

Executive Director's Report July 16, 2009 Council Meeting

Budget

- The budget report through May 2009 is included in the packet.

Membership Update

- All 28 positions on the Council are currently filled. We have been recruiting for vacancies that will occur in January in Regions IV and VIII and for the non-profit agency position on the Council.

Staff Update

- Armondo Frank began work on June 1st in our newly created Program Manager position.

Advocacy Activities

- Letters were written and delivered throughout the legislative session to legislators on numerous bills the Council was supporting and opposing and on issues related to funding that was being cut or added to the budget.
- Testimony was prepared and/or edited for advocates and Council members to deliver before several legislative committees. Shawn and I also testified – Shawn on two education bills and I when our budget was being heard by the Appropriations Committee.
- Two Senate concurrent resolutions were written that are now awaiting final passage by the legislature – one that calls for a plan to consolidate and reorganize the state's developmental centers and the other that directs the savings from cost effective practices in the NOW program be used for people on the waiver waiting list.
- At the press conference called by the Advocacy Center to release their report *Beyond Repair: An Investigation into Serious Abuse and Death at Northeast Supports and Services Center*, I spoke in support of the closure of this center and the transition of its residents into individualized community based settings.

LaCAN

- The Disability Rights Rally on May 7th attracted approximately 1000 people to the State Capitol to bring attention to the waiver waiting list. Other issues on the agenda were the consolidation and closure of developmental centers and the restoration of cuts to community services and support coordination. A record 15 Council members attended!
- LaCAN members were very active this legislative session responding to action alerts, visiting legislators and attending committee meetings in their rally yellow T-shirts.
- A debriefing of the legislative session with the LaCAN Leaders and FHF Directors is planned for July 2nd. This is always very helpful to learn where we can improve for next year.

Collaborative Efforts

OCDD Resource Allocation Stakeholders Group

- This group has not met since the last Council meeting and some of its recommendations have not been implemented. OCDD is still waiting for approval of the Resource Allocation Model from CMS, but has proceeded with utilization of the SIS/LaPLUS assessment and individualized planning process.
- The administration has not granted approval for implementation of resource allocation in the public ICFs/DD, however, SCR 42 includes that provision. This resolution is pending final passage in the House.
- Another recommendation of the Stakeholders Group was to keep the waiver waiting list first-come, first-served, but to dedicate a certain percentage of new slots as emergency/crisis slots. The definition of emergency/crisis slots was also to be broadened from its current strict criteria. There has been no movement on this recommendation.

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)

- The Federal application for Part C funds was submitted on May 27th. OCDD is waiting on approval which is expected in June.
- An SICC committee will work on draft legislation for the 2010 legislative session to revise Louisiana's early intervention law.

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

- At this writing HB 827 is pending final passage by the Senate and is expected to pass. This bill was developed by LEAD to make changes in existing election law to make it easier for people with disabilities needing assistance in registering and voting.

Autism ACT 648 Task Force

- Issues with insurance providers allowing reimbursement for behavioral line therapists who are not employees of a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA) persist.
- Some family members have volunteered to establish their own business as a mechanism to receive reimbursement for contracted BCBA and line therapist services.

OCDD Mortality Review Committee

- OCDD is seeking authority through SB 191, which at the time of this writing is pending House approval, to acquire documentation by law of mortality information (death certificate, physician's notes, etc.) Currently, much of this information does not have to be provided to OCDD, hindering any death review process.
- In addition to reviewing the individual deaths, the committee also discussed clinical issues impacting quality of life, such as a serious lack of training for physicians dealing with medical issues commonly seen in people with developmental disabilities.

Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition

- The coalition is implementing a system to recruit and coordinate volunteers who have experience in supporting people with disabilities to work in inclusive emergency shelters.
- HB 554 would provide civil immunity for certain volunteers working in coordination with the state or its political subdivisions. At the time of this writing, HB 554 is pending final passage in the Senate and is expected to pass.

