



State of Connecticut  
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

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Governor

Jordan A. Scheff  
Commissioner

Peter Mason  
Deputy Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
March 4, 2019**

Senators Abrams and Somers, Representatives Steinberg and Petit 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 offer testimony on **Proposed H.B. No. 6527 AN ACT REQUIRING ADDITIONAL OVERSIGHT OVER GROUP HOMES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.**

The proposed bill would require the Department of Developmental Services to have additional, unspecified oversight of DDS-operated or funded group homes. The department agrees that oversight of homes for individuals with intellectual disability is critically important and is the key to the department's mission to provide individuals with intellectual disability a safe and enriched living environment in the community. DDS oversight not only protects the safety of individuals, it allows them to flourish in our communities. The department's oversight also ensures that both state and federal dollars are spent wisely on appropriate services and supports for these individuals.

DDS currently has multiple levels of oversight for group homes, as well as all other programs and services that the department operates or funds. For a private provider agency that wishes to develop a group home the provider must first be qualified by the DDS Operations Center. The qualification process reviews both financial and programmatic aspects of the provider along with the qualifications of the staff who would be providing administration of the home and direct care to individuals.

Once the private provider is qualified by DDS, they are required to obtain a license for such group home. Both the initial licensing process for a group home and subsequent renewal of a license include reviews based on the department's Community Living Arrangement regulations to evaluate developmental and clinical services provided to individuals living in the licensed group home. These reviews also identify environmental issues that could affect the individual's health and safety, and gauge compliance with department policies and procedures.

In addition to licensing and its requirements, DDS's Quality and Systems Improvement Division conducts Quality Service Reviews (QSR) of group homes that measure personal outcomes and provider support expectations across all service delivery settings. The QSR evaluates the quality of supports delivered by the licensed, qualified provider and assesses the individual's satisfaction with services and supports. The QSR incorporates department quality assurance activities and components to address the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) quality system expectations.

Other department oversight measures include audits of qualified providers conducted by the Audit, Billing, and Rate Setting Services Unit. The unit conducts financial compliance audits of the department's regional and central office operations and of the program contracts of qualified provider agencies. The focus of these audits is to ensure compliance with state statutes, accounting standards and rate setting regulations. This unit also audits case management files for compliance with the Home and Community Based Services Waivers and for Medicaid eligibility.

The DDS Division of Investigations receives and investigates reports of abuse or neglect of individuals with intellectual disability. These investigations can lead to a substantiation of abuse or neglect and may, in turn, lead to termination of employment and possible criminal charges. If a DDS employee or an employee of a DDS qualified provider is terminated because of substantiated abuse or neglect, the former employee is placed on the DDS Abuse and Neglect Registry. DDS qualified providers and providers for other state agencies are required to check the DDS Registry and if an applicant for employment is on the registry that applicant cannot be hired.

Finally, DDS qualified providers that operate licensed group homes must submit an annual report of residential and day services that breaks out costs for each licensed group home and each type of service provided. These reports allow the DDS Operations Center to have an overview of each provider's financial position and how the provider has spent state and federal funding.

The department is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy living environment that allows individuals with intellectual disability to ability to flourish in our communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding **Proposed [H.B. No. 6527](#) AN ACT REQUIRING ADDITIONAL OVERSIGHT OVER GROUP HOMES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**. Please contact Krista Ostaszewski, DDS Director of Legislative Affairs at (860) 418-6066 with additional questions.