Governor’s Commission on Intellectual Disability

 June 20th Meeting Minutes

The Governor’s Commission on Intellectual Disability met on June 20, 2017 from 4 P.M. to 6 P.M.at the Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

Present were: James Brett, Chairman, Anne Fracht, Amy Carnevale, George Ford, Paul Zerola (phone), Marjorie Cohen, James Cassetta and Joanne Jaxtimer. DDS representatives present: Elin Howe, Jane Ryder, Victor Hernandez and Margaret Van Gelder

Mr. Ford began the meeting requesting a future discussion regarding the role of the GCID with regards in particular as a “policy making” group. Mr. Brett suggested a future review of the Executive Order establishing the GCID.

Ms. Van Gelder provided the group with an update of the DDS initiative on employment opportunities. She reviewed the “Employment Blueprint” and provided an update on the vocational accomplishments the blueprint provided. Ms. Van Gelder also gave a short presentation on the new Federal grant “MA Partnership to Transition to Employment” that was awarded to DDS in collaboration with MRC, DESE and the DD Council. Mr. Cassetta raised the issue of the need to continue to explore creative solutions to protect the individual from losing their benefits and Ms. Carnevale suggested the expansion of the use of “apprenticeships” as a way of introducing young adults to employment.

Commissioner Elin Howe provided an overview of the Department by updating the GCID on:

* **Turning 22**- DDS has revised its practices so that class members including those with Intellectual Disabilities and individuals with Autism or Prader-Willi Syndrome and no Intellectual Disabilities are enrolled in a Home and Community Based Waiver concurrently with receiving a waiver service. We are currently working to enroll individuals who are entering adult services in the first quarter of FY'18 with the focus currently on those anticipated to receive services in the months of July and August
* **Social Inclusion**- The Department continues to focus on Social Inclusion of individuals into their community. This fiscal year, DDS provided mini-grants to 18 organizations that responded to an RFR seeking projects that promote Social Inclusion. DDS is continuing work on a document that sets out its expectations for inclusion of individuals in their communities. The DRAFT document has been widely circulated among all stakeholder groups for their input.
* **Services for people with autism and no Intellectual Disability**- As of June 1, DDS has made 666 individuals over age 22 eligible for services. Of the 666, 361 or 54% are currently enrolled in 894 services. Nineteen percent (19%) of these services are either fully or partially self-directed by the individual/family. Five hundred and fifty five (555) individuals between the ages of 18-21 have been made eligible for services. Two hundred and forty two (242) or 43% are enrolled in 568 services.
* **Participant Directed Services**- Continue to increase the number of individuals/families who self-direct services. As of June 1, 933 individuals participate in self-directing, 560 in fully self-directing services and 373 in Agency with Choice (co-employer model, partial self-direction). The Department has exceeded it FY'17 goal to have 900 individuals participating in self-direction. Together with ARC MA, continue to expand outreach to individuals and families on service method choices including full self-direction, partial self-direction through Agency with Choice and traditional services offered by the private and public sector. At this time, 4 ARC Chapters are scheduled to conduct forums, along with DDS to provide information directed at interesting more individuals and families in self-direction but also assuring that families are receiving the information necessary for them to make an informed choice of service method.
* **Shared Living**- Since January 2015, when DDS introduced its Residential Reconfiguration Plan, the number of individuals participating in Shared Living has increased from 955 to 1,221 as of June 1. The goal for FY'17 is 1,286. At the same time, DDS has limited its growth of community residential services. Census in Community Residential Services was 7,460 in June 2015 and increased by 101 to 7,563 by June, 2016 and by only 30 to 7,595 as of April 30, 2017. DDS provided incentive grants during FY'17 to assist providers who had not previously offered shared living services to hire a staff member to serve as an agency point person on the initiative. For well- established providers who were receiving an excessive number of referrals for the service, the grants helped them increase their FTEs to handle the referrals.
* **Home & Community Based Waiver Services and Federal Revenue**- DDS' 3 HCBS Waivers and the ABI and MFP Waivers all must be renewed with CMS by July, 2018. This workload impacts both DDS and MassHealth. I have reviewed with staff a tentative work schedule taking into consideration: completion of the waiver application; time necessary for MassHealth to do its financial analysis and; the receipt and analysis of public input prior to the waivers being submitted. Waivers will need to be submitted to CMS no later than sometime in March if not before. DDS has dramatically increased its use of the Home and Community Based Waivers. This has enabled us to increase our federal revenue substantially in the current fiscal year. FY'17 will be the first year in which we will utilize all waiver slots in each of our 3 adult waivers.
* **Acquired Brain Injury and Money Follows the Person Waivers**- DDS supports a total of 427 individuals, including 267 enrolled in the ABI Residential Waiver and 160 individuals enrolled in the Money Follows the Person Residential Waiver, in community residences, shared living and assisted living. DDS anticipates serving approximately 149 individuals on the ABI and Money Follow the Person waivers in FY'18.
* **Employment/Community Based Day Services**- Continue to increase the number of individuals who are employed. As of June 1, 2,814 individuals participate in individual supported employment, 3,393 in Group Supported Employment and 400 in Competitive Integrated Employment Services. • Continue to reduce the number of individuals (current number is approximately 1,400) who are paid sub-minimum wage; goal is to eliminate this practice by July, 2018 consistent with the Employment Blueprint.

Chairman Brett referenced the need to keep in mind the recent Providers Council report on the anticipated staff shortages for those programs servicing people with a disability. The next meeting of the GCID is scheduled for Sept 27, 2017 and this meeting was adjourned at 5:25pm.