La. Rehabilitation Council (LRC)

- Derek White and Pranab Choudhury have both applied for LRC membership.
- Of the 4000 persons determined eligible for services through the Louisiana Making a Difference Campaign, 1913 people had plans written (at various stages).
- LRS-LA Workforce Commission joint project - Visited Utah to see "Utah Works" program through their Voc Rehab Commission. A pilot project was set up in Lafayette. The goal is to develop ways for LRS to get people job ready for placement by LA Workforce Commission.
- LRC is stressing the need for a program that offers a high school vocational option designed for kids who plan to work after high school in a field not requiring a college education. SB259 is pending Final passage in the House.

Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) Advisory Committee

- Advisory members recommended that the Dept. of Education accept information collected by the PBS project as partial fulfillment of schools' requirements to report implementation of the Model Master Discipline Plan.

Division of Educational Improvement and Assistance (DEIA in the La. Dept. of Education (LDE)

- At the DEIA Special Education LEA Directors' Quarterly Update the State Performance Plan Indicators were reviewed and a blueprint for LEAs to address each indicator was shared.
- A summary of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds available was provided along with strategies and suggestions for utilizing funds to enhance programs.

Housing Groups

- The La. Housing Finance Agency (LHFA) held a Public Hearing to receive input on the Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan for FY2010 – FY2014. The four agencies involved in the consolidated plan process are: LHFA (HOME program under HUD); Office of Community Development (CBDG program); Department of Social Services (Emergency Shelter Grants Program); and Department of Health and Hospitals (HOPWA – Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS). The plan may be submitted to HUD between November 15th and February 15th with the plan year beginning April 1st. The plan will be posted on LHFA's website and the OCD website once it becomes available.

- The Louisiana Housing Alliance (LHA) hosted a Legislative Day at the Capitol on May 5th which included a legislative luncheon. Senators Sharon Weston Broome, Cheryl Gray, and Lydia Jackson spoke about housing legislation (i.e., SB167, SB249, SB228, SB227, and HB781). Consumers were given the opportunity to ask questions and bring up challenges faced while trying to obtain accessible, affordable housing. Some were directed to additional resources to help resolve issues and others were asked to give their contact information in order to receive more detailed information.

Louisiana Indian Education Association (LIEA)

- LIEA officers met with Mark Ford, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs' (GOIA) Executive Director, about the American Indian Scholarship and to plan the selection of 2009 scholarship recipients.
- LIEA members will make recommendations for scholarship recipients during the annual meeting on June 30th. Recommendations for revision of the GOIA scholarship application to include preference for students with disabilities will also be discussed.

Meetings Attended Since March 30, 2009

Program Staff Retreat – March 30
 Rally Planning Committee – April 3
 LaTEACH Planning Meeting with H/E/E Committee – April 8
 House Appropriations Committee, DDC budget – April 14
 Rally Planning Committee – April 21
 House Appropriations Committee – Public Testimony on HB 1 – April 23
 House Ways and Means Committee re: HB75 – April 28
 House Appropriations Committee re: HB1 – April 28
 Direct Support Professional Coalition – April 30
 Meeting with La. Serve Commission staff re: Service Learning initiative – May 1
 Disability Rights Rally – May 7
 Meeting with Region II LaCAN Leader – May 12
 Meeting with OCDD national consultants re: developmental centers – May 12
 State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) committee and council – May 13
 Senate Finance Committee re: SB267 – May 18
 Nominating Committee Conference Call – May 20
 Senate Finance Committee re: DHH budget – May 21
 Executive Committee Conference Call – May 22
 Meeting with Susan Benoit re: LaTEACH contract – May 22
 Senate Finance Committee – Public Testimony HB 1 – May 29
 Partners' presentation on Systems Change and Community Organizing – May 29
 Meeting with Rep. Fannin re: NOW slots – June 3
 House Health and Welfare Committee re: SCR42 – June 9
 Advocacy Center Press Conference on Abuse at Ruston – June 9
 Meeting with Sen. Donahue re: authoring SCR116 – June 9
 SICC Executive Committee – June 10
 House Appropriations Committee re: SCR116 – June 15
 Executive Committee Conference Call – June 18