**Governor’s Commission on Intellectual Disability**

**September 15, 2021 (Remote)**

The Governor’s Commission on Intellectual Disability met remotely on Sept. 15, 2021. Those attending were Members: James Brett (Chair), Amy Carnevale, Marjorie Cohen, James Cassetta, JoAnn Simons and Becca Gould, DDS: Jane Ryder, Elizabeth Morse, Christopher Thompson, Christopher Klaskin, Tim Cahill, Liz Sandblom, Nick Dantzer, Kim Egan and Victor Hernandez.

Chairman Brett opened the meeting at 4:05pm.

1. He welcome Becca Gould GCID new member and introductions were made by all present.
2. Minutes of March 2021, December 2020, and June 2020 were approved.
3. **Commissioner Ryder** discussed the staffing crisis that DDS and the Commonwealth is experiencing the number of vacant positions across the board in DDS services is an incredible amount and has an effect on our services. Vacant positions in our group homes presents a challenge to daily program services. The vacancies in our day programs are keeping people from coming back to their day services. Vacant positions in our transportation system, where individuals are not able to go to the day program because there's no way to transport them to their day programs. It als has an impact on placing our turning 22 class into DDS services. We have heard from families, and we have shared that we know that the staff and our programs were committed to working with our provider agencies, during this crisis. We have tried to influx some money into the system is federal money coming through the American Recovery Program. We have adjusted our rates toy target salaries of our direct support workers. We are working with social media App providers to put together a public relations campaign to sell Human Services as a career. DDS is also enhancing our Urban Youth Program as another way of introducing Human Services as a career. DDS will do whatever we can to partner with our agencies to get through this situation. Provider members supported the Commissioner’s presentation and lauded DDS for working in partnership with the providers. They expressed the fact that they cannot accept referrals or bring people back unless they can assure their safety. Everyone agreed that working together and encouraging flexibility is the best course of action for now. The governor has made it clear that state employees in the executive branch are vaccinated. There can be exceptions and we are working on to that. The Federal government has come out with their own mandated vaccine program where businesses with over 100 employees need to have their staff vaccinated as well. The booster shot is now available for those who have received the vaccine. We have a number of individuals that we support across programs who have been vaccinated and we're working with our state operated programs and providers to provide them information concerning the booster shot. We are also doing weekly testing of all staff in our primary care programs.
4. **Kimberly Egan**, **DDS Assistant Commissioner for Management and Finance** presented on the FY 22, General Appropriations Act which was passed in July. DDS has $158 million more this year from last year. Some of the highlights it includes transferability language which is extremely important this year, so we can transfer money between our accounts. We didn't have that flexibility last year. The turning 22 class is again fully funded. We also will be getting some 257 reserve funds for rates that increased on July 1st.
5. **Tim Cahill, Assistant Commissioner for Operations**, gave an update on ARPA. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was passed and signed by President Biden back in March. It allows for 10% additional federal revenue to be provided to all state-based Medicaid programs for community-based services. We're allowed to spend the additional revenue, through the spring of 2024. The projection is that for Massachusetts and EHS $500 million in additional revenue is projected. There are three key pillars that are the focus of this investment: the workforce issue, access and promotion of home and community-based services and the infrastructure of our technology supports. Workgroups have been meeting regularly and will reach a consensus on what the priority projects will entail to be submitted to CMS by mid-October
6. **Jennifer Petersen, Director of Supportive Technology** gave a presentation about supportive technology and remote supports. The Innovation and Technology Task Force was created in 2019 in partnership between DDS, and our provider group ADDP. It was a 24-member task force and represented diverse roles or perspectives from the IDD community and service delivery system. They developed a final report, and it can be found on the Mass Arc website. A challenge to building supportive technology competency and capacity is ensuring safeguards and human rights while delivering virtual services. We worked with the Medicaid team and were able to submit an amendment to CMS on our waivers to include some new services. We were able to issue an RFR, in which 11 providers were awarded up to $50,000 to promote assistive technology. It was one time only and providers have provided opportunities for their direct support staff to participate in certificate programs. They expanded opportunities for students in OT, PT, speech to an assistive technology to work with our population to get to know the needs and understand our population. DDS is continuing to educate staff, families, and individuals about how to identify the need at the ISP level about assistive technology. With our Office of Quality Management, we want to make sure that our provider agencies understand that they are responsible to provide privacy and make sure all these safeguards are in place. Our licensing team will soon be looking at the remote supports, and monitoring service provided for security of privacy. We are also developing a technology use policy.

Chairman Brett adjourned the meeting at 5:25pm.