



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services



M. Jodi Rell
Governor

Peter H. O'Meara
Commissioner

Kathryn du Pree
Deputy Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
February 20, 2009**

Good morning Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Peter O'Meara, Commissioner of Developmental Services, and I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to comment on House Bill 6365, Governor M. Jodi Rell's recommended budget for fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

Results Based Accountability Initiative:

As one of the original agencies to pilot the Results Based Accountability (RBA) initiative with our Birth to Three program, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is pleased to expand our participation by commenting on a broader range of programs this year. We would be happy to answer any RBA questions that you may have for us during this first portion of our testimony related to the following five programs as identified by your committee:

1. Respite Program
2. Voluntary Services Program
3. Individual Supports (community living)
4. Community Residential Services (Community Living Arrangements (CLAs)-group homes)
5. Case Management

Overall DDS Budget:

As Commissioner of an agency that provides services to over 20,000 Connecticut citizens, I appreciate the complicated task the legislature faces in this challenging budget year and recognize that there are difficult decisions to be made.

With that said, the department is grateful that the proposed budget before us for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 reflects Governor Rell's desire to minimize the impact of budget reductions on the most vulnerable citizens of our state. New funding for age-outs, high school graduates and the Birth to Three system, will allow us to serve new consumers and their families. The budget avoids rate reductions to our private providers, who are vital partners in our service delivery system and who will still face many challenges in the current economy.

Over the past several years, DDS has been fortunate to receive an infusion of resources associated with the Waiting List Initiative. This has allowed us to make significant enhancements to our service system as well as keep up with the increasing demand for services, especially with regard to individuals on our Waiting List and their families. In light of the challenges we currently face as a state, we thank Governor Rell and the legislature for your continued support and confidence in the department.

As mentioned above, a very reassuring aspect of the Governor's recommended budget is a continued commitment to our families' needs.

Age Outs:

Residential Services – The Governor's recommended budget provides annualization of funding for FY09 placements as well as new funding for 72 individuals in FY10 and 67 individuals in FY11.

Day Services – The Governor's recommended budget provides annualization of funding for FY09 placements as well as new funding for 73 individuals in FY10 and 70 individuals in FY11.

High School Graduates:

Day Services – The Governor's recommended budget provides annualization of funding for FY09 placements and supports service funding for 278 graduates in FY10 and 254 individuals in FY11.

Cooperative Placements:

Funding within the Governor's recommended budget provides for six (6) new placements in FY10.

Voluntary Services Program (VSP):

The Governor's recommended budget provides \$6,460,760 to annualize the FY09 VSP placements. The proposed budget also transfers \$33,692,416 from the Community Residential account to create a separate Voluntary Services account to provide better accounting and visibility to the program.

Autism:

The Governor's budget continues to support up to 75 clients in the Autism pilot.

Birth to Three:

The Governor's budget provides \$6.3 million of additional funding for growth related to an FY09 increase in eligible children and demand for intensive services for children with autism and complex medical needs.

Waiting List:

DDS has made significant strides in addressing the needs of individuals on the waiting list over the past several years with financial support of Governor M. Jodi Rell and the legislature through the state budget process. During the current economic crisis facing the state, DDS is committed to maintaining current services. Although the Waiting List Settlement Agreement expires on June 30, 2009, in the next biennium based on the current economy, we are very pleased that the Governor has continued to propose new resources for high school graduates and individuals who are aging out, individuals who ultimately would have added to the Waiting List. In addition, the Waiting List Settlement Agreement and initiative has substantially expanded the funded capacity of the department over the past five years. The resource commitments set forth in the Settlement

Agreement have been fully realized and DDS will continue to efficiently manage the enhanced capacity established during the term of the Settlement Agreement.

Other:

The Governor's budget includes the transfer of \$1million from the Department of Social Services (DSS) to the department's Clinical Services account to ensure the continuation of dental services for DDS clients after the elimination of non-emergency dental services for adults under Medicaid. It also includes in the Community Residential Services account, \$500,000 transferred from DSS to fund Home Health Services.

In summary:

In the department's goal of providing supports and services to individuals and their families who depend on us for residential, day or respite services, DDS has relied on the professionalism, commitment and dedication of our public and private sector employees who enhance the quality of life for those individuals we are responsible to serve. Our partners, the non-profit private agencies, have worked in unison with the public sector to provide support to over 20,000 consumers. I want to thank these individuals for their commitment to providing quality services over the years.

The Governor's recommended Biennial Budget calls for a total of \$2.06 billion dollars for the department. This amount reflects an increase of approximately 4% in FY10 over FY09, and an increase of about 1.95% in FY11 over FY10. I understand that the budget process this session will be challenging and I assure you that DDS is committed to making the most out of our appropriation to address many of the longstanding needs of our consumers and recognize the critical support needs of families and caregivers. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of the Governor's recommended budget and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.