

**Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Service Improvement Working Group**  
**Thursday, December 18, 2014**  
**Legislative Office Building – Room 1C**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Tom Fiorentino and Jonathan Slifka (Co-chairs), Deborah Chernoff, Judy Dowd, Terry Edelstein, Joe Drexler for Terry Macy, Andrea Barton Reeves, Varian Salters, Leslie Simoes, Barry Simon, Tracey Walker, Julia Wilcox, Katie Rock for Morna Murray and Walter Glomb for Lisa Roland

Members Absent – Emily Angeloff and Tom McCann

Call to Order – The meeting convened at 2:05 p.m.

Introduction of Members

Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the November 13, 2014 meeting were approved as submitted.

Chairman Slifka stated that he had requested an extension on the report submission deadline to March, 2015.

Presentations by Benjamin Barnes and Chris LaVigne –

Secretary Barnes spoke to the group to offer information about the costs between private and public sector services and other various components that make up the costs in residential settings.

There were several comments about state services being too costly and not the most efficient way to provide services. Secretary Barnes disputed that state services are inefficient and the premise that state employees are paid too much and have benefits that are too rich. Instead, he explained that the costs in the documents are not the true costs. The costs that have been reflected in those documents are “allowable costs” vs real costs. In order to maximize federal revenue, the state is allowed to include administrative costs in the cost calculation. Allowable costs for state services are different than for private services. But the fact that the state is allowed to attribute administrative costs to state-operated services does not influence the downsizing of state-operated services.

Secretary Barnes acknowledged that he appreciates the adaptability of private providers and understands how difficult it must be to make good clinical decisions when resources aren't as abundant as we'd all like.

Secretary Barnes suggested that the group consider making recommendations that would be helpful to move the state in a way the group wants to go. However, because revenues are not growing as they had in the past, it will be impossible to accommodate recommendations that

all have high costs. This administration has made a significant commitment to date toward caseload growth. He suggested that it would be wise to try to make recommendations with lower costs, be specific, realistic and reasonable and frame the recommendations in a way they can be accomplished.

### Discussions

Discussions revolved around clarification of the allocation of unfunded pension liabilities, mechanisms for payment, rate setting, services and federal reimbursement and how they all relate. The group stated that further discussions were necessary so they could better understand costs in the various settings.

The group said it appeared to make sense that since the state is required under law to pay unfunded liabilities, then it shouldn't be considered as part of the expenditures when comparing state group home costs to private group home costs.

They recommended that if Southbury Training School closes, other plans would need to be made to fund pension costs that couldn't be claimed under Medicaid.

It was also suggested that the system be redesigned to allow for best practices and a better system of care when serving individuals and also maximizing federal reimbursement.

Costs to downsize Southbury are often more expensive because the residents of Southbury are older and have more complex needs than residents of other group homes. When transferring residents from Southbury, development costs also need to be considered which may include expensive code renovations.

The group discussed direct care staff and salary costs of state versus private, benefits, reliance on Medicaid, reliance on state entitlements like state funded day care use by private provider staff and the need for many direct care staff to work second jobs, etc. because of the lack of COLAs and adequate funding for private providers.

It was decided that the group wanted the opportunity to ask follow up questions before preparing the recommendations for the final report. A list will be compiled to be discussed at the next meeting.

Future Meeting Dates/Times – The next meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. at the DDS North Regional Office.

Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m