



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

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Governor

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Commissioner

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Deputy Commissioner

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

February 28, 2018

Senators Gerratana and Somers, Representatives Steinberg and Betts and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Jordan A. Scheff, Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **S.B. No. 168 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING GROUP HOME LICENSING VISITS.**

The proposal clarifies the requirement regarding unannounced visits by DDS Quality and Systems Improvement Division staff related to licensure of DDS Community Living Arrangements (CLAs) or “group homes”.

This proposed legislation is based on recommendations of the Lean Licensure and Certification Workgroup (LCW) established pursuant to **Special Act No. 17-21** which required a workgroup consisting of representatives from state agencies (DDS, DMHAS, DCF and DPH) and nonprofit providers to conduct a review of state agency certification and licensure processes of certain nonprofit community providers and to identify potential efficiencies. A weeklong cross-agency Lean event took place in November 2017 which resulted in a number of legislative proposals aimed at lessening the administrative impact on nonprofits and reducing time away from the individuals who they support.

Last fiscal year (FY17) DDS conducted 149 unannounced licensing visits and 473 announced licensing visits. While DDS believes that there can be a value to unannounced visits from a quality review and assurance standpoint, it is less so for a CLA for which no concerns have been identified.

DDS is not meeting the current statutory requirement that at least one half of the broader range of visits (licensing, Quality Service Reviews and more general “facility” visits) be unannounced. While we do track licensing visits, there is no mechanism in place to accurately track the variety of other visits that occur in a home such as from case management or resource management staff.

To be very clear, this proposal would not prohibit DDS from conducting an unannounced visit when warranted for audit purposes or if concerns with a home’s operation are identified. It does, however, allow the agency more discretion in targeting unannounced visits where, and if, necessary. Additionally, DDS may conduct enhanced monitoring for homes with a one-year licensing status, to follow up on concerns that the Department is aware of.

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This proposal, along with other Lean related proposals before the Public Health Committee during this session, is a step in the right direction for both the department and our private provider partners as we continue to improve and evolve the service system by lessening administrative burdens and focusing more on the needs of individuals with intellectual disability who we support.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of [S.B. No. 168](#) **AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES' RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING GROUP HOME LICENSING VISITS.** I would be happy to answer any questions you have at this time. You may also contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066 with additional questions.