



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services

DDS

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Commissioner

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**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

March 4, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Morna A. Murray, J.D., Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding **Proposed H.B. No. 6490 AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR PERSONS DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER.**

A similar proposal was introduced last session as part of Section 2 of **H.B. No. 5558 An Act Concerning Services for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder. H.B. No. 6490** establishes a pilot program for individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), who require a high level of clinical services, have been difficult to place due to such person's behavioral needs, are on DDS's residential waiting list, and have an Emergency priority designation or have been served in a hospital setting or out-of-state facility.

DDS's residential Waiting List is for individuals with intellectual disability who may or may not have ASD. So although it is not clear, it appears that the intent of the bill is to serve individuals who have both intellectual disability and ASD who meet the criteria stated above. If this is the case, DDS already has a mechanism to provide these services through a Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver, however, these services are only provided within available appropriations. The only new funding for residential services in Governor Malloy's proposed budget for FY16 and FY17 is for 110 individuals who are aging-out of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or Local Education Agencies (LEA) services and the annualization of \$4 million provided in FY15 for individuals who were designated on July 1, 2014 as a Priority 1 on the Residential Waiting List, receiving less than \$20,000 in residential supports, and living at home with a caregiver who was at least 70 years old.

If the intent of the pilot is to provide residential services for individuals with ASD who do not have intellectual disability, then the HCBS Waiver for persons with autism would be the current funding mechanism. However, this waiver is capped at \$60,000 per person and the only residential supports currently offered are a Community Companion Home or a live-in companion. If the pilot described in this bill is intended to expand services to this population, an appropriation of state funds for the pilot's entire cost of services would be required as

Connecticut would not get the 50% federal reimbursement that it gets for funds spent on HCBS Waiver services.

The Governor's proposed budget for the next biennium does not include funding for this proposal, and the department cannot fund any pilot or new initiative within existing resources. As a result, we cannot support this bill at this time.

The DDS Division of ASD Services currently serves 33 children previously served by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Voluntary Services Program (VSP). Of these children, more than half of them fit the description of the target population identified in section 2 of the bill. Some of the children were previously served out-of-state and many have been treated in hospital settings. These children present with significant behavioral needs and require high intensity services. All of these children receive in-home behavioral supports which utilize an approach consistent with Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA). It should be noted that if a child requires a higher level of support outside of their home, other funding sources (i.e. school districts) should be identified and explored.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony on [H.B. No. 6490](#). Please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066, if you have any questions.