LaDDC News

2022 Legislative Session: Celebrate the Successes

June 7, 2022

Disability advocates across the state celebrated as the 2022 Regular Legislative Session closed yesterday evening. This legislative session was a huge success filled with critical wins for the intellectual and developmental disability (I/DD) community. Below is a recap of the issues followed closely by the Council and LaCAN (Louisiana Council's Advocacy Network).

Results for Home- and Community-Based Supports

Act 199 (HB1) is the state's Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) budget bill that will take effect on July 1st. This budget was signed by the Governor with a few line item vetoes, but those vetoes will not impact the I/DD community. This year's budget included funding for:

- The nine regional Families Helping Families (FHF) Centers contracting with the Council. This additional $500,000 was appropriated to the Centers last year, but was not included in the proposed FY23 budget originally
- Comprehensive dental coverage for adults on I/DD waivers and in Intermediate Care Facilities for Developmental Disabilities (ICF/DD)
- Annualizing the increased I/DD waiver rates from last year
- Adding an additional 250 Community Choices Waiver slots for the aging and adult population
- Increasing rates within the Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS)
- Increasing Support Coordination rates and EarlySteps rates
- Increasing transportation rates in the Office for Citizen's with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) adult I/DD waivers

HB55 has been sent to the Governor and requires the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) to ensure comprehensive Medicaid coverage for dental care be provided to each person age 21 or older who resides in ICF/DDs.

HB645 would have established the Community Options Waiver Fund to provide additional revenues for Medicaid services provided under the Community Choices Waiver, the Adult Day Health Care Waiver or any other Medicaid home- and community-based services for people with adult-onset disabilities. Unfortunately, this piece of legislation stalled in the Senate and was not passed.

Act 242 (SB260) amends the Community and Family Support System Fund, now called the Disability Services Fund, to allow the use of funds for all state-funded services and waiver services for the I/DD population.

Results for Education

SB45 will be sent to the Governor and makes important updates to legislation passed last year (Act 456 of 2021) requiring the governing authority of each public school, including charter schools, to adopt policies relative to the installation and operation of cameras that record both video and audio in self-contained special education classrooms, upon the written request of a

student's parent or legal guardian. Unfortunately, many districts have yet to adopt these policies. SB45 amends current law to state:

- Policies must be adopted by December 31, 2022, or within 60 days of receipt of funding, whichever comes first
- Copies of the adopted policy are to be submitted to the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) by January 15, 2023 and within 10 days of any policy revisions
- Policy must include provisions on how a parent or legal guardian may request cameras

Approximately $8 million has been included in the FY23 budget to fund cameras.

SB192 will be sent to the Governor and creates the Postsecondary Inclusive Education Fund to fund programs for students with I/DD at Louisiana postsecondary institutions. SB192 also creates the Postsecondary Inclusive Education Advisory Council to advise the Board of Regents with respect to funding and expanding these programs, provide technical assistance to institutions starting or expanding programs and develop operational guidelines and processes for the programs. Approximately $1 million has been included in the FY23 budget for this issue.

Seven pieces of legislation were filed addressing Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) and school choice. The Council, LaCAN and many other advocates, groups and organizations shared their concerns for ESAs with the legislature and the potential impacts ESAs may have on the public school system and its ability to serve children with disabilities. A more detailed explanation of the Council and LaCAN's concerns can be found here. Two of the bills (HB194 and SB203) made it through session and will be sent to the Governor.

Others Issues of Interest

Numerous other issues focusing on home- and community-based supports, education and employment were addressed throughout session. A complete list of all the issues monitored by the Council during the 2022 Legislative Session can be found on the Council's website. Click on the "2022 Legislative Bill Tracking" banner.

We also encourage you to reach out to your State Representative and State Senator to thank them for their support of the disability community this session.

- Click here for State Representatives' full contact information.
- Click here for State Senators' full contact information.
- Don't know your State Representative and/or State Senator? Click here and enter your home address. The first person listed will be your State Representative. The second will be your State Senator.

Thank You for Your Advocacy Work

The Council and LaCAN want to thank all of you for your support and engagement in advocacy this session. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was the first session in two years in which the Council and LaCAN had a physical presence at the Capitol. Without your hard work, dedication and determination these successes would not have been possible. Advocacy truly does work!

Contact Us

LaDDC News is the electronic newsletter for the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information above, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

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