

Questions for Department of Developmental Services Commissioner Nominee

By: James Orlando, Chief Attorney
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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, developmental services regions, and state-operated residential facilities. The commissioner plans, develops, and implements programs and services for people with intellectual disability; develops eligibility criteria for their placement in public or private residential care; and investigates allegations of abuse and neglect of such people and individuals receiving services from the Department of Social Services' Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services.

Questions

1. What are the biggest challenges you have faced in your first two years as DDS commissioner? What do you see as your major accomplishments?
2. Describe the department's mission as you see it. As commissioner, how will you ensure that the department meets this mission?
3. Do you believe that the department has the adequate resources, in terms of both personnel and budget, to meet its obligations under the law?

4. What are your legislative priorities for the 2019 session?
5. How many people are currently on the department's waiting list for residential service placement? What steps is DDS taking to reduce the waiting list? How does DDS balance meeting consumers' clinical needs with state budgetary constraints?
6. DDS's current five-year plan runs from 2017 to 2022. Can you please describe the major initiatives of the plan? Is the department on track to meet the plan's goals?
7. Please describe the Intellectual Disability Partnership and DDS's role in the Intellectual Disability Partnership Advisory Committee. More generally, how does DDS engage with advocates and other stakeholder groups in shaping the department's priorities and initiatives?
8. Does DDS or its private providers have any problems finding sites for group homes? Does DDS work with communities in choosing sites?
9. In September, the media [reported](#) on an alleged racial incident at one of DDS's offices. Has the investigation of this incident been completed and if so, what were the results?
10. There has been considerable debate in recent years regarding the closing of Southbury Training School, which currently houses under 200 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?
11. Legislative changes in 2017 transferred to DDS investigatory responsibilities for alleged abuse or neglect of individuals (a) with intellectual disability or (b) who receive funding or services under DSS's Division of Autism Spectrum Disorder Services. Can you please describe the department's process for conducting these investigations? How many complaints of alleged abuse did the department receive last year?

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