

2008 Legislative Agenda

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

Supporting a conceptually coherent policy for integrated life in the community for people with developmental disabilities and the people who support them

Through research, working with families and shared knowledge of best practice nationwide, the Council has identified the critical components of a comprehensive system that supports integrated life in the community. The Council supports legislative activities that “*foster the statewide development and implementation of comprehensive long-term care and support system of services that maximize the independent living philosophy and quality of life while recognizing the need for interdependence and support. The system will provide individuals across the lifespan and families (when applicable) with meaningful, informed choices of support services, providers, and residential settings, when such care or support is necessary, meets an adequate level of quality, accountability, is cost-effective, and is consistent with the individual’s values and preferences.*”

(Olmstead Report, 2004)

The Council’s Agenda is founded on the following directions:

1. **Enable Active Participation**-People with developmental disabilities and their families should be part of the developmental discussion, not be presented with the policy after the fact.
2. **Embed a Person-Centered Foundation**-A person-centered approach must recognize the importance and value of natural supports that are community based.
3. **Enable Control over Resources**-The state must develop key aspects of consumer directed services. The state must also implement the self-determination project funded through the Independence Plus grant.
4. **Revise the Quality Assurance, Quality Improvement System**-Develop a comprehensive system that effectively and appropriately assesses risk and strives to enhance safety, health, and quality of life for people in the community.
5. **Enhance Resources to the Natural, Community-Based Support Infrastructure**-Develop opportunities in each community for all types of services, supports and community resources to support individuals and families.
6. **Develop the Provider Market**-Quality services come from a competitive market where a provider knows that they will be out of business if they provide bad services.
7. **Develop the Support Profession**-The state must support the expansion of the Direct Support Professional’s curriculum and install fair wages for the quality and quantity of the work accomplished.
8. **Commit to a Multiyear Funding Plan**-Annually increase the number of individuals living in the community who will receive supports through the Medicaid Waiver Program.
9. **Adjust Waiver Services and Waiver Rates to Incentivize Best Practices**-Policy needs to create incentives for people to have real jobs and the Division should add Peer Support as a Medicaid billable service.
10. **Consider New Models**-Explore using other models to better coordinate and assure quality of services that people receive, and to provide some interim services to individuals on the waiting list.
11. **Move Money**-The long term care and supports system could be improved if funding were more flexible and followed a person to a preferred setting.
12. **Foster Interagency Collaboration**- Multi-agency collaboration is important when transitioning individuals from institutions to the community, and from high school to work and adult life in the community.
13. **Fund and Implement the Children’s Initiative**- The state needs to apply many of these recommendations to the children’s population. The DHR needs to create and send to the Governor a budget package that is dedicated to the children’s movement and does not compete with the needs of the adult population.

Real Homes

Goal: To promote policies that ensure resources are in place to help Georgians with disabilities acquire accessible and affordable housing.

Support legislation to increase accessibility in new homes by requiring one zero-step entrance, 32" wide doorways, and a first floor half bathroom in all new single family homes built on concrete slabs. (Concrete Change and Accessible Housing Coalition)

Real Supports

Goal: People with Developmental Disabilities and their families will be able to access services and supports.

Unlock the Waiting Lists: To keep pace with the multi-year funding plan, the request is 2500 MRWP services at \$15,676,036 state funds for 6 months

Unlock also supports a 7% rate increase for all DD Medicaid waiver services, including the new services for FY '09

DCH Budget: 500 ICWP waiver slots for people with physical disabilities and brain and spinal cord injuries

EPSDT: Explore legislation that will put federal EPSDT (Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment) language in state law

Joint Resolution for Children's Freedom Initiative: Add language to deter the institutionalization of children

Other Legislative Issues of Interest to Council and Partners in the Community

Each year prior to the start of the legislative session, the Council invites the community of interest to submit their legislative agendas to the Council for their consideration for support. During the October quarterly meeting, Council members review the issues of interest from the wider community. Decisions to support are based on 4 criteria.

- Issues must directly or indirectly affect our constituents or the GCDD itself;
- Supporting or opposing the issue is in concert with our mission, vision, values;
- The issue draws upon our knowledge and expertise as an organization;
- We have the capability to develop a realistic plan for how to implement the policy stand, communicate the plan to the appropriate people and make use of the stand in our work.

