

Waiting List Initiative

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pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

Good morning Chairman DiGirolamo, Chairman Cruz and members of the House Human Services Committee. My name is David Kauffman, Chief of Staff for the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). With me is Patty McCool, Director of the Bureau of Supports for People with Intellectual Disabilities. We are representing Fred Lokuta, who is the Deputy Secretary for the Office of Developmental Programs. We want to thank you for this opportunity to come before the committee to discuss ODP's efforts to serve the people of the Commonwealth with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and Autism and provide people with the opportunity to live independent, dignified lives in their communities. Truly, the options for those receiving state supports have never been as broad or as deep as they are today. Participants may live with their parents or in the community, going to work each day for employers large and small, or learning useful life skills in one of the many day programs throughout the state. In addition, the number of people served by the Community Waiver programs is the highest it has been since at least 2002 - now reaching over 27,000 people.

Thanks to the work of Governor Corbett and the General Assembly, ODP received increased funding to take individuals off of the waiting list for the second consecutive fiscal year (FY).

In FY 12-13, the initiative that was contained in the budget increased funding for 1,130 community waiver participants:

- 700 slots for students leaving the school system in FY'11-12 (Graduates) and;
- 430 slots for persons with Aging Caregivers, defined as having a primary caregiver greater than 60 years old.

For the current FY13-14, the Waiting List Initiative provided funding for an increase of 1,080 community waiver participants:

- 700 slots for students leaving the school system in FY'12-13 (Graduates);
- 380 slots for persons on the Emergency Waiting List and;

In addition, funding was increased for 118 persons on the Adult Autism Waiver Interest List, the first initiative of its kind in Pennsylvania.

As soon as the FY12-13 Budget was enacted, ODP's program personnel began a statewide effort to enroll the eligible persons from the waiting list and match each of them with service providers. It is important to note that, after years without an active, successful effort to add members, Governor Corbett's Waiting List Initiatives sought to enroll two times more participants in each of the last two fiscal years than would enroll in an average year. This is a significant operational challenge that could not be overcome without the work, persistence, and collaborative spirit of those working to serve the ID and Autism communities. I want to thank all stakeholders – families, supports coordinators, providers and counties for their efforts to execute these initiatives.

As of November 1, 2013, 318 of the Graduates and 256 from the Emergency Waiting List have been enrolled, including 21 "unanticipated emergencies." Compared to their respective FY'13-14 totals, these enrollment figures represent 45 percent of Graduates and 67 percent of those from the Emergency Waiting List.

Despite some initial challenges, the enrollment process is gaining efficiency, with 182 participants enrolled in November versus an average of 90 per month for the previous months including the FY'12-13 initiative. We are pleased to report that, due to

ODP's program staff projects, we will accomplish our goal of full enrollment into the community waivers by the end of the fiscal year.

The people enrolling through the waiting list initiatives are taking advantage of the broad range of services available within the waiver programs by choosing the mix of activities best suited to their individual needs. Notably, the majority of those enrolling in the consolidated waiver are choosing to utilize Home and Community Habilitation Services, the goal of which is to help participants gain, maintain or improve socialization and adaptive skills. This service has the added benefit of allowing participants to remain in their own homes, where they are comfortable and feel safe.

Others are choosing Family Living Homes, where they reside in a private home with care providers and often another waiver participant. This maintains a familial style of living arrangement for the participants while providing the supports they require for the foreseeable future. Also, Family Living Homes limit the investment needed to start new community homes, reducing the financial risk borne by providers.

As a result of the funding that Governor Corbett and the General Assembly provided and the efforts of all stakeholders, the number of people on the ODP waiting list is approximately 14,600, down from approximately 15,800 in December 2012. Additionally, as of April 2013, 54 percent of the individuals on the waiting list classified as needing services within two years are receiving some ODP services through the community waiver or base programs. While I acknowledge there is more to do to serve those on the waiting list, the significant progress we have seen over the past two fiscal years is encouraging.

At ODP, we continue to embrace the evolution of service delivery and strive to provide our participants with as many viable options as possible. For example, ODP is involved in a comprehensive futures planning effort that includes representatives from all stakeholder groups and representatives from other state departments such as Education and Labor and Industry. The effort is seeking to identify short and long term goals that will continue to move the program forward. We believe this year's and last year's initiatives have been extremely successful for the participants, their families, and our dedicated provider network. Despite the fiscal pressures we are all under, we are grateful to have the resources to continue our commitment to addressing the waiting list. This ensures that as many eligible residents of the Commonwealth as possible have access to our programs. We urge the General Assembly to continue to support the expansion of both ODP's consolidated waiver and autism programs in FY14-15, providing much needed services to the state's most vulnerable populations.

Again, we want to thank Governor Corbett, the General Assembly and the House Human Services Committee for your continued support and your time today. Patty McCool and I will be happy to answer any questions.