

Policy Flash

The latest news, views & information on policy issues for Virginia's DD Council members
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In Virginia. . .

Governor's Olmstead Initiative . . .

... is now fully underway according to Julie Stanley, the new Director of Community Integration for People with Disabilities in Virginia. At the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities' recent quarterly meeting Ms. Stanley reviewed various preliminary initiatives that had taken place in Virginia regarding Olmstead implementation including: Item 329 M in the '02 Appropriations Act that directed development of a Task Force to consider Olmstead implementation in Virginia; submission of the final report of the Task Force in September, '03; and Executive Order 61, issued in January '04, establishing the Olmstead Community Integration Implementation Team (CIIT) and a Community Integration Oversight Advisory Committee (CIOAC).

Presently, the Olmstead CIIT has begun examining the Task Force report with the goal of categorizing, prioritizing, and costing out (where applicable) the 201 recommendations contained in the report. The Olmstead CIIT is expected to present its report on the recommendations to the CIOAC in mid-July. The next meeting of the CIOAC is scheduled for April 14th.

Ms. Stanley noted that the Governor's budget for the upcoming biennium included nine Olmstead-related proposals including funding 25 more Individual and Family DD Support Waiver Slots; funding 160 new MR Waiver slots; earmarking Medicaid funds for a new Medicaid Waiver for people with Alzheimer's and Related Dementias (to serve 200 individuals); earmarking Medicaid funds for the Medicaid Buy-In program (to serve 200 individuals); funding five new Public Guardian and Conservator programs (to serve 125 adults); funding 77 Individualized Mental Health Discharge Assistance Plans; and several programs to expand mental health services for children and adults with intensive community-based services. Information about meetings and work of the Olmstead CIIT and the CIOAC can be found at www.olmsteadva.com.

Legislation Passed During the '04 General Assembly Session...

... codified the Disability Commission, streamlined membership, and reassigned administrative and staffing duties from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities to the Clerks of the Senate or the House and to the Division of Legislative Services respectively. The purpose of the Disability Commission, essentially unchanged from its historical mission, is described in duplicate bills, H.B. 817 and S.B. 381: "to identify and recommend legislative priorities and policies for adoption or examination by the General Assembly in order to provide ongoing support in developing and reviewing services and funding related to Virginians with disabilities." The "new" Disability Commission will be chaired by the Lt. Governor (which has been the historical structure) until January 2006 after which the chairman will be a legislator selected by Commission members. The number of consumer representatives on the Commission was unchanged by the legislation.

In the Nation. . .



Senate and House Work on FY '05 Budget...

... and there is a lot of work to do. The Senate completed action on its Budget Resolution during the week of March 15th which would allow \$821 billion in discretionary spending, almost half of which is for defense programs. The Senate resolution included rejection of a requirement for instituting major cuts to Medicaid and budget reconciliation instructions to the Senate Finance Committee to prepare tax cut proposals for up to \$80.6 billion. The House also completed action on its version of the FY '05 budget last week which includes freezing domestic funding, instituting 5 year discretionary spending caps, and cutting Medicaid funding (\$2.2 billion over 5 years). Most DeeCee watchers predict that FY '05 funding levels will not change compared to FY '04 funding levels for most health and human service programs, including entitlement and discretionary programs (Source: NACDD, ARC).



Opposition Continues....

...by parents of children with disabilities to the reauthorization of IDEA as presented in current bills (HR. 1350 and S. 1248). The House bill (19 co-sponsors) has passed. It includes provisions that strip students with disabilities and their parents of important rights established in previous special education legislation. S.B. 1248, which is also problematic, has not yet been acted upon and it is expected that a revised Senate bill may come to the floor in April. Advocates have been working hard with Senators to maintain favorable provisions of IDEA legislation that are needed to ensure rights and services for students with disabilities. Following passage of S. 1248, huge differences between the House and Senate bills will need to be resolved. (Source: NACDD, ARC)



Federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities....

... will be conducting a Monitoring and Technical Assistance Review Systems (MTARS) site visit to Virginia's three DD Partner agencies—the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, The Partnership for People with Disabilities, and the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy, during the week of June 21st. During the week representatives and staff of the three agencies will meet with staff from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (the federal funding entity for the DD Partner agencies) and peer reviewers from DD Partner agencies in other states to review activities and discuss operational issues. A public forum will be held as part of the MTARS process. All DD Councils in the U.S. routinely undergo MTARS site visits.

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