

**Questions Submitted by Families of People with I/DD
for the Public Hearing on the Confirmation of
Morna Murray as Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services
2/24/2015**

Budget and Funding

1. Given the drastic reductions to in home supports proposed in the budget--respite, family support grants, etc.-- and the lack of residential placements, what are the options left for families we heard from on family hearing day?
2. The Governor's budget document states that \$4 million was annualized for the waiting list. However, since the \$4 million included in last year's budget was allocated for a 6 month period, how is \$4 million for a full year "annualized"? Wouldn't that require \$8 million?
3. As you well know, the private provider agencies are continuing to suffer financially, with there now being eight years without any increase in funding. Yet, STS, the regional centers and the public DDS-run group homes continue to receive annual COLAs. How will the private providers be supported in the future or will we just continue to see a number of them go out of business?
4. How will the governor's proposed cuts and recent rescissions in the DDS budget in both the day and residential programs affect current and future programs? The budget proposed by the governor on Feb 18, reduces the DDS budget for the next two years.
5. The \$43 million in rescission cuts over the past two years combined with the new cuts in the Governors proposed budget have left many parents and families feeling that the Governor does not consider supports for their loved ones with I/DD a priority. As Commissioner what would you say to families about that? How do you plan to address this problem with the Governor?
6. How will the Governor's cuts to Medicaid impact DDS policies that address health and safety needs of DDS consumers?

Waiting List

1. Do you agree that DDS needs to do more to prioritize resources to reduce the waiting list? What specifically would you do to redirect resources?
2. Do you consider addressing the growing Waiting List your top priority? Will families continue to be told that there is no residential funding available until the last remaining caregiver dies? Where do you see the Waiting List five years from now? Ten years from now?

3. Is accelerating community placements out of STS and retaining savings to either reduce the waiting list or replace the family support and respite funds that were reduced in the proposed budget an approach you are considering/willing to consider?
4. Many families have complained about a lack of predictability and transparency with DDS in general but also specifically in regards to the waiting list. Last year many families were shocked to learn that their loved ones names were taken off the waiting list because they had accepted in home supports. How do you plan to make the policies and practices of DDS more transparent, predictable and consistent?

Southbury Training School

1. On Dec 14, 2014, as President and CEO of CCPA, your press release stated, "The Connecticut Community Providers Association applauds efforts to focus attention on closing of astronomically expensive state institutions that operate at the expense of funding for high quality alternatives in the private sector that are half the cost." While recognizing that you are now in a different position and have different responsibilities, can we expect that your fundamental position on the closure of the institutional facilities, Southbury and the regional centers, will not change?

Employment for People with I/DD

1. The I/DD community faces enormous roadblocks to finding suitable employment. Will you ask the governor to propose an employment initiative for the I/DD community, similar to the "Second Chance" proposal he recently announced for non-violent drug offenders? The I/DD community is only asking for a "First Chance".
2. A bill is going to be introduced during this legislative session, that will direct all state agencies to hire members of the I/DD community. Is this a bill you would support?

Health & Safety

1. Dr. Allan Bergman in his February 11th presentation to the IDD/Caucus mentioned many areas of reform and improvements impacting the health and safety of the people with I/DD. Do you agree there is a need to make improvements addressing the health and safety needs of the IDD/consumer? If so, what suggestions did he make that you would like to pursue?"