**Governor’s Commission on Intellectual Disability**

**March 17, 2021 (Remote)**

The Governor’s Commission on Intellectual Disability met remotely on March 17, 2021. Those attending were Members: James Brett (Chair), Amy Carnevale, Marjorie Cohen, Anne Fracht, Joanne Jaxtimer, George Ford, Doreen Cummings, James Cassetta, JoAnn Simons, DDS: Jane Ryder, Elizabeth Morse, Christopher Thompson, Christopher Klaskin, Tim Cahill, Liz Sandblom, Nick Dantzer, Margaret van Gelder and Victor Hernandez.

Chairman Brett opened the meeting at 4:02pm.

1. Updates COVID - New guidance for visitations are expected to be released within the week in preparation for Phase 4. It is expected that very soon, vaccines will be available for everyone in MA. Release of new guidance on surveillance testing expected soon. Vaccine efforts have moved into our group homes. Day program staff are included in the efforts as well. The Administration developed a “Vaccine Advisory Group” to assist with prioritizing groups for the vaccine. Congregate care sites are now planning for 2nd doses. DDS will continue to seek ways to help our individuals get vaccinated along with the assistance of our Family Support system and provider agencies. Especially with the pre-registering process. MA Vaccine Equity Project- 20 cities throughout the state will have a special program that may include individuals with ID/DD. DDS continues to advocate for those with IDD living in our residential sites and in the community.
2. Commission members were given the final copy of the *Permission for Release of Photographic/Video Images Form* prepared by DDS to permit individuals (or their guardians) to consent to the use of photographic or video images taken of them. This was developed to comply with DDS’ regulations at 115 CMR 5.04(2) ensuring the right to be protected from private and commercial exploitation. This is intended to remove any barriers to individuals’ participation in current social media platforms that were not present when the earlier release was established.
3. Last week the Governor outlined his Future of Work Initiative. This is the Administration’s efforts to have a long term "hybrid" work model for most of the state workforce. During this year, efforts will be to redesign office space and equip staff with the technology they need to be able to continue to work remotely post pandemic. The Administration also has a Modern Desktop Initiative underway to equip staff with similar devices to develop a universal network availability. The Governor is working with unions and agency heads to update telework policies, implement a new workplace reservation system to coordinate in-office work, and redesign less-crowded workspaces. The pandemic has moved forward many technology improvements and changed many long-standing work practices. The goal is to permanently adopt a hybrid work model and to update and reconfigure many office spaces to adjust to a smaller footprint.
4. It was announced that Mitch Gaynor, DDS Digital Media Manager is new to DDS. Mitch comes to DDS to develop and enhance our internal and external communications. He has creative experiences with group communications and advocacy efforts.
5. Infiniteach- An initiative supported by the DDS Supportive Technology Line Item. This program is supported by the Massachusetts eHealth Institute that links high-impact startups with an expertise in "eHealth" technologies and strategies to public and private industries to solve accessibility, equity and other emergent healthcare issues. DDS selected to work with one of those startups, Infiniteach. They have demonstrated expertise in developing digital platforms for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to increase access to education, community living, healthcare and employment. DDS young adults with ASD were identified as a priority population needing innovative tools and resources for the Department to better serve, particularly those transitioning into the DDS system from school. The pilot project being developed will create a digital platform to empower ASD individuals to design their adult services via curated lessons focusing on topics areas that will include self-advocacy, employment skills, daily living skills, healthy relationships and general health and safety. Development/construction of the platform is anticipated to be completed this year.
6. The Governor’s budget for DDS is over 5% more than last year. Funds Turning 222 and other key programs for DDS. Next step is the House budget expected in April.

Chairman Brett adjourned the meeting at 5:35pm.