

**Notes from first LON Subcommittee of the DDS Legislative Advisory Committee on Friday,
March 5 at DDS Central Office.**

Attending were Joe Drexler and Terry Macy – Co Chairs, Judy Dowd representing OPM, Mary Pat DeCarlo representing Ct Non Profits and Deb Duval DDS Staff and LON expert. Stan Soby from Oak Hill was not present.

Deb Duval, DDS staff responsible for the LON, was asked to attend our meeting and provide background information on the development and oversight of the LON tool.

The meeting began with Joe reading the charge of the Subcommittee summarized (and therefore our tasks as follows:

Review the appropriateness of the level of need tool and its scores and reimbursement rates, ways to link levels of need to funding and ways to appeal level of need scores.

Task 1 then becomes determining the appropriateness of the tool

The LON has been in development for a significant period of time and was the subject of ongoing review by “The Stakeholders Group”. This cross section of persons from diverse backgrounds had direct input into issues that they thought should be measured and therefore had say over the tool’s design. They were kept abreast of the evolution of it as it progressed through several iterations. The tool was actually created through a contract with Cynthia.

The committee discussed the fact that the LON is an assessment of people’s skills across several domains, that while we use it to establish funding levels it is first and foremost an assessment of skills that should be the basis for planning for Individual Plans and creating outcomes.

We are using version 1.1 based on the algorithm 1.1.1. There have been a few tweaks of the tool but it appears this is the version that will be used in the future and is found on the DDS website. Along the way there have been identified some issues including the large incidence of persons found to be rated “Level 5”.

The tool appears to be well normed. It was used on a large number of school graduates in the last year with good results. Regardless of assessment tool designs there will be pockets of populations where they are not sensitive enough. On example, Prader Willi Syndrome was noted.

While there are approximately 30,000 people with Intellectual Disabilities in Ct. only 13,000 are provided supports by DDS and 9,000 are on the waiver and have had a LON.

Case Managers and private agency staff have been trained in how to do “the assessment”. With the turnover in each sector there is constant need for ongoing training.

The committee discussed the need and methodology to test the integrity of the LON. The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Supports Intensity Scale (SYS) tool is one very comprehensive and recognized international tool. It was agreed that a good test of the LON’s integrity would be to compare a sample of persons given the LON and the SYS. To that end the group discussed the possibility of contacting our original consultant to determine 1.) what sample size would we need to have to produce a credible study and 2.) determine if she would be willing to conduct the research.

The next meeting will be held Friday March 26th at Ct Nonprofits, 90 Brainard Road, Hartford, Ct. at 1:30 pm.