

## **Social Worker Training on Supporting Individuals with Developmental Disabilities**

The Council has recognized the need for the training of various medical and social services professionals in serving and supporting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Previous Council initiatives have targeted Nurse Practitioners, Physician Assistants, Dentists, and Dental Hygienists. The Council may consider expanding their efforts to reach Social Workers and other mental health professionals through the following contractual activities with the Louisiana State University (LSU) School of Social Work:

1. Development of an elective course for use in the LSU School of Social Work's current MSW program (offered in-person and online) and future BSW program
  - Course may or may not include a service learning component (e.g., students volunteering at the annual Disability Rights Day)
  - Course would be offered every few years or more often depending on student interest
  - An online elective would likely result in higher enrollment as these students have fewer elective options
  - **Estimated cost: \$1,500 - \$2,500**
  
2. Development of a Professional Training Certificate Program
  - Program would offer 20 hours of in-person continuing education (e.g., 10 clinical, 3 ethics, 7 general) and could be launched online in future years
  - Session topics would be determined in collaboration with the Council staff and could include: DD service delivery system and available resources, facilitating inclusion, school social work / IEPs / transition planning, grief counseling for parents & siblings, ethical issues, cultural competency, treatment of dual diagnosis (mental health & DD), abuse issues related to individuals with DD, etc.
  - Certificates would be awarded to participants who complete all 20 hours and pass a final examination
  - Program would be primarily marketed to social workers, but open to other mental health or medical professionals
  - Marketing would include the Council logo to increase Council awareness
  - Council funding would be used toward program development, locating content specialists/presenters, marketing, and hosting the event for the initial year.
  - Program participants would be charged a fee that would be reinvested into the program for upcoming years (pending university approval)
  - **Estimated cost: \$20,000**
  - NOTE: If activity is funded for additional years, this would allow for the development of multiple or tiered certifications with different focuses
    - Would recommend that the first year focus on children with developmental disabilities as topics related to children seem to draw more interest
    - Funding needed would be significantly lower and used for curriculum development