

## **DDS Legislative Update – January 5, 2009**

The Connecticut General Assembly begins its 2009 legislative session on Wednesday, January 7, 2009. The session ends at midnight on Wednesday, June 3, 2009.

The 2009 legislative session is termed a "long session" in which individual legislators can introduce proposed bills on any subject matter they choose. These proposed bills are sent to the joint legislative committee that has cognizance of the bill's subject matter. The legislative committee can then decide to give the proposed bill a public hearing, choose to combine the proposed bill with other bills on similar subject matter or the committee can choose to raise and draft its own bill on the subject matter.

Also, the biennial budget for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 will be crafted during the 2009 "long session." This budget will cover spending and revenue for the state from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011. The Governor and state legislators work together to develop the state's budget that must be passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor. The Governor, the Appropriations Committee and the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee create proposed budgets from which the final state budget is negotiated.

The Office of Legislative Affairs at the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is aiming to issue weekly updates on its webpage during the 2009 session with information about DDS's legislative proposals; bills that may have an impact on the department and bills that may impact our consumers. These updates will keep you informed on what legislative committee these bills are in, whether there is a public hearing scheduled on a bill and what actions have been taken on a bill (i.e. did it pass, how was the bill changed, etc.)

If you want to contact your State Senator or State Representative on a particular bill but don't know who your legislators are, you can find out by calling your town's Registrar of Voters.

If you already know who your legislators are, but need their contact information, you can find it on the Connecticut General Assembly website: [www.cga.ct.gov](http://www.cga.ct.gov). When you are on the General Assembly's webpage look at the left side of the page, and select "House", then select "Members" and look for your state representative (they are listed in alphabetical order.) To contact state senators, select "Senate", then select "Members" and look for your state senator.

The legislative committee of cognizance for the Department of Developmental Services is the Public Health Committee. Most of the department's non-budgetary legislative initiatives will originate in the Public Health Committee. Senator Jonathan Harris and Representative Elizabeth Ritter have been appointed as the committee's Co-Chairpersons for the upcoming session. The

Ranking Members for the Public Health Committee are Senator Dan Debicella and Representative Janice Giegler.

The legislative committee that has oversight of the DDS budget is the Appropriations Committee. Senator Toni Harp and Representative John Geragosian have been appointed as the committee's Co-Chairpersons for the upcoming session. The Ranking Members are Senator Dan Debicella and Representative Craig Miner.

Governor Rell is expected to present her proposed state budget to the General Assembly on Wednesday, February 4, 2009. DDS will analyze the proposed budget to determine its impact on the department's programs and services. DDS will present testimony on the Governor's proposed budget at an Appropriations Committee meeting in February at the Legislative Office Building (LOB.) Testimony by the department presented before any legislative committees will be posted on the Legislative Affairs webpage.