
DDS Executive Briefs

An Update on CT DDS Initiatives

December 21, 2017

Holiday Wishes from the Commissioner

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate this holiday season and near the start of a new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on 2017. I must extend my heartfelt appreciation to each of you for your tireless support, impassioned advocacy and steadfast commitment to individuals with intellectual disability in our state. No matter the adversity, our community has come together time and time again to do our best on behalf of individuals and families. While we certainly face limitations on accomplishing everything that we would wish, I see reminders of the positive force that our collective efforts become on a daily basis.



DDS Self Advocate Coordinators' Holiday Luncheon

Despite a protracted period of fiscal challenges, supports and services for individuals with intellectual disability continue to evolve and improve. Whether it is providers coming together to demonstrate the power of assistive technology, DDS staff taking a critical eye to how we measure quality, or partnership groups tackling ongoing federal transitional planning, our community manages to keep an eye on the ball even during what can often feel like a

crisis. Of course, above all, this is built on the foundation of exemplary work provided each and every day by those directly supporting individuals and families.

Looking ahead to 2018, I am hopeful that these efforts will continue and be expanded. We will use our Five Year Plan as a roadmap, continuing to put resources behind the concepts and projects that were presented at the start of the year. There will also be an opportunity to foster creative initiatives with the formalization of the Intellectual Disability Partnership. These prospects give me great confidence that we will be able to focus even more of our energy toward affecting positive change for the individuals and families who we support in the coming year.

As always, please know that you have my deepest thanks for what each of you contributes to the work of the department. Wishing you the happiest of holidays and a wonderful start to the New Year!

With gratitude,
Jordan Scheff

20,000 Thank Yous

Over the past few years, DDS has faced the potential of a variety of changes or reductions to the supports and services we provide. In order to remain within appropriations, we have been forced to contract supports in a number of ways; however, our partners at the Office of Policy Management and the Office of the Governor have drawn the line in key areas.

One such example occurred this spring, when Governor Malloy and Secretary Barnes heard the pleas of families, staff, providers, legislators, and agency leadership to keep Camp Harkness open, despite having listed its closure as a potential necessity. By allowing DDS to manage our appropriation in alternate ways, DDS was able to continue to offer the opportunities at Camp Harkness to families and individuals for Summer 2017.



From left: April Dipollina, Parent, CHAC Member, Connecticut Family Support Network; Jordan Scheff, DDS Commissioner; Heather Dierberger, Parent, Petition Creator; Stan Soby, CHAC Committee Chair, Oakhill; Shannon Aiello, CHAC Secretary, Arc of New London; Betsie Danforth, Parent, CHAC Member, Petition Designer



Before this agreement was reached, a young family that enjoys Camp Harkness each year began an online petition to keep it open. The petition garnered more and more support, even as news was relayed that the camps would not close, ending with more than 20,000 signatures. To honor the collective voice raised through this effort, the Camp Harkness Advisory Committee turned the signatures into an assemblage of 20,000 “Thank Yous” instead.

At the beginning of December, DDS hosted an event at Camp Harkness, which included the presentation of this book to Governor Malloy, in thanks for his support. Commissioner Scheff attended the event to accept the book on behalf of Governor Malloy. Connecticut State Senator Paul Formica, representing the 20th state senatorial district in which Camp Harkness resides, was also in attendance to help celebrate the Camp’s meaningful work.

Respectful Language

On December 12, 2017, DDS released a revised respectful language procedure. This procedure was developed with a great deal of input from multiple stakeholders, led by DDS Self-Advocates. It establishes standards and expectations for the use of respectful and person-first language in all department and qualified provider communications. The procedure has been updated in an effort to best promote equality, inclusion and full integration of persons who have a disability into the community.

While this is an internal agency policy and procedure, DDS is working to share it through all appropriate external channels, as well, in an ongoing effort to educate and inform public stakeholders.

