



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

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DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
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Good morning Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Ziobron and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). I am grateful for the opportunity to come before you today to testify on [H.B. No. 5035](#) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2019 and discuss the activities and progress DDS has made during the past year, as well as the challenges we face in the fiscal year ahead.

I would first like to say that, during this time of fiscal uncertainty for our state, DDS and its numerous partners continue to work to move this critically important system of supports forward each and every day. To this end, in February 2017, DDS released its new [DDS Five Year Plan 2017 – 2022](#). Building on the department's accomplishments from 2012 – 2017, the plan creates a path for DDS to transform itself and continue to have a positive impact on individuals with intellectual disability in Connecticut. In the 2017-2022 Five Year Plan, DDS is committed to continued work focusing on several overarching shifts:

- DDS is dedicated to moving away from traditional legacy systems of service delivery, in favor of community integration and innovation in all areas of supports for individuals with intellectual disability.
- As the state continues to do more with less, DDS is seeking ways to make critical programs, funding and services sustainable.
- DDS continues to support and encourage self-advocacy efforts, helping individuals we support to engage, organize, and communicate on their own behalf.
- DDS is committed to maintaining and enhancing agency transparency through participation of stakeholders in the work to come, and frequent communication about progress both stakeholders and the community at-large.

The direction of the agency is set by five guiding principles in the Five Year Plan: 1) People & Families First, 2) Strong Foundation, 3) Innovation & Transformation, 4) Excellence in Service Delivery, and 5) Sustainable Change. These guiding principles speak to where the agency must focus its efforts and resources, in order to be successful in transforming models of supports in the years to come. They point the agency toward establishing a strong foundation first, on which to build innovation, transformation, and best practices in service delivery. They remind DDS to promote sustainability in the changes sought. Most importantly, they ground the team in a steadfast commitment to the individuals and families supported by

the agency. These principles are woven throughout the 2017-2022 Five Year Plan, giving a lens through which to view and prioritize the projects that will make up the department's work.

This plan has helped us to focus the department's work in the past year on several projects and initiatives to improve our system and allow staff to concentrate on the individuals we support and their needs. We have reduced burdens on our provider partners and increased consistency in processes through Lean efforts, such as the interagency project focused on licensing and certification processes. Through the planned utilization of ID Partnership funding, we have continued to develop strategies for closing gaps in our service system and explored innovative and more cost effective ways of providing supports. The successful completion of the Office of Protection and Advocacy's Abuse Investigation Division integration into DDS has enhanced the state's ability to protect individuals with intellectual disability and provide a more sustainable, predictable and responsive abuse and neglect protection system. In partnership with sister agencies, DDS has continued to work towards achievement of the goals set forth in the recommendations from the U.S. Office of the Inspector General, to improve the DDS incident reporting and management systems. This is in addition to our everyday work of offering high quality supports to individuals with intellectual disability, whether through direct service provision or partnership with our valued private provider community.

Knowing that you, as policymakers, rely on accurate data to inform critical budget decisions, I want to highlight one additional project that was completed during the past year. DDS produces and makes available on the agency website a quarterly Management Information Report (MIR). This report regularly captures data regarding the more than 16,000 individuals who have been found eligible for DDS supports and services. Information regarding where individuals reside, what types of supports they receive or what type of supports they are waiting for is all illustrated in this report. Starting in fiscal year 2017, production of the DDS MIR became automated. The goals of automating the DDS MIR include: 1) increased timeliness of data, 2) streamlining the report preparation process, and 3) improving the accuracy and reliability of the data. We hope that you will find the information included in this report valuable to you, specifically during budget deliberations. Quarterly reports from the current fiscal year and annual reports from previous years are available at this link: <http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=3&Q=455410>

The Governor's recommended budget adjustments for FY19 continue to support many critical DDS initiatives. Indicative of this, it includes a new appropriation of \$5 million to assist with Emergency Placements. While still in the early changes of planning, in discussing this proposed funding in greater detail with the administration during the past couple of weeks, I believe that this funding would allow the department to build capacity within the community to address some immediate concerns of individuals in crisis. In turn, this ability to offer enhanced supports would reduce reliance on hospitals for individuals with acute clinical needs. This funding also would allow DDS to provide some critical wrap-around services to de-escalate situations and offer enough stability to keep individuals in the most integrated community-based settings that best suit their ongoing needs. These opportunities would enable DDS to address well-established gaps in our continuum of supports and services. Specifically, there have been recent instances of individuals relying on Emergency Department care for extended periods of time, due to the nature of their crisis and the constraints of the current system. This proposed funding would permit DDS to build some capacity to address these unique situations and create a system that delivers supports and services in a cost effective and timely manner, while lessening the need for more costly long-term congregate care placements. Creating a distinct funding stream for this initiative would allow the department to build this capability, without taking critically necessary resources from the emergency needs of individuals on the residential waiting list, whose needs currently are met to the greatest extent possible through the reuse of existing funds each year.

In addition to new initiatives, Governor Malloy's proposed budget adjustment for FY19 includes the annualization of FY18 budgeted lapses. I offer the following details on the reductions to these specific accounts:

- Personal Services: this reduction includes annualization of fiscal year 2018 holdbacks, reflection of SEBAC savings, and projected savings from ten additional conversions of Community Living Arrangements (CLAs) from public to private operation. A portion of the projected savings is reflected as an additional appropriation in the Community Residential account at the Department of Social Services (DSS).
- Other Expenses: this reduction reflects annualization of current year holdbacks and savings associated with the aforementioned CLA conversions. A portion of the projected savings is reflected as an additional appropriation in the room and board line at DSS.
- Clinical Services: a minor reduction to this account is also related to the conversion of ten public CLAs.
- Reductions to the Behavioral Services Program, Supplemental Payments for Medical Services, ID Partnership Initiatives, and the Rent Subsidy Program accounts are all reflective of annualization of current year holdbacks.
- Employment Opportunities and Day Services: this account was reduced by annualizing current year holdbacks and was increased by \$1 million for caseload growth in the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program.
- Emergency Placements: The additional \$5 million would allow the department to address some immediate needs of individuals in crisis, through capacity building within the community to reduce reliance on hospitals for individuals with acute clinical needs, and provide for some wrap-around services in situations that could avoid placement in congregate care settings.

As of February 16, 2018, only 45 of DDS's 879 CLAs remain state operated. DDS is in the process of converting 10 publicly-operated homes to private provider operation during the current (FY18) fiscal year. As of today, five of these conversions have been completed. Public employees in these homes are being given opportunities to relocate to fill vacant positions in other public DDS settings, which will result in reduced overtime costs to DDS. The proposed budget adjustment for FY19 includes an additional 10 CLA conversions.

Despite the ongoing period of fiscal challenges faced by the department and state as a whole, I wish to emphasize that critical supports and services for individuals with intellectual disability continue to evolve and improve. Whether by 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 continues to keep the system moving forward. Above all, this system of supports is built on the foundation of exemplary work provided each day by staff who directly support individuals and their families. To continue and expand these efforts, DDS will use its Five Year Plan as a roadmap, putting our resources and support into the concepts and projects that improve our service system. In addition, there will be opportunities to foster creative initiatives through the Intellectual Disability Partnership. These opportunities give me great confidence that the department will be able to focus even more energy toward positive changes for the individuals and their families who we support in the coming years.

As always, I express my deepest thanks to all DDS partners and stakeholders, including the legislature, for their contributions to the important work of the department.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony on Governor Malloy's proposed budget adjustments for FY19. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have for me at this time, and look forward to working with all of you throughout the legislative session.