

Executive Director's Report
July 17-18, 2019 Council Meeting

Budget

- The budget report with expenditures through May 2019 is included in the packet.

Action Plan and Annual Report

- The [Annual Report](#) for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)18 was completed and is available on our website.
- Public input was solicited on the FFY20 Action Plan the Council approved at the May 23rd meeting. Comments received will be considered by the two standing committees on July 17th.

Membership Update

- Patti Barovechio was reappointed by the Governor on June 14th.
- Alan Coulter resigned from the Council because he will no longer be employed full time at HDC. Michael Norman will be HDC's new representative on the Council and is awaiting appointment by the Governor.
- Enrice Jones resigned from the Council and we are currently recruiting applicants to fill her position.

Orientation

- Conducted orientation for new Council member Amy Donarski on June 5th

Staff Changes

- As previously announced via email, William Ebere joined our staff as a part-time administrative assistant on April 23rd. I hope you all had the opportunity to meet him at the May meeting.

Ad Hoc Committees

- The Nominating Committee met on June 14th to recommend a slate of officers for the Council's consideration at the July meeting.

Legislative Update

- On April 10th the Revenue Estimating Conference recognized additional revenue which resulted in a \$14,974,332 deposit into the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) Fund. The NOW Fund was created as a result of the Council's advocacy efforts in 2007 and its purpose is to provide a funding source for waiver services.
- The Council's advocacy efforts prior to and during the 2019 legislative session resulted in outcomes that will benefit thousands of people with developmental disabilities and their families. Read the recap of the session: [2019 Legislative Session: DD Advocates Achieve Many, But Not All Goals](#)
- All bills the Council tracked throughout the session: [Legislative Tracking List](#)

LaCAN

- The annual Legislative Debriefing was held for LaCAN Leaders, Families Helping Families Directors, and the Partners' Coordinator where we discussed the outcomes of the legislative session and solicited feedback on LaCAN's activities before and during the session, emphasizing what was most effective and what we can do to improve in the future.
- Due to feedback we received from many of our LaCAN leaders and members that Voter Voice was not user-friendly, a decision was made to not renew our contract with Voter Voice. A switch back to Constant Contact occurred on July 1st.

Advocacy Activities and Provision of Information

Community Supports

- Provided information to the Senate Finance Committee on the inequitable state funding per capita of the Human Services Districts and Authorities.
- Sent [letter to LDH Deputy Secretary Mark Thomas](#) and a subsequent [letter to Division of Administration Commissioner Jay Dardenne](#) expressing concern that the Council was not consulted to develop a plan for appropriations out of the NOW Fund in accordance with Act 665 of 2018. [Commissioner Dardenne replied to our letter](#) on July 1st stating that the Division and LDH will make a more concerted effort to collaborate and coordinate with the Council on utilization of the NOW Fund.
- Advocated for OCDD to allow individuals/family members living in the home of a waiver recipient to serve as the waiver recipient's DSP. OCDD is researching how other states implement similar policies.
- Advocated with Rep. Dodie Horton and La. Department of Health (LDH) officials to implement TEFRA as a Medicaid State Plan Option instead of a Medicaid waiver and to ensure all children with developmental disabilities would be included. HB199 passed directed LDH to implement a program to serve the "TEFRA population."
- Provided information to a Regional Human Services Authority on issues related to starting up an in-house behavioral service for children with autism and offered references to individuals with a background and expertise in this area.

Education

- Provided information to the House Education Committee, House and Governmental Affairs Committee, and Senate Education Committee relative to requiring schools to have cameras in special education classrooms upon parental request.

General

- Provided information through LaDDC News on the following:
 - [2019 Legislative Session: DD Advocates Achieve Many, But Not All Goals](#)
 - [Recruiting Strong Advocates for DD Council](#)
 - [Council Issues Solicitation of Proposals for Post-secondary Inclusive Education Alliance](#)
 - [Public Comment Sought on Council's FFY 2020 Action Plan](#)
 - [How-To Guide on Medicaid Renewals](#)
 - [HUD Releases Guidance Excluding ABLE Accounts in Determining Eligibility](#)
 - [Changes to the Flexible Family Fund Program](#)
- Facebook and Twitter
 - Provided information through Facebook and Twitter on various issues of interest to people with developmental disabilities and their families.
 - FFY19 Facebook Statistics
 - On October 1, 2018 the Council's Facebook page had 2,622 likes. On June 27, 2019 the page had 3,425 likes, an increase of 31%.
 - The Council ran a ten-day Facebook ad in May/June of 2019 at a cost of \$98.35. The ad performed as follows:
 - 4,140 people reached
 - 1,085 video views
 - 171 page likes
 - 19 shares
 - Link to view Facebook Ad: <https://laddc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Facebook-Ad.mp4>

Collaborative Efforts

OCDD System Transformation Core Work Group

- Provided input to OCDD on what's working/not working in meeting the behavioral support needs of people with developmental disabilities.
- Learned that rule changes and waiver amendments will be required to include children ages 0-3 in the Children's Choice Waiver. The only exception is children who meet the criteria for the Money Follows the Person grant (90-day continuous hospitalization). OCDD is continuing to work on criteria for this age group to qualify for the waiver and could potentially also be used to qualify for TEFRA.

