

Executive Director's Report
July 17-18, 2013 Council Meeting

Budget

- The budget report with expenditures through May 2013 is included in the packet.

Membership Update

- Since my last written report, Vickie Davis, Kristopher Hebert, Terry McFillen, Allison Rouse, Monica Simmons, Patsy White and Lilian Wise and were appointed to the Council and Hugh Eley was reappointed.
- Two remaining positions remain to be filled and the Council has recommended three candidates for these positions.

New Council Website

- We continue to tweak and add information to the Council's new website. We are currently building an Advocacy 101 section to provide users with the basic information, tools and resources to begin advocating for systems change.

DD Council Federal Appropriations

- The amount of Federal Fiscal Year 2014 funding is still uncertain for the DD Councils and many other social programs funded by the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill. According to the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, the House is calling for higher defense spending while the Senate anticipates increasing both defense and domestic spending.

Advocacy Activities

- We coordinated the Council's advocacy efforts during the very busy 2013 Legislative Session. Letters were written for Sam's signature and delivered or sent to legislators in support or opposition of issues affecting people with developmental disabilities addressed in seventeen pieces of legislation. We also provided information to legislators throughout the session on how legislation would impact people with disabilities.
- Planned, coordinated and sponsored the annual Disability Rights Rally at the State Capitol where over 400 people in attendance raised awareness and provided information to legislators and the media on the need for restoration and expansion of home and community based services for people with developmental disabilities.
- Provided information and support to twenty-two LaCAN members in testifying before the Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees in support of funding for additional NOW slots and restoration of funding to the Individual and Family Support Program, Families Helping Families, Children's Special Health Services, and all cuts to DHH's budget. Provided information to legislators and legislative staff on all of these programs. Organized three "yellow shirt days" in these Committees with a total of 131 LaCAN members attending these committee meetings. The legislature added funding for 200 NOW slots, and restored funds to the Individual and Family Support Program in all ten districts and authorities,

Families Helping Families and Children's Special Health Services, but all of these funds were subsequently vetoed by the Governor.

- Provided information to families regarding the legislative and budget process at the stakeholders' meeting on the proposed closure of Children's Special Health Services' clinics.
- Provided support to LaTEACH members in testifying on the impact of unnecessary and inappropriate assessments on their children and information to House and Senate Education Committees regarding the impact of high rates of students with disabilities on school accountability structures and implications for inclusion. HB343 and SB127 passed that exclude students with disabilities who are not pursuing a high school diploma from taking the ACT or other standardized assessments and not penalizing the students or the schools for them not participating in these assessments.
- Provided support to family members and other stakeholders with understanding the proposed education funding formula proposal and expressing their views of these changes. The proposed Minimum Foundation Program (MFP) failed to pass.
- Provided information on the inequities in MFP funding across various school structures to the House Education Committee. Efforts to require equity in funding levels across school structures failed to pass.
- Provided information and recommendations to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) in relation to:
 - consideration of revising school performance scores (a task force is being formed to study this issue);
 - the need for alternate assessments based on grade-level academic standards. BESE was not directly considering alternate assessments. However, this item is related to recommendations from the Special Education Advisory Panel on state-level activities and the teacher accountability processes;
 - the need for continued funding for Assistive Technology in the state level activities budget; and,
 - representation of parents of children with disabilities on the MFP task force. BESE did not include any representation of parents of children with disabilities on the MFP task force.

Collaborative Efforts

Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) Mortality Review Committee

- Of the 15 cases reviewed this quarter, the Committee noted no issues of abuse/neglect but requested one corrective action plan related to improving ongoing, individualized and comprehensive documentation.

OCDD Employment First Workgroup

- Since fear of losing benefits is a barrier to employment a one page fact sheet will be developed regarding employment and benefits planning with information to

refer individuals/families to the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) program.

- The Rate Committee is considering options that would provide incentives for providers to serve more people in competitive employment. The Data Committee has requested OCDD collect certain data from providers.

Lifetime Respite Coalition

- The coalition has plans to seek enabling legislation and funding for respite services for non-waiver recipients in the 2014 Legislative Session.
- Also plan to seek legislative proclamation of May as Caregiver Relief Month.
- The website www.LouisianaAnswers.com includes a list of all state respite providers.

La. Rehabilitation Council (LRC)

- The April meeting did not establish a quorum. A plan was drafted to address gaps in membership.

Louisiana Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE)

- The Board approved Vision and Mission statements and an Action Plan, which centers on improving the State's capacity to provide employment services to people with the most significant disabilities and activities to improve the chapter's sustainability.

Capital Area Human Services District Behavioral Health Services Collaborative

Concerns were shared regarding:

- The strain on services to cover the increased numbers of individuals with significant behavioral and health needs since the reduction in state operated large ICFs/DD
- Whether the state can guarantee adequate health care providers at the Emergency Shelters for people with special needs.

BrightStart Inclusion Workgroup

- This group was convened to address issues related to young children with disabilities.
- See status report Activity 11.1.1 for details on the work plan that was developed

Other Collaborative Efforts

- Money Follows the Person Grant Coordinating Committee

Meetings Attended Since April 1, 2013

House Appropriations Committee re: HB1 – April 9

Executive Committee – April 9

House Health and Welfare Committee re: HB375 – April 10

Council Meeting – April 17 – 18

OCDD Employment First Work Group – April 23

House Health and Welfare Committee re: Medicaid Expansion bills – April 24

Interview w/ Nat'l Consultant re: supporting self advocate council members – April 24

TV Morning Show Interview re: Disability Rights Rally – April 30
Disability Rights Rally – May 1
Emergency Preparedness Training – May 2
Senate Finance Committee re: DHH's budget – May 6
Children's Special Health Services (CSHS) Stakeholder Meeting – May 7
LaTEACH Planning Conference Call – May 8
Meeting with Laura Brackin – May 13
Meeting with Sen. Claitor and LaCAN members re: CSHS – May 14
Employment First Rate Committee – May 14
Meeting w/ Sam and Rocky re: my annual evaluation – May 17
Senate Finance Committee re: DHH's budget – May 17
Senate Finance Committee re: Medicaid Expansion bill – May 20
LaCAN Leader/Families Helping Families Directors Conference Call – June 7
Meeting at OCDD re: transition planning for an individual – June 11
Nominating Committee – June 12
Partners Graduation presentation – June 15
Supported Independent Living Ombudsman meeting w/ OCDD – June 24
LaCAN Leader/Families Helping Families Directors Conference Call – June 25