

DDS Legislative Update – February 11, 2014

New Session Begins February 5, 2014 and Ends May 7, 2014

The 2014 legislative session was supposed to begin on February 5th but because of snow the opening day was postponed to February 6, 2014. Barring bad weather, the 2014 session will end on May 7, 2014 at midnight. This year's session is called a "short" session which occurs in even numbered years. The main task of the General Assembly in a short session is to make adjustments to the two-year budget for the state passed in the previous year's long session. **The budget adjustments will be made to the fiscal year (FY) 2015 portion of the two year budget that covers state appropriations and revenues from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015.** Besides adjusting the budget, House and Senate members will work to pass bills that are "raised" by legislative committees based on input from various constituencies and executive branch agencies like DDS.

All bills must have a public hearing before they can be voted on and move forward. **Public hearings are where Connecticut citizens have their voices heard on the range of issues that the legislature will be working on during this session.** For the Department of Developmental Services and the individuals and families that receive supports and services from DDS, the public hearings of the Appropriations Committee, the Public Health Committee and the Human Services Committee are very important.

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Information

The Appropriations Committee will hold state agency budget presentations and public hearings on **Tuesday, February 18, 2014** for Health and Hospital Agencies that include the **Department of Developmental Services (DDS)**. **The public hearing on February 18th will begin at 4:00 p.m. in Room 2C of the Legislative Office Building (LOB).** This year the Appropriations Committee has not asked DDS to do a budget presentation for the full committee.

The Appropriations Committee also will hold state agency budget presentations and public hearings on **Friday, February 14, 2014** for Human Services Agencies such as the Department of Social Services (DSS), the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The public hearing on February 14th will begin at 4:00 p.m. in Room 2C of the Legislative Office Building (LOB).

Below are the rules for testifying before the Appropriations Committee. Please note that for both the Health and Hospitals public hearing and the Human Services public hearing, the Appropriations Committee makes accommodations for persons with special needs and their families.

Public speaker order for the public hearings will be determined by a lottery system. Lottery numbers will be drawn from 9:00 A.M. until 10:00 A.M. in the First Floor Atrium of the LOB and from 10:15 A.M. until 1:00 P.M. in Room 2700 of the LOB. The list of speakers registered through the lottery system will be posted outside the designated hearing room two hours prior to the start of the public hearing. Speakers arriving after the completion of the lottery will have their names placed at the end of the speaker list.

On February 14th and 18th the Committee will provide a separate sign-up sheet for persons with special needs. Those speakers will be registered on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Committee Chairs will alternate between the special needs list and the standard list until the special needs list has been exhausted. **Hearing Room 2D will be reserved for individuals with special needs who need a quiet space while waiting to testify.**

Speakers will be limited to 3 minutes of testimony. Please submit 25 copies of testimony at the time of sign-up, and no later than one hour prior to the start of the hearing, in Room 2700 of the LOB. Testimony submitted after the designated time may not be distributed until after the hearing. Electronic testimony will be accepted either in Word or PDF format via email at appropriationtestimo@cga.ct.gov for posting on the Committee's website and inclusion in the hearing transcript. **All public hearing testimony, written and spoken, is public information.** As such, it will be made available on the CGA website and will be indexed by internet search engines. Unofficial sign-up sheets have no standing with the Committee.

DDS Legislative Proposals for 2014

The Department is asking the Public Health Committee to raise six bills for us this year. DDS's first proposal would require mandatory reporters to report suspected abuse or neglect of individuals receiving services funded by the Division of Autism Spectrum Services, not already covered under another mandatory reporting statute, to DDS. The department's second proposal would expand the definition of abuse, for purposes of the statutes governing the DDS Abuse and Neglect Registry, to include financial exploitation, psychological abuse, sexual abuse and verbal abuse. The third proposal would repeal statutes pertaining to Unified School District #3 which is the Early Connections Program, the state run Birth to Three provider.

DDS's fourth proposal would transfer the administration of DDS's Revolving Loan Fund to the CT Housing Finance Authority (CHFA). The fifth proposal would allow a licensed psychologist to introduce evidence to the court regarding a respondent's condition in lieu of a physician if the respondent has intellectual disability. And, DDS's sixth proposal would revise statutes related to DDS Regional Advisory Councils and the Council on Developmental Services and make a technical correction to reflect statutory change in terminology from mental retardation to intellectual disability.

If the Public Health Committee allows DDS to go forward with these bills, we will post them to the Legislative Affairs website at:

<http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=2039&q=394202>

Links to the General Assembly and Legislative Committees

[Connecticut General Assembly](#)

[Appropriations Committee](#)

[Public Health Committee](#)

[Human Services Committee](#)

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