The revised procedure can be found at the web link below:

http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/dds_manual/if/ifpr010_respectful_and_person-first_language.docx

Maintaining Status as a Qualified Provider

Don't forget to contact the Operations Center for Executive Director changes, changes to agency name or any changes to the Provider Profile information listed on the DDS website. **New Executive Directors** must meet the minimum qualifications as defined by DDS for the services the agency is currently qualified to provide (see http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/qpap/Provider_Minimum_Qualifications-IDS.pdf). Changes to the **Provider Profile information** (address, contacts, email addresses, etc.) should be submitted promptly to ensure timely receipt of communications. Questions can be directed to Debra Lynch at 860-418-6019 or Debra.Lynch@ct.gov

Submit the following documents via email to dds.provider.profiles@ct.gov

Description	Documents
<p>Change in Principal of the Entity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume • Provider Profile Correction Form • Assurance Agreement-Agency • Criminal Background Verification Certificate for a Change in Principal of the Entity, Connecticut Administrator, Partnership or LLC • Copy of criminal background report completed by the Connecticut State Police. The Criminal Conviction History Record must be searched using fingerprints. Out of state providers may utilize their state agency for the criminal background check and fingerprinting process. <p style="text-align: center;">Connecticut Criminal History Record Request Form Criminal History Check</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Connecticut State Police website http://www.ct.gov/despp/cwp/view.asp?a=4212&q=494532</p> <p><i>Note: If the new staff is the designated Administrator for Connecticut, then the individual <u>must attend the Provider Orientation</u> within 30 days from the date of hire or when the next mandatory Orientation is offered. Failure to attend this orientation within the stated timeframe may result in the suspension of providing supports to new referrals.</i></p>
<p>Agency Name Change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter on company letterhead notifying DDS of name change • Copy of incorporation papers from the Connecticut Secretary of State • Assurance Agreement-Agency <p><i>Note: If there is a change in the ownership or partners, the Operations Center may require the reconstructed LLC or partnership to reapply as a provider.</i></p>
<p>Clinical License/Certificate Renewal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical Behavioral Consultant - submit copy of current clinical license and/or BCBA certificate when renewed. • Healthcare Coordination – submit copy of current clinical license when renewed.
<p>Changes to the Provider Profile listed on the DDS website Link to Provider Profiles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider Profile Correction Form • Provider Profile Correction Form - Towns

State Budget Update

Connecticut's Fiscal Year 2018 – 2019 biennial budget has already seen a number of changes since its original passage in October. Though the alterations enacted thus far have been primarily technical in nature, there are still a number of issues reported to be under consideration for further modification by the legislature, including a restoration of funding related to the Medicare Savings Program.

Most recently, the Office of Policy and Management reported a likely shortfall eclipsing \$222 million for the current fiscal year. A deficit of this size exceeds the threshold of one percent of the General Fund, triggering a provision of state law requiring the Governor to prepare a deficit mitigation plan for approval by the legislature.

While the Governor has released a proposed list of options for such a deficit mitigation plan, the legislature has not yet reconvened to act on any further changes to the budget. DDS will continue to offer updates germane to departmental operations and supports as they become available.

2017 Oral Health Champion

On December 6th, 2017, the Connecticut Oral Health Initiative honored DDS Dental Coordinator, Izabella Pulvermacher, with the 2017 Oral Health Champion Award. Izabella works directly with DDS dental clinics, acts as a liaison to other state agencies, and is available for social workers, nurses, parents, individuals, and advocates in need of support or assistance.

Izabella's commitment to oral health as a gateway to overall health resonates throughout the department, as well as with the many statewide coalitions in which she participates. We thank Izabella for her service to the individuals and families supported by DDS.



Legislative Update

The next legislative session will run from February 7, 2018 through May 9, 2018. The 2018 legislative session is termed 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 (or in this case, in the long special session). The budget adjustments will be made to the fiscal year (FY) 2019 portion of the two year budget that covers state appropriations and revenues from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. In addition to 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 moved 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 who 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.

The DDS Legislative Affairs Division provides updates on the DDS website throughout the session with information regarding legislation that we are tracking for potential impact on DDS stakeholders. We invite you to check the DDS Legislative Affairs webpage regularly during the session for the most up-to-date information.

Exemplary Service



On November 15, 2017, the North Region's Regional Advisory Council (RAC) honored Nancy Bilyak after 39 years of service. Nancy Bilyak is a mother, former DDS employee, and tireless advocate over the past four decades. In 1978, Nancy Bilyak was first appointed to the Tolland Region Council, which had just been established as one of the twelve departmental Regions. Nancy served in a volunteer capacity until 1985, when she became an employee of the Department. Though she could no longer serve as an active member of the RAC, she did continue to attend the meetings in her professional capacity and took the minutes as secretary.

When Nancy left her position with the Department in 1988, she rejoined the Region 3 RAC, which then included Tolland, Putnam and Mansfield Training School. As one of six statewide regions, they met at the Willimantic Office and provided guidance to the department during those critical years of deinstitutionalization and the development of expanded community based services. Region 3 soon became the East Region, which included North and South Eastern CT. Eventually, DDS consolidated from six Regions to three, and Nancy became part of the North Region RAC.



