

State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY TASK FORCE

MEETING SUMMARY

September 25, 2019

Co-chairman of the task force Marc Weinberg convened the first task force meeting and welcomed members.

Co-chairman Orville Karan stated that much of what the task force will try to accomplish has yet to be addressed but hoped to get the first meeting off to a good start.

Task force members present introduced themselves. They include Sen. Mary Abrams, Rep. Jonathan Steinberg, Rep. Lezlye Zupkus, Judy Dowd, Joseph Duffy, Peter Mason, and Dawn Odour.

Mr. Karan opened the meeting for members to discuss the legislative charge of the task force, [Special Act 18-2](#). He stated that the task force is expected to present a report of their recommendations to the Connecticut General Assembly and that the task force terminates once the report has been submitted. He noted that there are many questions the task force will have as it moves along, such as travel and expense reimbursement for members, the role of the administrative staff, whether the task force has a budget, means of communication between members, and the frequency of meetings.

Members expressed that they remain flexible and will try to accommodate any meeting date and time set by the group.

Mr. Karan remarked that given the degree of flexibility expressed by members, focus should now be placed on frequency and setting a date for the next meeting.

Rep. Zupkus asked when the task force report is due.

Task force staff noted that during the 2019 Legislative Session, legislation passed to extend the reporting requirements from January, 2019 to January, 2020.

Members unanimously expressed that the charge of the act may be too broad. More importantly, already in existence are the Developmental Disability Subcommittee of the

Medical Assistance and Program Oversight Council, the Intellectual and Developmental Disability Council, and others that review services offered by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Mr. Mason, Deputy Commissioner of DDS, suggested that the DDS Commissioner, Mr. Jordan Scheff, present to the task force a profile of the agency.

Rep. Steinberg asked that the commissioner provide his perspective on the areas that offer the greatest opportunity for solutions.

Sen. Abrams asked that the commissioner also provide his perspective on DDS pilot studies, and whether they have been successful or have faced challenges that can be improved. She added that she is particularly interested in learning about the challenges of the aging population of the Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) community.

Mr. Karan agreed that a baseline of Department needs and responsibilities, and the capacity of the needs, will provide a target for the task force to focus.

Ms. Dowd asked about the history of SA 18-2. She stated that DDS already offers many services, but noted that it would help the task force focus on specific needs if they are aware of the gap that was recognized which led to the establishment of the special act.

Rep. Steinberg remarked that the legislature has for many years introduced bills that have tried to address shortcomings in programs, much of which were the result of recent budget shortcuts. Many parents have spoken eloquently that the services currently provided are not as robust as those provided previously. The task force is a compromise in addressing those shortcomings by studying issues without an attached fiscal note.

Mr. Duffy echoed Rep. Steinberg regarding budget shortcuts and stated that the resource decreases have been significant while the scale of need has remained massive.

Ms. Odour suggested that the task force focus on a review of residential services because they comprise of many layers, including the aging population, and staffing and training.

Mr. Mason expressed that there must be flexibility with requirements because everyone's needs are different.

Mr. Karan remarked that the task force will not accomplish their charge by the next meeting, but the hope is to raise curiosity with real data and information which will guide us towards a focus.

The next task force meeting will be held on October 30, 2019, at 1:00 PM. Presentations will include a profile of DDS from Commissioner Scheff. Other presentations will include individuals and IDD community organizations which will be identified by Mr. Duffy, an active member of the community.