

## DDS Legislative Update – January 9, 2015

### New Session Began January 7, 2015 and Ends June 3, 2015

**The 2015 legislative session began on January 7, 2015 and will end on June 3, 2015 at midnight.** This session is called a “long” session which occurs in odd numbered years. The main task of the General Assembly in a long session is to craft and pass a new two-year budget for the state. **The budget that the Governor, the House and the Senate will be working on this session is for fiscal years (FY) 2016 and 2017.** The budget, when passed, will go into effect July 1, 2015 and be in effect through June 30, 2017.

Besides passing a new two-year budget, House and Senate members are allowed to submit proposed bills. These proposed bills can be on any topic of interest to the legislators. Most of the proposed bills do not become law but some of the concepts contained in proposed bills eventually make their way into other bills, which do become law. Bills also 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.

### Some Important Dates

**The Governor’s proposed budget for the next two fiscal years is scheduled for release on the Wednesday, February 18, 2015.** The Governor customarily gives his budget address before the General Assembly on the same day his budget is released.

**The Appropriations Committee schedules public hearings on the Governor’s proposed budget a week or two after the Governor’s budget has been released.** Each section of the Governor’s budget has a public hearing typically scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. in Room 2C of the Legislative Office Building. The Health and Hospitals section of the budget contains the Department of Developmental Services budget. When more information about the Health and Hospitals budget public hearing is available, we will let you know.

### DDS Legislative Proposal for 2015

The department will be asking the Public Health Committee to raise one bill for DDS this year. **DDS’s proposed bill would update section 1-1g of the Connecticut General Statutes to define “intellectual disability” rather than defining “mental retardation.” This proposal will not change any of the DDS eligibility criteria.** This bill also would remove a remaining reference in Connecticut statute to the term “the mentally retarded.”

**If the Public Health Committee allows DDS to move forward with this bill, we will post it 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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