



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. 6005 AN ACT CONCERNING A MORATORIUM ON THE CLOSURE OF GROUP HOMES OPERATED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**. This proposal would prohibit the closing of any group home operated by the Department of Developmental Services, including the group home located at the Hartford Regional Center in Newington.

The closures of DDS Community Living Arrangements (CLAs) or “group homes” over the past several years have been in response to statewide and agency specific budget issues. By closing public group homes in a planned manner, DDS has been able to consolidate staff resources as the state employee workforce has decreased through attrition. This consolidation of staff has resulted in reductions in overtime in other DDS group homes and programs, thereby resulting in lower expenditure levels. Legislative studies, including the recent one by the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee, have reported that private sector placements not only are less costly than public sector placements based on the comparison of per diems and other cost data but that the services in the private sector are at least as good as in the public sector based on quality assurance indicators.

DDS CLAs are chosen for closure based upon consumer census, physical plant considerations and available vacancies (both staff and consumer) within our system. When a home is chosen for closure, the remaining consumers are provided the opportunity to move to other residential programs that meet their identified level of need. Placement opportunities can be in the public or private sector. The consumers’ families and guardians are involved in the selection of new residential services and all phases of the transition to their new homes. Additionally, DDS works with the employees and their union to reassign staff in accordance with their collective bargaining agreement. This allows DDS to meet targeted budget savings by reducing overtime in other programs.

While DDS appreciates the concerns that are raised anytime that there is a change in services and supports, challenging economic times require that we work toward solutions that allow DDS to continue to serve as many individuals as possible within existing resources. As a publicly financed service system, we must provide these services in the most fiscally responsible manner possible. This consolidation of resources allows DDS services to continue, rather than be eliminated, by reducing costs in a planned and beneficial manner. While we are sympathetic to the impact these changes may have on consumers, families and employees, it allows important services to continue while reducing costs and maintaining jobs for our employees.

For these reasons, DDS respectfully opposes this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 6005. Please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066 with any questions.