

Executive Director's Report

April 16-17, 2008 Council Meeting

Budget

The budget report through February 2008 is included in the packet.

Membership Update

- Godfrey White has left the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs but his replacement has not yet been named by the Governor.
- William Payne has announced his retirement from the Office of Mental Health (OMH) in a few months. Jennifer Kopke is the new OMH Assistant Secretary. I have contacted her to ask if she will be representing OMH on the Council or designating someone else in her place.

Staff Update

- Tommy Sellars will be helping us out around the office six hours a week. His first day was March 19th.

Disabilities Information Access Line (DIAL) Report

Calls from persons with disabilities	339
Calls from parents/family members	179
Calls from professionals	<u>100</u>
Total disability related calls	618
DD Council calls (not counted as I&R)	76
Other calls	<u>134</u>
Total DIAL calls this quarter	828
Hurricane related calls this quarter	9
Hurricane related calls to date	1369
Follow-up Calls Attempted	17
Follow-up Calls Completed	10
Satisfaction Reported	100%

Advocacy Activities

- A letter was sent to our Congressional delegation requesting funding for the Lifespan Respite Care Act which was passed by Congress in 2006 but never funded.
- Three different letters were sent to Congress regarding a CMS regulation that would reduce reimbursement for case management to states.
- A letter was sent to the Chairperson of the Metropolitan Human Services District Board expressing concerns that OMH Act 378 funds have not been adequately spent over the past several years, especially for adults. (attached)
- Emails were sent to two members of the Appropriations Sub-committee on Health and Human Resources regarding the cost of the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) compared to the cost of institutional services and implementing cost efficiencies across all programs in the developmental disabilities service system. (attached)

LaCAN

- LaCAN members discussed our legislative agenda with legislators at Regional Round Tables and on individual visits during January, February and March
- A LaCAN Leader planning meeting was held on March 10th in Lafayette to prepare for the upcoming legislative session
- A LaCAN Leader evaluation instrument has been developed and provided to the leaders. Formal evaluations will begin after the legislative session.
- LaCAN Leaders, Families Helping Families Centers and all other rally partners are busy planning for the Rally on April 23rd
- We still have a vacant LaCAN Leader position in Region X (Jefferson Parish).

Collaborative Efforts

DD Network Focus Group

- The Council, the Advocacy Center and the Human Development Center hosted a Focus Group on March 17th in Baton Rouge to gather public input for planning purposes.
- Nineteen leaders from across the state representing self-advocates, family members, providers and representatives from various advocacy organizations provided recommendations for improving the agencies' current plans.

OCDD Resource Allocation Stakeholders Group

- Four workgroups have been formed to develop recommendations for the stakeholders group on various policy issues regarding allocating resources to people entering and currently in the developmental disabilities service system. This process will use the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) and La. Plus instruments to assess people's needs and allocate resources based on the level of their needs. The Council is represented on all four of the work groups. We have participated in the following three groups to date:

Prioritization of the Waiver Registry (Waiting List)

- Recommended that the waiting list remain first-come, first-served, but that a certain percentage of all new waiver slots be designated as emergency slots. This percentage would be based on data from the number of people eligible for an emergency slot but denied due to unavailability and the number of people designated as Priority one or two by the regional offices and denied services due to lack of funding.

New vs. Existing Services

- Recommended that the Resource Allocation Model be applied to people receiving services and new people entering the system. If the assessment indicates that an individual is receiving more waiver services than they need, their excess services will be reduced by 50% the first year. The remaining extra services will be eliminated from their plan of care the second year.
- People in residential settings receiving more services than they need will have to comply with this policy as well. They would have a transition period in which to move.
- Since the support coordinators cannot conduct the assessments on everyone at once, people in the NOW and living in private ICFs/DD would be targeted in the first year at their annual planning date. People in the Supports Waiver and in developmental centers would be targeted in the second year of implementation.

- The SIS/La.Plus be administered by an independent entity to residents of ICFs/DD

Fairness Across Settings

- Recommended that the SIS/La.Plus and a Resource Allocation Model be applied fairly to people receiving services through the NOW and Supports Waivers and those living in ICFs/DD.

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)

- At the February meeting, OCDD provided an update on a concern discussed at the November meeting about families who missed an opportunity to protect their child's date on the New Opportunities Waiver waiting list because they did not check that as their choice on EarlySteps forms. The forms have been revised to make that section more prominent and an easy to read FAQ (frequently asked questions) sheet has been developed to explain to parents why this is so important.
- The OCDD Regional offices have gone through the files of children who have exited EarlySteps in the past year whose parents did not check the box requesting that their date be protected to see if there is anything else to indicate the parent's desire to protect the date.
- The SICC approved a recommendation to increase provider rates to the previous level before the cuts were made. The recommendation will be referred to OCDD with the expectation that OCDD will look at their budget and proceed from there.

Autism State Team (CDC Know the Signs: Act Early)

- On March 13-14 as a member of a state-wide team council staff participated in the CDC Act Early Summit in New Mexico. This Summit brought together state teams from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and New Mexico to share practices and develop plans related to early intervention services for children with autism and their families.
- All Summit materials and state plans may be viewed at http://www.aucd.org/template/event.cfm?event_id=1160.

Positive Behavioral Support Project (PBS) at Louisiana State University

- On February 29th, council staff participated in planning sessions to address the entire continuum of behavioral support systems in schools.
- Council staff have facilitated a sub-committee reviewing policies related to discipline with the goal of making recommendations for legislators to revise statutes. This sub-committee met January 25th and February 29th to review statutes and make recommendations.
- Many of the areas this committee has identified to recommend changes to the regulatory statutes were submitted to the Legislature by the Department of Education in March. There are additional components of the statutes that this sub-committee will continue to pursue and recommend changes.