My Choice Louisiana Advisory Council

- Provided feedback on the draft Transition Assessment tool and the accompanying instructions that will be used with individuals in the target population in the Department of Justice settlement agreement with the La. Department of Health.

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)

- The SICC received a [letter from State Education Superintendent John White](#) in response to the SICC's request that the Early Childhood Care and Education Commission consider the inclusion of infants and toddlers with disabilities and the early childhood gaps that affect this population in the \$8 million grant the state received to expand early childhood education in communities across the state.

Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA)

Passed the following motions:

- To send a letter to all school system superintendents, charter school administrators, and special education directors recommending the following in regard to the establishment of special education advisory councils as required by Act 274 :
 - The application process for the councils be posted publically;
 - The membership be diverse in terms of disability, race, gender, and geography and that this diversity be reflected in all three categories of membership;
 - That high school students, student leaders, non-profit representatives such as Families Helping Families, adults with disabilities, post-secondary representatives, La. Rehabilitation Services, and school board members all be considered as possible candidates in the membership category that includes "other special education stakeholders;"
 - The councils be accessible to all disabilities, including the deaf community;
 - The members have term limits;
 - The meetings are public meetings with documents available to the public.
- To notify the Governor's Office of the impasse between the La. Commission for the Deaf, the La. Department of Health, and the legislature and request his office assist in seeking a resolution to the allocation of funding for closed captioning of legislative meetings. (A tax was collected to provide captioning for this purpose but it has not occurred.)

Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline (ACSBD)

- Provided the ACSBD's Legislative Committee with a cross reference of SB137 and existing laws related to student behavior and discipline. As a result of this analysis, this Committee determined SB 137 would create issues with implementation due to inconsistencies across some sections.

Employment First Core Work Group

- Stakeholders advocated for the following issues to be addressed:
 - schools not having a transition process for students with mental illnesses/emotional disturbances
 - parents and students not being connected with multiple agencies for services until their exiting year
 - rural areas not receiving/having access to resources at the same level as metropolitan areas.
- Cross-agency collaboration capacity building meetings were held in Regions 3 and 4 to develop concepts on how to increase community integration and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Employment First Vision Quest Grant Work Group

- After multiple stakeholder teleconferences and meetings, La. Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and the Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) are now drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with multiple agencies (LRS/LDH/OBH) to address Mental Health and Employment

Developmental Disabilities Family Forum & Town Hall Meeting

- In July 2016 the Council created the Community and Family Support System Task Force to make recommendations to address inequitable funding and other issues preventing the system from equitably meeting the needs of Louisiana's citizens with disabilities and their families. One of these recommendations was for each Regional Advisory Committee to host Parent/Self-Advocate Focus Group meetings to provide feedback on their experiences with the Human Services Districts/Authorities.
- On June 18th Capital Area Human Services District and its Regional Advisory Council hosted the first regional family forum and town hall meeting. Information was shared about DD services and how to access those including behavioral health and addiction recovery services. Ashley McReynolds provided a brief history of Act 378 and the services available as a result and the public provided comments about the services available to them.
- Similar forums will be scheduled throughout the state.

Meetings Attended (by Executive Director) Since April 2, 2019

Meeting with Julie Foster Hagan – April 3

Executive Committee – April 4

Membership Committee – April 9

Executive Committee – April 10

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) – April 11

Meeting with Members of Partners' Class – April 12

Public Testimony on HB 1 in Appropriations Committee – April 17

Council Committee Meetings – April 17

House Health and Welfare Committee re: HB199 – April 24

Call w/ National Assoc. of Councils on DD (NACDD) re: annual conference – April 29

Disability Services Day – May 1

Meeting with Julie Foster Hagan – May 6

House Education Committee re: HB283 – May 14

OCDD System Transformation Core Stakeholders Group – May 15

Meeting with Sheryl Matney – May 22

Council Meeting – May 23

Public Testimony on HB1 in Senate Finance – May 24

Senate Health and Welfare re: HB199 – May 29

Meeting with Liz Gary – May 29

Meeting with April Dunn re: NACDD Conference – May 30
Orientation for Amy Donarski – June 5
Legislative Debriefing for Advocacy Leaders – June 12
Nominating Committee – June 14
Governor’s Advisory Council on Disability Affairs – June 18
Partners in Policymaking Debriefing – June 27