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State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

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DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

March 2, 2011

H.B. 6380- An Act Concerning the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2013

Good morning Senator Harp, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Peter O'Meara, Commissioner of Developmental Services, and I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Governor Malloy's proposed budget- House Bill 6380, An Act Concerning the Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2013.

As Commissioner of an agency that provides services to more than 20,000 Connecticut citizens, I appreciate the complicated task that the legislature faces during this challenging budget year, and recognize that there are difficult decisions to be made.

The Department is grateful that the proposed budget before us for fiscal years (FYs) 2012 and 2013 reflects Governor Malloy's desire to minimize the impact of budget reductions on the most vulnerable citizens of our state. I would like to review some highlights of Governor Malloy's proposed budget as it relates to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS):

Personal Services (PS):

The department's FYs 2012 and 2013 appropriation provides sufficient funding within the Personal Services (PS) account to adequately fund the Department's programmatic and administrative infrastructures and continue our commitment to the individuals and families that require and receive services.

The Personal Services account includes the following reductions and increases: (1) a reduction option proposed by the Department that would continue the consolidation of residential cottages at the Southbury Training School, which would reduce expenditures by $1,573,582 in FY12, and have a fully realized reduction value in FY13 of $2,462,895; (2) a reduction option proposed by the Department that would close five publicly operated Community Living Arrangements, which would reduce expenditures

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by $1,858,982 in FY12, and have a fully annualized savings in FY13 of $3,717,964; (3) a reduction option proposed by the Department that would eliminate positions through attrition with an the annualized savings of $2,533,727; (4) funding for a twenty seventh payroll; and (5) funding for annual increment and general wage increases for bargaining units as applicable with collective bargaining agreements.

Contracted Services:

As mentioned above, a very reassuring aspect of the Governor's recommended budget is a continued commitment to our consumers' and families' needs:

Age Outs:
Residential Services – The Governor's recommended budget provides annualization of funding for FY11 placements as well as new funding for 83 individuals in FY12, and 108 individuals in FY13.
Day Services – The Governor's recommended budget provides annualization of funding for FY11 placements as well as new funding for 90 individuals in FY12 and 101 individuals in FY13. This provides continuity for adolescents aging out of DCF who would otherwise have no continuity of support.

High School Graduates:
Day Services – The Governor's recommended budget provides annualization of funding for FY11 placements and supports service funding for 289 graduates in FY12 and 277 students who will graduate in FY13.

Cooperative Placements:
Funding within the Governor's recommended budget provides for six new placements in FY12 which is annualized in FY13 for individuals who require forensic services.

Voluntary Services Program (VSP):
DDS is in the process of receiving FY 11 VSP transfers from the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The cost to DDS will largely be offset by savings associated with the aging out of some existing VSP recipients. The Governor's recommended budget provides $229,000 to annualize the remaining requirements for FY11 VSP transfers from DCF to DDS.

Autism:
The Governor's recommended budget makes an adjustment of $340,000 to make it consistent with the FY'10 spending level and the projected spending level of this fiscal year. Also, the budget proposes to fund a Study of Need of Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder, which includes the feasibility of a center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities. In addition, the Governor's recommended budget provides for three positions to support caseload growth anticipated from the new Autism waivers. It is anticipated that at least two of these positions will be case managers. We are considering the other position for supervision of case management and monitoring of quality assurance indicators for the Medicaid waivers.

Self Directed Payments:
The proposed budget makes a reduction in self directed payments of one percent. The Department currently reviews self directed services and, as appropriate, reallocates funds from individuals who are not utilizing their allocated supports to other individuals who require supports. We will use this process to obtain the required overall savings. We believe this can be accomplished without a detrimental effect on individuals currently receiving services.

Birth to Three:
The $3.2 million annualized reduction in the Birth to Three account results from a proposal to require insurance companies to pay "first dollar" for Birth to Three services, meaning that the state will not continue to absorb the costs of co-pays and deductibles that insurance companies deduct from their payments for Birth to Three services. Massachusetts is currently using this process. The current autism insurance coverage as it is implemented makes the claiming process for Birth to Three programs extremely cumbersome and difficult. Raising the annual cap for children with autism in the existing Birth to Three insurance statute will streamline the claims process and protect the family's annual and lifetime policy limits. If this change is made, Birth to Three providers would no longer bill under the autism insurance coverage.

Other:
The Governor's recommended budget includes the transfer of $500,000 from the Department of Social Services (DSS) for families who have had difficulty accessing their home health benefit for their children with intellectual disabilities from typical home health providers.

To further the Department's goal of providing supports and services to individuals and their families who depend on us for residential, day or respite services, DDS has relied on the professionalism, commitment and dedication of our public and private sector employees who enhance the quality of life for those individuals we are responsible to serve. Our partners, the non-profit private agencies, have worked in unison with the public sector to provide support to more than 20,000 consumers. I want to thank these individuals for their commitment to providing quality services over the years. I especially appreciate their continued commitment at a time when shared sacrifice is being required by everyone involved in state government.

The Governor's recommended Biennial Budget calls for a total of $2.11 billion dollars for the department over the next two fiscal years. I understand that the budget process this session will be challenging, and I assure you that DDS is committed to making the most of our appropriation to recognize and address the critical support needs of consumers and their families. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of the Governor's recommended budget. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.