



M. Jodi Rell
Governor

State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

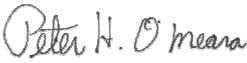
DDS

Peter H. O'Meara
Commissioner

Kathryn du Pree
Deputy Commissioner

Memorandum

TO: *All Public and Private Direct Support Staff
Executive Directors
Managers
Supervisors*

FROM: *Peter H. O'Meara, Commissioner* 

DATE: *October 1, 2008*

Last month was dedicated to the appreciation of the efforts and talents of direct support workers. The week of September 8th was declared nationally as the week of thanks for the work of direct support staff. The Department of Developmental Services and providers engaged in different activities to show our thanks.

What is clear in this type of recognition is the critically important role each of you has in providing services to people with intellectual disabilities that assures their health, keeps them safe and enhances the quality of their lives. No matter what the mission is of the agency employing you, our goals and desires for people with disabilities to be treated with respect and dignity is only possible as each of you does your job well. The vast majority of you demonstrate your caring, concern and ability to do this challenging work on a daily basis.

The people entrusted to your care are dependent on you to ensure their well being. While many have family and friends who stay active in their lives, it is staff who have the daily responsibility for their welfare. Consumers, families, supervisors, co-workers and the public, trust you to carry out your responsibilities.

Over the past few months, there have been a number of situations in which this public trust has been violated. It is for this reason that I am writing to you. Recently, there has been an increase in reported cases of fraud in which public or consumer funds have been misappropriated and used by staff for their personal use. The incidents I refer to have included payroll fraud involving falsification of time sheets, as well as misuse of client funds / goods (e.g. groceries) for personal purposes. While it involves only a few employees to date, this will not be tolerated and when proven will result in the full array of employment and legal consequences. It exhibits a total disregard for the welfare of our consumers and is a criminal activity. We condemn it as vigorously as we do acts of abuse or neglect.

As a state or private sector employee, you are responsible to follow this department's policy of zero tolerance for any abusive, neglectful or fraudulent behavior. You have an equally important responsibility to report any of these situations that you are aware of or directly observe. I understand that this requires personal integrity and a degree of courage when it involves revealing a coworker's indiscretions. But, it is your responsibility in carrying out the commitment you have to ensure a better life for the people in your care. I'm sure it is the same expectation you have of people who care for your family members. Always remember that many of our consumers cannot report the wrongdoing of others and rely upon you to protect their rights and assure their well being. I implore you to take this responsibility seriously and thank you for your commitment to the people we serve.

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