

State of the State Community Supports

- Almost 10,000 people wait 8 years for services through the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) .
- A total of 12,567 Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) waiver slots are allocated; 4,637 additional waiver slots were allocated since 2007, an increase of 58 percent. These include:
 - 8,832 NOW slots; 3,790 added since 2007
 - 1,475 Children's Choice slots; 675 added over the last 5 years
 - 2,050 Supports Waiver slots; added all in 2007
 - 210 Residential Options slots; added in 2010
 - It is expected that OCDD will fill all of the remaining 2,025 slots awarded in 2008 and the 150 slots funded in 2010 by June 30, 2011.
 - Another \$15.3 million has been deposited into the NOW Trust Fund, although the Administration has indicated it plans to use these funds to support existing slots instead of "for the purpose of adding additional waiver slots" as stipulated in Act 481 of 2007.
- Since February 2009 providers have faced four rate cuts across several service areas that have made providing some services cost prohibitive. Many providers supplement waiver services with other programs and funding sources. The FY12 Executive Budget does not contain any additional provider rate cuts.
- Currently, the average annual cost of a new NOW slot is \$45,534 and for current NOW participants it is \$56,191. As the average cost of the NOW has decreased the average annual cost of serving an individual in a developmental center has increased to \$201,852.
- Data from June 30, 2009 reveal that per capita LA ranks fourth in the nation in the number of people in large facilities (16+) and second in the number in all ICFs/DD. Due to closures and downsizing of developmental centers LA has reduced the total census to 955 residents, a decrease of 352 or 26 percent in the last five years. The number of centers has gone from nine in 2005 to three at the end of this fiscal year. At February 7, 2011 the census in each existing developmental center was: Acadiana 66, North Lake 276, Northwest 133, Pinecrest 460. There are plans to privatize Acadiana by the end of this fiscal year.
- The total budget for state funded Act 378 programs is approximately \$12 million.
 - OCDD serves 1,563 children through the Cash Subsidy program
 - 7,165 children on the waiting list for Cash Subsidy.
 - OCDD serves approximately 1,460 adults and children through the Individual and Family Support program
 - The Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) serves 331 children through Cash Subsidy
 - 437 children on the waiting list for Cash Subsidy
 - OBH provides direct support through the Consumer Care Resources program to children and limited supported living services to adults.
 - The Office of Aging and Adult Services provides Supported Living services to 23 individuals with adult on-set disabilities.

State of the State Early Intervention (ages 0-3)

In 2010:

- Louisiana served a total of 9,071 children in 2009-2010 with 4,701 active as of December 1, 2010. There are 2.27 percent of infants and toddlers between birth to three served compared to the national average of 2.67 percent. Louisiana serves 1.56 percent of infants, birth to one year compared to 1.03 percent served nationally.
- 90.7 percent of infants and toddlers with Individual Family Service Plans received early intervention in a timely manner, an increase from 85 percent in 2007.
- 99 percent of infants and toddlers primarily received early intervention in home or community-based settings.
- Approximately half of infants and toddlers participating in EarlySteps did not improve functioning or regressed between entry and exit in areas of social-emotional skills; acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including language and literacy); and, appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.
- Parental reports indicate:
 - 81.5 percent feel the program helps them know their rights
 - 91.45 report the early intervention services helped them effectively communicate their child's needs
 - 88 percent indicate the program has helped their child develop and learn
- 95.2 percent of children eligible for special education had a timely transition conference, an increase from 85 percent in 2007.

Preschool (ages 3-5)

- Rank among the top in the nation in funding for state-financed prekindergarten programs, per pupil expenditures and enrollment in preschool programs with more than 30 percent of four-year-olds participating.
- Participating children are 33-43 percent less likely to be identified as needing special education.
- Increased the percentage of students served in regular early childhood programs from 79 percent in 2006 to 94.5 percent in 2011.
- Vast majority (79%) of students with disabilities in regular childhood settings still receive the majority of their special education and related services outside of the regular setting.
- Parental reports of being told there are no more slots available in early childhood programs even though they signed up prior to other children but had to go through the process of evaluating and planning because of their child's disability.

