

Key Points

PLANNING FOR NEEDS OF AGING INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Introduction

- The Department of Developmental Services (DDS), formerly named the Department of Mental Retardation, is responsible for the comprehensive planning, development, and administration of complete, comprehensive, and integrated statewide services for persons with mental retardation.
- The purpose of the PRI study is to evaluate efforts by DDS to address and plan for the current and future service needs of the aging population with intellectual disabilities in Connecticut.
- The study concentrates on two populations: 1) individuals age 45 or older who are or would be eligible for DDS services and 2) caregivers of DDS clients over the age of 65.
- The vast majority of DDS services are funded through Medicaid waiver programs approved by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS).
- A common misconception is that the services and supports provided by the department to individuals deemed eligible for DDS services are an entitlement. In actuality, receipt of services is dependent on a number of factors, including system capacity, the amount of resources available, and whether an individual meets the income and asset limits to enroll in one of the Medicaid waivers.

Section I

- According to DDS, there are an estimated 33,500 individuals living in Connecticut who have mental retardation, although only about 15,000 individuals receive services from the department (not including those served by the Birth-to-Three program).
- Although great strides have been made in increasing the average life expectancy of people with intellectual disabilities, some factors like genetic disorders, certain neurological conditions, and more severe intellectual disabilities accelerate the aging process.
- There were 5,187 DDS clients who were 45 years old or older as of June 12, 2008.
 - Only 17 percent of clients age 45 years old or older live with family compared to 68 percent of the 10,070 individuals who are age 44 or younger.

Section II

- The department operates with a central office located in Hartford and three regions, which include several regional campuses, and Southbury Training School.

Key Points

- DDS expenditures for FY 08 are estimated at almost \$940 million, of which \$342.7 million has been reimbursed to date under the federal Medicaid program for certain services provided to DDS clients.
- As of June 30, 2008, the department had almost 3,600 permanent full-time filled positions and 1,120 part-time filled positions – the lowest number of staff in the nine years examined.

Section III

- The vast majority of individuals determined eligible for DDS services are under age 45 (96 percent in 2008) with less than two percent being 55 or older.
- Each person expected to receive DDS-funded services must have a standardized level of need (LON) assessment.
- In 2001, a federal lawsuit was filed on behalf of over 1,000 individuals waiting for residential and/or day services from the then DMR. As the result of a settlement agreement, DDS uses a four-category priority status -- Emergency, Priority 1, Priority 2, and Priority 3 -- that determines how soon requests for residential services and supports must be addressed.
- Each region has a planning and resource allocation team (PRAT) that makes all key decisions regarding DDS client services including requests for residential and day supports, the designation of priority status, the allocation of regional resources, and Medicaid waiver eligibility.
- DDS has informal and formal appeal processes. The process used and individuals involved depends on the issue to be appealed. All Medicaid waiver-related issues may be appealed through the Department of Social Services.

Section IV

- DDS began a five-year wait list initiative supported by the Governor and General Assembly in 2004. Over the five years, a total of \$32.8 million in funding was provided including 50 percent federal reimbursement through the Medicaid waivers. The initiative is now in its final year.
- As of June 2008, there were 560 individuals seeking residential services on the DDS wait list and 1,450 people on the planning list.
- In February 2008, the department restored and filled the aging coordinator position at central office. Among the coordinator's responsibilities is to monitor and assist in the development and implementation of the recommendations of the Focus Team on Aging.