

Questions for the Department of Developmental Services Commissioner Nominee

By: Nicole Dube, Principal Analyst
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Commissioner of Developmental Services ([CGS § 17A-210](#))

The commissioner administers the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), including the operation of the Southbury training school, intellectual disability regions, and state-operated residential facilities. The commissioner plans, develops, and implements programs and services for people with intellectual disability and autism spectrum disorder; investigates allegations of abuse and neglect of such people; and develops eligibility criteria for their placement in public or private residential care.

Questions

1. Describe the department's mission as you see it. As commissioner, how will you ensure that the department meets this mission? What particular experience, expertise, and other assets do you bring to the department?
2. Do you believe that the department has the adequate resources, in terms of both personnel and budget, to meet its obligations under the law?
3. How many people are currently on the department's waiting list for residential service placement? What approaches will you use to reduce the waiting list? How will these approaches balance consumers' clinical needs with state budgetary constraints? This session, the Public Health Committee favorably reported legislation ([sSB 246](#)) that would require DDS to maintain one statewide comprehensive waiting list for residential service placement. Do you have any comments on this legislation?

4. Please describe the current activities of the department's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services and your vision for its future.
5. Does DDS or its private providers have any problems finding sites for group homes? Does DDS work with communities in choosing sites?
6. What changes would you like to make in DDS operations over the next four years?
7. There has been considerable debate in recent years regarding the closing of Southbury Training School, which currently houses approximately 229 residents. Legislation passed in 2015 required the Office of Policy and Management, in consultation with DDS, to report to the legislature on a plan to close Southbury Training School and regional centers in order to achieve targeted savings ([PA 15-1, December Special Session](#)). What is the status of this plan?
8. Other than lack of funding, what do you consider to be the biggest challenge to increasing access to services for people with intellectual disability?
9. In 2016, the legislature passed a law eliminating the Office of Protection and Advocacy (OPA) and establishing a nonprofit entity to serve as the state's independent protection and advocacy program ([PA 16-66](#)). In March, the governor signed an executive order (No. 57) that administratively transferred from OPA to DDS, two review boards that review and investigate the deaths of individuals with intellectual disabilities (i.e., the Independent Mortality Review Board and the Fatality Review Board). Additionally, OPA's Abuse Investigation Division also relocated to DDS. Can you please describe the department's role in the investigation of the abuse and death of people with intellectual disability?
10. In April, the governor announced that the department's plan to privatize 40 DDS-operated group homes has been placed on hold. What is the status of the plan? Do you have any comments on this issue?

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