After discussion, the Council votes on each issue, assigning it to one of 5 tiers:

- Tier I: Council Initiates, is the lead agency
- Tier II: Other agency is the lead, but Council participates
- Tier III: Council allows use of name, but otherwise, no action
- Tier IV: Council has neutral position, won't fight or support
- Tier V: Council opposes, fights against

Tier I: Council Initiates (These items are part of the Council's five year work plan and are described above)

- **Unlock the Waiting List Request for 2500 MRWP services**
- **DHR Budget:** 7% rate increase for all DD Medicaid waiver service providers
- **DCH Budget:** 500 ICWP waiver slots for people with physical disabilities & brain/spinal injuries
- **Joint Resolution for Children's Freedom Initiative**
- **Transition:** explore legislation requiring agencies to work with families towards transitioning
- **Amendments to HB 1435:** Correct and make definition of disability consistent in election code
- **Family Support:** DD Council recommends \$6.0 million addition to state grant-in-aid funds
- **HB 540:** enable child support for mentally or physically disabled child beyond age of majority

Real Influence

Goal: People have the information, skills, opportunities, and support to live free of abuse, neglect, financial and sexual exploitation, violation of their human and legal rights and the inappropriate use of restraints and seclusion.

Amendments to HB 1435. HB 1435 removed the Oath Requirement from the election code, facilitates assistance at the polls, and supports the availability of accessible voting materials. Some corrections need to be made and the definition of disability made consistent throughout the bill.

Real Learning

Goal: A Georgia where high school students with disabilities experience effective transition planning that includes the practice of self-determination, alternative diploma routes, professional collaboration and positive parent support that leads to better post-school outcomes.

Transition: Explore legislation requiring agencies to work with families towards transitioning teens with disabilities out of school

IE2: Track progress of IE2 committee (basic education funding formula, and special education funding formula)

Tier II: Another organization is the lead, Council actively supports

- **\$500,00 for the production of Braille books** for students at the post-secondary level; (Federation for the Blind)
- **Carve out dental services for children enrolled in Peach Care and Medicaid;** Line item in DCH budget (GDA)
- **HB 880: E-Text legislation;** (Learning Disabilities Association of Georgia)
- **Updating Georgia Code** to remove language disrespectful to people with DD (AADD)
- **Real Homes Legislation:** increase accessibility in new homes (Concrete Change and Coalition for Accessible Housing)

Tier III: Council allows use of name, but otherwise no action

- **Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities;** \$40,000 cut restored plus additional \$125,000 (JFGA, GACOA)
- **Aging and Disability Resource Center;** \$350,000 to create two additional ADRC sites in Georgia
- **CCSP waiver program for Medicaid eligible elderly;** \$6.7 million requested (Georgia Council on Aging, Co-Age)
- **CCSP program for 2000 non-Medicaid eligible elderly** \$4.0 million requested (Georgia Council on Aging, Co-Age)
- **Parent Protection Act;** unpaid leave for parents to attend childrens' school events (Georgia Job/Family Collaborative)
- **HB 845 and SB 13:** Raise Georgia minimum wage (Georgia Living Wage Coalition)
- **Life Sharing;** amend code to allow two persons with disabilities to reside in an owner occupied home without having to be licensed (DHR)

Tier IV: Council has neutral position, won't fight or support; & Tier V: Council opposes, fights against:

- Council has no issues in these tiers

Issues to Watch

- **SB10:** Special Needs Voucher
- **IE2:** Special Education Funding Formula
- **SB 20:** Carnal Knowledge bill
- **HB 235:** consent to surgical/medical procedures on incapacitated individuals
- **HB 542:** create a Legislative Youth Advisory Council
- **HB 652:** Blind Person's Braille Literacy & Education Act
- **SB 277:** prohibits a parent's refusal for their child to take psychiatric drugs as basis for excluding child from school activities

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities is "to collaborate with Georgia citizens, public and private advocacy organizations, and policy makers to positively influence public policies that enhance the quality of life for people with developmental disabilities and their families."

Values

1. **We value** people with developmental disabilities with their own gifts and talents, and as independent contributors to a collaborative community.
2. **We value** available, accessible, flexible, and responsive services, which enhance people's participation in the community.
3. **We value** a diverse Council with informed, motivated and active members who disseminate accurate information.
4. **We value** a knowledgeable, diverse, and well-supported staff, which share open and honest communication with Council members.
5. **We value** educated and supported families who make significant contributions to caring for and assisting people with developmental disabilities in preparing for their futures
6. **We value** public policy founded on sound research, accurate information, and best practices in alignment with the principles of the Developmental Disabilities Act.
7. **We value** public advocacy that is founded on the development of relationships with stakeholders and the legislative community.
8. **We value** communities, which are designed to be inclusive, allowing for full participation by all people, physically, economically, organizationally, and environmentally. We value communities that educate, respect, promote, and protect the rights of people, thus offering a wealth of opportunities, and have the capacity to find solutions.

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