State of the State Education

Louisiana has the largest private school enrollment (14 percent of students) in the nation and an ever growing number of Charter Schools (28 systems and counting) that do not equally serve students with disabilities – particularly developmental disabilities

- Private schools and Charter Schools on average serve significantly lower percentages of students with disabilities (2.6 percent and 7.9 percent, respectively) than do traditional public school systems (13.6 percent).
- Private and charter schools have lower percentages of students with significant disabilities on average than are found in the traditional school systems.

Elementary/Middle (since 2000)

- Increased the percent of students with disabilities included in regular education from 43.5 to 62.9 percent.
- Increased proficiency on LEAP tests in all content areas by double digits
- Trend of assessing less and less students (i.e., LEAP) as they get older.
 - In 2001 there were 6,176 fourth grade students with disabilities taking the LEAP compared to 3,394 tenth graders (a difference of 55 percent). By 2010, 6,531 fourth graders and 1,289 tenth graders took the LEAP (a difference of more than 80 percent).
 - Speculation for this drop off over grades is that students are retained multiple times then enrolled into the pre-GED option program where they are considered as a 'completer' if they discontinue the program after one day. With the changes in the exit options there is a need to ensure that the practice of not counting students who discontinue a program.

Discipline and Behavioral Practices:

- Any form of corporal punishment and unregulated use of restraints and seclusion is allowed.
- Improvements in the data regarding long term discipline removals (greater than 10 days).

High School, transition and exit outcomes

- Increased rates of students with disabilities exiting with a diploma from 16.7 percent in 2001 to 21.9 percent in 2010.
- Decreased percentages of students with disabilities dropping out of school.
 - Still have over 26 percent of students dropping out in 2010 and students in pre-GED are not considered drop outs.
- Transition services are too little too late.

State of the State Health

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) identified severe provider shortages in La. of:
 - More than 120 primary health care providers contributing to more than 1.5 million Louisianans not receiving adequate primary health care services,
 - Nearly 100 dental providers contributing to nearly 1.5 million Louisianans not receiving adequate dental care, and
 - Nearly 100 mental health care providers contributing to 2.5 million Louisianans not receiving adequate mental health care needs.

- Mortality data for Louisiana DD Waiver recipients SFY 2009 shows that 17 individuals (14.9%) died from influenza or pneumonia. This is consistent with SFY 2007 mortality data which shows influenza or pneumonia were responsible for about 14% of deaths among Louisiana DD Waiver recipients. This is contrasted with mortality data from 2009 that demonstrates 2% of all deaths in Louisiana (among persons with and without disability) resulted from influenza or pneumonia.

- OCDD's Mortality Review Committee (MRC) forwarded the following recommendations to OCDD leadership:
 - Improve the level of coordination to maintain continuity of care for individuals with complex medical conditions.
 - Improve the capacity of provider agency staff to recognize, respond to and document health issues of individuals with medical conditions.
 - Identify circumstances that a mental health professional prescribe/manage/monitor all psychotropic regimens and that a neurologist prescribe/manage/monitor all neurologic regimens, and for OCDD to develop minimum guidelines for medical and laboratory monitoring for all individuals receiving such medication.
 - Improve communication and coordination of care provided through home health agencies.
 - Form a work group to develop guidelines and training for support coordination agencies to review the need for home health services
 - Mandate a training and certification process for home health agencies for health care issues for people with developmental disabilities.

State of the State Housing

Accessible, affordable housing was in short supply before Hurricane Katrina. Housing units lost have not been replaced appropriately but were mostly replaced with either accessible or affordable housing but not necessarily both.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for people with disabilities is a disaster recovery program that was created in South Louisiana because of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. PSH combines unit based rental subsidies with individualized community supports. Congress appropriated funds for 3,000 PSH units that are expected to be filled by June 30, 2011. To be eligible for PSH, a household must be very low income (at or below 50% of Area Median Income) and have a cognitive, physical, or emotional impairment that requires supports to live independently.

Louisiana Section 8 housing is government funded with only income based eligibility and no disability requirement. To qualify for the program, families must make less than 50 percent of the Area Median Income, be a U.S. citizen or legal immigrant, and have a good rental history. To be placed on the waiting list, applications must be given to the local public housing authority. The wait for a Section 8 voucher is often several years. Once a voucher is received, the property must meet HUD's strict housing guidelines, have rent comparable to similar other housing units and the landlord must be willing to participate in the program.