Nancy has been known for her practical, commonsense approach to sharing information, tireless advocacy for the best interests of all individuals served by DDS, and willingness to offer guidance to families who may be newer to the DDS service system. We thank Nancy for her years of service, and want her to know that she will be missed greatly.

Gearing Up for the 2018 National Core Indicator Survey Project

DDS is preparing for the 2018 National Core Indicator (NCI) Survey season! The random samples have been collected, the background information materials have been compiled, and the survey has been converted into a fillable form, in readiness for a late December release. Each year, DDS participates in this national survey project that helps us see ourselves through the eyes of the individuals and families who we support. In addition to learning more about how people experience their lives and supports in CT, we gain a perspective of ourselves compared to over 40 other participating states. This is one of the best opportunities for us to learn from the individuals and families we support about what we are doing well, and what we could be doing better.

In advance of the survey rollout we have done analysis to ensure that the makeup of the sample is representative of the individuals we support. While we have always pulled a representative sample,

historical participation data has told us that we have tended toward higher participation rates for individuals living in 24-hour congregate care settings than those living in their own or family homes. Therefore, this year we have also set targets for participation in-line with the proportion of individuals with specific support types; we hope that this will lead us to survey results that better represent everyone engaged with the agency. We will target outreach accordingly.

The NCI results are used by DDS to better align strategic activities, set improvement targets, and understand what is changing over time. Specific areas of interest include individuals' feelings of choice and control in how they plan and live their lives, how much people are working and being paid in integrated settings, how safe people feel, how responsive and effective our case management system is, how people participate in their communities, access to friends and family, and how many people participate in advocacy activities.

As a special note, this year, NCI listened to the advocacy community and changed the name of the primary survey from 'The Adult Consumer Survey' to 'The Adult In-Person Survey'.

To review the results of previous NCI surveys go to <https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/states/CT/> and click on the reports.

Staff Recognition in the South

On October 5th, the South Region of DDS held its 2017 Annual Recognition Ceremony on the beautiful grounds of Camp Harkness in Waterford. Commissioner Scheff and Regional Director Thomas Dailey joined employees, providers, individuals and families in recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of one another. The day's top award, the *Lynda T. Cavagnaro Award*, was presented to Pamela Lewis, CCH Case Manager. This award was established in memory of former SR employee for her exemplary level of professionalism, dedication, and commitment to those she served.

Other special award recipients included: M.W.; Michelle Mazzotta, Private Case Manager; Journey Found, Inc; and Gales Ferry Subway Owners Paul & Staci Greeley, who received the *Community Connections Award* for their tireless efforts in supporting M.W. to

establish unique and meaningful community connections. The *Private/Public Partnership Award* was awarded to G.Z. and family, Donald Marquis, IFS Case Manager, Marie Bennett, former IFS ARD, and Christine Gerrish, IFS Secretary, for connecting to community organization and networking to reach a common goal – a new van for G.Z.



*Pamela Lewis, CCH Case Manager
Lynda T. Cavagnaro Award Recipient*

The Public Residential staff of Oakridge CLA received one of two *Living the Mission Awards* for their tireless efforts to ensure the residents of Oakridge CLA have the best quality of life possible. The second *Living the Mission Award* was presented to N.S., Lessy Antunez, IFS Case Manager, and Yesenia Guichardo, IFS Family Support Worker in recognition of their work supporting N.S.'s dream of finding her own apartment.

Creativity and Innovation Award recipients Kim Dubois and Mary Agnes Innocent, both Public Physical Therapists, were acknowledged for their passion, enthusiasm, and fortitude in ensuring the best interests of the individuals they support. The *Dedication and Leadership Award* was presented to Beverly Ostroski, Public Clinical Nurse Coordinator, as a leader in the field of nursing, a role model for other employees and someone individuals, families and colleagues know they can count on.

The *Volunteers Above and Beyond Award* was presented to Vivian Coleman, Clerk Typist/Receptionist, for her stellar customer service, her willingness to go the extra mile for her co-workers, and her strong commitment to community volunteerism. Additionally, over 100 employees were recognized for *Years of Service* milestones. After the ceremony, everyone enjoyed a picnic lunch and activities at the beach sponsored by the South Region Employee Recognition Committee.