



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Ned Lamont
Governor

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Peter Mason
Deputy Commissioner

June 10, 2021

Greetings to all DDS Stakeholders,

With Wednesday's passage of a biennial budget, DDS is excited to celebrate the huge infusion of money into the private provider system. At a time of a national workforce shortage in our industry, the efforts by Governor Lamont and Secretary McCaw have put us on path to much needed provider staff stability for all of our providers, unionized or not. This is a landmark moment in CT and one watched closely across the country. I could not be more grateful to be leading the agency during such unprecedented times.

Following nearly 16 months of pandemic, and emerging with such an important commitment to the workforce that worked tirelessly to get us through, the easy thing would be to take a breath and look to address other issues within the system a little later. But as my dad often says, the easy thing and the right thing are not often the same thing. While this investment of funds can't be overstated, there remain other concerns top of mind for many of you. While they may not seem directly related to this news, I believe that they are, in fact, intrinsically linked.

Most other concerns, while critical, are almost impossible to address without an adequate workforce or provider stability. That foundation has been addressed and fortified in the biennium. Now, our work can be focused on how that infusion of resources, while not specifically directed at these other issues, makes them viable to examine and to rectify. Most notably, I believe we have a significant opportunity to leverage our experience from the pandemic combined with the fiscal enhancement and other federal resources to:

- 1) Address the waitlist
- 2) Expand our continuum of supports
- 3) Move away from over reliance on legacy systems
- 4) Modernize and make more efficient DDS systems

And I am sure more. Our plan is to begin to set up a broad array of opportunities for stakeholder engagement, through in person a virtual meetings, surveys, and report outs that will add richness to some of the ideas already being considered and those yet to be identified. Please be on the lookout for opportunities to participate to be announced soon.

To be clear, this investment could be viewed only as a wage bill. I am confident it can be so much more. With your input and your patience, we can use this as a springboard to take large steps towards addressing so many other concerns. There is reason to be hopeful, and in fact optimistic, that even if you did not see your specific concern addressed by this infusion of resources, it can be if we work together by listening to families, providers, DDS staff, advocacy groups and of course, those we support.

Looking forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,

Jordan A. Scheff
Commissioner

Department of Developmental Services

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