LAHousingSearch.org is also a product of disaster recovery. The housing locator service allows people to locate available housing that best fits their individual and family needs.

www.lahousingconnection.com – The Council funded and The Arc of Louisiana maintains one of the few websites that focuses on housing for individuals with disabilities.

Recreation Research

Recreational opportunities in Louisiana for people with developmental disabilities are lacking and vary regionally. Not all parishes or cities have programs through a recreational department. However, some areas have buy-in from the community, the city, the parish, and recreation departments. A few areas even have non-profit organizations that offer recreational, leisure, and social activities in collaboration with city and/or parish recreation departments. Recreation programs and activities across the state vary in regard to inclusiveness. While there are some fully inclusive recreation programs across the state, some programs exclude people with disabilities usually due to lack of accessibility or staff training. Some are only for people with disabilities and are not promoted to people without disabilities. There are some areas of the state that have accessible playgrounds but not have an inclusive recreation program.

Southeast Louisiana: Inclusive recreation programs/ leagues and accessible playgrounds exist in the Greater Baton Rouge and Northshore areas. The LA DD Council funded in this area three inclusive recreation programs that include a Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) model. Two of the three programs continue without Council funding and are now sustained by the local recreation departments. The Northshore also has an overnight summer camp for children and adults with cerebral palsy or other developmental disabilities. Each camper is paired with one or two high school volunteers who assist with the camper's day-to-day activities.

Although there are some accessible playgrounds, the Greater New Orleans area lacks recreational activities. Programs for people with disabilities are generally segregated. However, the New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD) has plans to redesign. Local disability advocates are working to make sure the redesign is inclusive and are promoting the PBS model created with Council funding. Several other areas in Southeast LA have summer programs and activities. Recreation programs and activities in St. Charles and Lafourche parishes were originally funded by the Council and are now sustained by the local recreation departments. Some recreation activities in Southeast Louisiana are promoted as being inclusive for both children and adults but many are less accessible.

Southwest Louisiana: Recreation for people with DD in this area is sponsored by non-profit organizations solely or in collaboration with local recreation departments. The Lafayette area has an accessible playground with sports, recreation, and social activities sponsored through non-profits rather than city or parish recreation programs. The Lake Charles area and surrounding parishes offer inclusive sports, recreational, leisure, and social activities through local recreation departments and non-profits. Several programs are promoted for people with DD but some are more inclusive than others. The City of Lake Charles, local non-profits and the regional DD agency collaborate on a monthly Community Dance that is truly inclusive.

Central Louisiana: Recreational opportunities are very limited in this area. There are some programs through YMCA but none are accessible to people with DD. Only one location in Alexandria has an indoor swimming pool that people with disabilities can use along with people without disabilities. Churches in this region are starting to promote services and activities for all people with and without disabilities. This is due in part to the rise in awareness of the Wounded Warrior Project, a national non-profit organization that advocates for injured service members and their families. There is also a summer camp for children with Down Syndrome.

North Louisiana: There are no regular inclusive recreation programs in this area but only seasonal activities. Most of the activities for people with disabilities are segregated. Non-profit organizations are active in supporting self-advocates in community events. Some churches also offer "Parents Night Out" events where parents can drop off their child for a date night and these are usually inclusive.

State of the State Transportation

- Through Council funding, the Arc of La is working to promote transportation funding available from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) through local Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plans. The outcomes of this initiative are to promote through a transportation liaison: 1) DD service providers and stakeholders' active participation in their regional transportation planning body; 2) DD service providers' knowledge about the various transportation funding options in their region; and 3) Transportation officials' awareness of and connection to DD service providers and other stakeholders in every region.
- Each metropolitan area in Louisiana has ADA accessible buses and or paratransit service available. Problems persist with regard to accessible sidewalks/bus stops and route availability.
- Transportation challenges are heightened outside metropolitan areas, especially in rural areas.
- Those who do not find public transportation useful, timely or appealing, often struggle to access their community. Many providers rely on underpaid direct support professionals (DSPs) to provide transportation for the persons they support and do not reimburse DSPs for gas expenses.