



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

**DDS**

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**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**February 27, 2013**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D., Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to testify on **Proposed [H.B. No. 5360](#) - AN ACT CONCERNING AN INTERNSHIP PROGRAM FOR ADULTS WITH AUTISM**. This bill would require the Commissioner of Developmental Services to develop and implement an internship program for adults with autism spectrum disorder, and allow a business tax credit of up to two hundred dollars for every adult intern with autism assigned to a program designed to connect the individual with the community.

Although this is an interesting concept, the implementation of such a program is perhaps more complicated and more expensive than may be contemplated. A Medicaid waiver for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who do not have intellectual disability, was recently approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) allowing Connecticut to receive federal reimbursement for services that were previously fully state-funded. Individuals currently receiving services under the autism waiver include 78 adults from the original pilot program and 19 children from the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Voluntary Services Program (VSP). Over five years, up to 136 individuals will be served by this waiver including more children from DCF VSP and 8 adults under the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. Services provided under the Autism Waiver include job coaching, community mentoring, life skills coaching, and behavioral supports.

Additionally, section 27 of Public Act 11-6 required a study of issues related to the needs of persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including the feasibility of a Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities. This study commenced in May 2011 led by the Department of Social Services (DSS) and included the Departments of Developmental Services (DDS), Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), Education (SDE), Children and Families (DCF) and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM). ValueOptions, the administrative services organization (ASO) for the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership (CT BHP), provided assistance with literature reviews, data analysis and summary documentation of the activities and findings of the ASD Workgroup Committee. Governor Malloy's proposed budget for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 includes new funding to begin to implement the recommendations of the Autism Feasibility Study. The report recommends a multi-year coordinated plan to expand and improve the ASD service system through improved training

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for providers, professionals and families; the creation of a centralized catalogue of ASD resources; a review of current reimbursement and insurance coverage for ASD services; and increased capacity for in-home supports and social and recreational opportunities for individuals with ASD. The report is under final review and is expected to be released in the coming weeks.

This concept is certainly in line with work that is currently underway through the Autism Waiver and it mirrors some of the recommendations of the feasibility study, specifically around employment. However, I am concerned that the internship pilot proposed in this bill could require resources from the Autism Division that are currently not available or are otherwise being utilized. We would be happy to further explore this concept going forward but DDS cannot commit specific resources at this time. Additionally, if at some point there were to be a tax credit for this type of internship, both the Departments of Revenue Service and Economic and Community Development would need to be involved in making these tax credits become a reality.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this HB 5360. Please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066 with any questions.