rescue fund, creation of a capitol improvement fund and elimination of unfunded state mandates. Alyssa summarized a survey of steps providers have taken to reduce costs and a CPI comparison.
- A discussion followed about the best strategies to present the impact of potential cuts on services and providers and whether there will be a commitment to vulnerable populations. It was felt that council members could take measures similar to those taken in the past including writing letters, attending legislative breakfasts and testifying.
- Commissioner O’Meara explained DDS’s request for continuing services and the needs of school graduates, ageouts and people on the waiting list. He explained the request for 10” percent reduction options including cuts to both the public and private sector. Jim Heffernan asked that DDS share the budget reduction options with the Council and discuss the budget at the February meeting.
- There was a discussion about the feasibility of raising the federal reimbursement which is a federal government decision.

Autism Pilot Update (Kathryn Reddington):

- Kathy Reddington, Director of Autism Services, presented an update on the pilot and the Division of Autism Services. (copy of presentation attached)

Minutes:

- The November Council minutes were approved unanimously with no corrections.
- Minutes of meetings will be shared with Council members and posted on the web as a draft within 7 days of a council meeting. They will be reposted with corrections after they are approved by the membership.

Ombudsperson Report – Ed Mambruno:

- Mr. Mambruno was unable to attend the meeting. His two most recent monthly reports were included in the packets. Members were asked to review the reports and told that will have an opportunity to ask questions at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Legislative Report - Christine Pollio:

- Ms. Pollio reviewed basic information about the legislative affairs webpage, committee information, how to contact legislators and useful links on the DDS and General Assembly websites.
- Packets of information were distributed and included a section on legislative advocacy and the first session update from the DDS Legislative Affairs Website.
- Rod O'Connor will aim to post weekly legislative updates.
- DDS's 2009 non-budgetary legislative proposals were shared. The eight (8) proposals will be presented to the Public Health Committee leadership on Friday 1/16/08.

Commissioner's Updates:

- Commissioner O'Meara shared a recent incident that occurred in a public CLA that appears accidental with no injuries which was widely covered by the media.
- During the past year, there have been a few incidents involving fraud or the mismanagement of consumer funds. It is a concern that this may increase as a result of current economy. The Commissioner sent a letter to all public and private employees to remind them of their responsibilities to safeguard consumer and public funds. One recent case may result in an arrest shortly. Statute now allows pensions to be targeted as part of restitution.
- The North Region has completed its Health Care Coordination Pilot for people who live on their own with staff support. We will plan a presentation for a future council meeting. The department's efforts to support UCONN nursing students continue. We will provide a small number of scholarships (2-3) in return for a work commitment. DDS hopes to eventually fund a nursing professor to specialize in developmental disabilities health academics.
- DDS is now conducting webcasts for the Trades meetings and in February it will be offered using an auditorium style format to involve providers directly and the topic will be the Governor's proposed budget as it relates to DDS. Council members are invited to log on. Information will be sent regarding how to log on.

- DDS does not anticipate having budget information until the Governor's budget presentation. The Commissioner is hopeful that the department's revenue generation will be considered when next year's budget is crafted.

Old Business:

- The February meeting date was discussed. It will remain on February 19, 2009 (February 12th is a state holiday). Jen Carroll and Dr. Pelegano will be unable to attend, but everyone else was available.

New Business:

- The election of Council Officers for 2009 took place. Jack Frost reported on behalf of the nominating committee that a slate had been chosen: Jennifer Carroll for Chairperson, Jim Heffernan for Vice Chairperson and Dr. John Pelegano for Secretary.
- There being no further nominations from the floor, a motion was made by Ted Walen and seconded by John Pelegano to close the nominations.
- A vote was taken and members voted unanimously in support of the proposed slate.
- Ted Walen updated the council on the advocacy efforts of FORCONN (of which he is the current President) on several issues through the years including recognition of the Waiting List, the need for increased dental care for consumers and most recently over the past year and a half, educating legislators about the needs of aging DDS consumers.
- Mr. Walen reminded council members about the 2008 study on this issue by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee (LPRIC).
- Christine shared the recent action by the LPRIC committee to raise bills on this issue and offered to email the information to members. She also mentioned that DDS would be commenting formally on all 20 recommendations which were included in the packets for the meeting and said she would share the Department's response when it is finalized.
- Christine mentioned statutory public notice requirements related to the minutes and agendas. She will work with the council to assure that required compliance is met.
- Jim Heffernan asked if there had been any discussions regarding potential agency or program consolidations in response to the budget situation. Christine offered to email members information on a previous LPRIC study on this issue which included testimony by DDS in opposition to consolidation.
- Chairperson Carroll confirmed that Jim Heffernan will Chair the February meeting in her absence.

****The next meeting will be held on February 19, 2009.****

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned: 8:50 p.m.