State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Mary McKay
Interim Deputy Commissioner
South Region Director

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM REVIEW AND INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE RE: THE PROVISION OF SELECTED SERVICES FOR CLIENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

September 27, 2011

Good afternoon Senator Fonfara, Representative Rowe and members of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee. I am Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D., Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your study regarding the provision of selected services for clients with intellectual disability.

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is responsible for the planning, development, and administration of complete, comprehensive, and integrated statewide services for persons with intellectual disability and persons medically diagnosed as having Prader-Willi Syndrome. DDS provides services within available appropriations through a decentralized system that relies on private provider agencies under contract or enrolled with the department, in addition to the state operated services. These services include residential placement and in-home supports, day and employment programs, early intervention, family support, respite, case management, and other periodic services such as transportation, interpreter services, and clinical services. Additionally, the DDS Autism Division operates a program for adults with autism who do not have intellectual disability. It is our understanding that your study is focused on comparing the cost of providing public and private services (both residential and day) to eligible DDS consumers.

As I have been going around the state to meet with various and numerous DDS stakeholders, it has struck me that DDS's current Legacy System is an unsustainable paradigm. For many, there is an expectation that services should follow a specific path: Birth to Three > school > day program > group home. I strongly believe that we need to embrace a new paradigm that focuses on building a larger service network around families to support individuals longer and more comprehensively in their homes. Our future support system will need to be more flexible and less regulatory-based, but still have strong performance standards, while offering more choices for in-home supports and later, day and residential supports. Any shift will need to be extremely mindful of the existing waiver program which garners a significant amount of federal revenue that ultimately helps to cover a large portion of the cost of services in Connecticut.

As a private provider executive prior to coming to DDS, I have firsthand knowledge of the great work done by our network of private providers as well as many of the challenges they currently face. While private sector services have certainly proven to be a less expensive option, the legislature is

Phone: 860 418-6000 • TDD 860 418-6079 • Fax: 860 418-6001
460 Capitol Avenue • Hartford, Connecticut 06106
www.ct.gov/dds • e-mail: ddsct.co@ct.gov
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aware of the strain some have experienced with multiple years of no cost of living adjustments during a period of increased costs. I am cognizant that these providers have continuously been asked to do more with less.

Having started my career in the public sector, and with five months as Commissioner of DDS under my belt, I can also tell you that the public sector has much to offer as we look to a shift towards a more sustainable service system. I see a clear role for many of these employees going forward as we look to increase support services to families. I appreciate the work being done in the public sector and the quality staff will continue to play a role in our future service system, especially on services focused on individual and family supports.

As many of you know, Connecticut is home to the largest campus facility remaining in New England…the Southbury Training School (STS). While it is no secret that I support community living, I most certainly respect the people who call STS their home and the staff who support them. I also fully support the Settlement Agreement in *Messier vs. STS.* This agreement requires that the teams supporting people living at STS exercise professional judgment regarding recommendations as to the most integrated setting in which the needs of each person can be met. I believe that the implementation of the Settlement Agreement provides people living at STS and their families or guardians with the means to make what I call an "informed choice" regarding the most appropriate and integrated setting for each individual. The chance for individuals and their families to find out what opportunities are available for them in the community is, for me, a critical first step in determining what is the best "next step" for each person. I have dedicated many years of my professional career to ensuring person centered supports for people. My plan is for any transition from Southbury to occur in a thoughtful and purposeful way.

As DDS moves forward, I am seeking new ways to engage with the people we support and their families. One question I've been asking self advocates is, "What does community living really mean to you and the people you advocate for?" It is important to keep in mind that many of the individuals who receive services and supports from DDS want the same things as everyone else…freedom and the opportunity to be on their own, to make personal choices, and enjoy privacy, empowerment, friendships, respect and dignity. People want to be in control of their lives. We need to focus on what the definition of community really is as we look to develop a more sustainable service system going forward. I'll be relying more and more on DDS Self Advocate Coordinators and their peers to guide us in policy decisions that affect their lives.

I envision my administration as being one of partnership. One that brings together a "community of providers" whose single focus is on creating the best practices and solutions for those we support. As I told the Governor on the day of my nomination "I will lead this department by putting the people we support and their families first and foremost in everything we do and how we do it." Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this study. Having just received the report yesterday, my staff and I look forward to reviewing it further and meeting with the committee staff to provide additional feedback. We are happy to answer any questions you have for us at this time.