Division of Educational Improvement and Assistance (Dept. of Ed – DEIA)

- State Autism Advisory Committee
 - The State Autism Committee will meet on April 3 to review progress on a statewide needs assessment, revisions to Bulletin 1508, and current activities.

The plan developed at the CDC Summit will be further developed with the State Autism Team.

- On February 1st council staff participated in the DEIA special education directors' quarterly update. Some information of significance included:
 - Reading first funding will be cut from \$26 million to \$9 million. Reading first has been found to reduce the rate of referral and/or identification of students to special education by approximately 40%.
 - Local Education Agencies were informed that letters indicating whether they meet requirements, need assistance, need intervention or need substantial intervention were mailed out at the end of January.
 - Indicators from Louisiana's February 1, 2008 Annual Performance Report that did not reach the targets set by stakeholders were shared. The targets that were not met included:
 - Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma
 - Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school
 - Proficiency rate of children with IEPs against grade level standards and alternate achievement standards
 - Percent of LEAs identified as having a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspension and expulsions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year
 - Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities
 - Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays
 - Percent of youth age 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals
 - General supervision system (including monitoring, complaints, hearings, etc.) identifies and corrects noncompliance as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification
 - State reported data are timely and accurate

Louisiana Indian Education Association (LIEA)

- The 9th Annual LIEA Indian Youth Leadership Camp will be held on April 11 – 13, 2008 in Schriever, LA. The LIEA is collaborating with the Council and the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs to outreach to American Indian students with disabilities. One individual with developmental disabilities has been identified and LIEA is working to determine necessary accommodations.
- Planning is in the final stages and the camp agenda includes activities provided by Rudy Macklin, former LSU and professional basketball player. Mr. Macklin is currently with the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition

- At the March 6th meeting, the group discussed several strategies for increasing the number of volunteers with the appropriate expertise to assist individuals with some

support needs but who do not need to be in a “medical” shelter so those individuals can stay in a general population shelter with the support they need.

- The Office of Public Health (OPH) already operates the LAVA data system which can be modified to organize all shelter volunteers (Red Cross, DHH employees, etc.) and search by various skills and experience criteria. OPH is working on legislation to cover volunteers (only those who sign up with LAVA) through workers compensation if they become injured providing volunteer services.
- The Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) will be working with the Dept. of Health and Hospitals’ administrators to get their personnel re-categorized to provide support in general population shelters rather than “special need” or “medical” shelters.
- The group created the “Louisiana Guide to Supports & Services for Individuals with Disabilities, Elders and Their Families Affected by Disaster.” OCDD funded the printing of 500 copies of this two- sided laminated sheet listing 38 statewide agencies/resources with their contact information. This has been disseminated statewide so every Emergency Shelter Manager will have one during a disaster.

La. Election Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (LEAD) Advisory Board

- In collaboration with the Advocacy Center, the Secretary of State’s Office received a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities to ensure that all polling places in the state are accessible to individuals with disabilities. The goals of the grant are to ensure that:
 - Persons with disabilities have the same opportunities to participate in the election process as the general population
 - Election officials, poll workers, and election volunteers are properly trained and are aware of practices that best promote access to and participation in elections for Federal office by persons with a full range of disabilities
 - Persons with disabilities receive information about the accessibility of polling places and new voting systems with accessibility features
- Funding is available through the grant to parishes to make polling places accessible – only 15 parishes have applied
- The Secretary of State’s (SOS) Office surveyed all of the parishes regarding the accessibility of their polling places and most say they are in compliance – this is not accurate, but takes an onsite visit to verify. The SOS cannot force a parish to comply, but is encouraging them to do so (someone would have to sue under the ADA).
- The Advocacy Center is assisting in monitoring polling places, providing training, and manning an election day hotline to provide information and take complaints
- The Advocacy Center presented proposed legislative changes that would make it easier for people with disabilities to vote

Community Housing Advocacy Networks (CHANs) & Housing Advisory Group

- The Baton Rouge CHAN is working on strategies to address housing needs in the Greater Baton Rouge area. CHAN members have identified key players they want involved in CHAN efforts and will invite presenters to speak to the group.
- The Housing Advisory Group is following key housing legislation and addressing issues of Permanent Supportive Housing, housing waiver slots and more.

Meetings/Events Attended Since January 3, 2008

Meeting with CARSA Representatives – January 8
Rally Planning Committee – January 9
Families Helping Families of LA Board – January 10
Region II Legislative Round Table - January 11
OCDD Resource Allocation Stakeholders Group – January 22
Partners in Policymaking Opening Session – January 25
LaCAN Leaders' Conference Call – February 8
La. Election Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (LEAD) Advisory Board – February 13
Families Helping Families of LA Executive Committee - February 13
Rally Planning Committee – February 14
Region II LaCAN Meeting – February 19
Meeting with Kathy Kliebert – February 19
Individual Service Plan meeting for self advocate – February 21
TriAngle Editorial Board – February 25
Collaborative meeting to discuss DSP wage issue – February 27
Radio Show in LaRose to discuss the NOW and the waiting list – March 7
LaCAN Leaders' Planning Meeting – March 10
Prioritization of the Waiting List Work Group (Resource Allocation) – March 11
New vs. Existing Services Work Group (Resource Allocation) – March 12
Meeting with Col. McDonough re: Act 378 funds in MHSD – March 13
DD Network Focus Group – March 17
Appropriations Sub-committee on Health & HR (DDC budget) – March 19
Meeting with Kathy Kliebert – March 19
Fairness Across Settings Work Group (Resource Allocation) – March 24
Appropriations Sub-committee on Health & HR (OCDD budget) – March 26