

**Executive Director's Report  
July 15 – 16, 2015 Council Meeting**

**Budget**

- The budget report with expenditures through May 2015 is included in the packet.

**Membership Update**

- Craig Blackburn, a self-advocate from Metairie, was appointed to the Council by the Governor on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and Delery Rice and Sue Berry were both reappointed.
- Recruitment efforts have been unsuccessful in attracting a sufficient number of applicants to fill the vacancy in the Northeast region of the state so the recruitment area was expanded to the Northwest and Central regions as well. The deadline for applications is July 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Staff Update**

- Brandi Jones was selected for promotion into the Program Manager position, previously held by Keokah Sanders. We are currently working to fill Brandi's previous position.
- Someone has also been hired to fill our Executive Secretary position, previously held by Paige Freeman, but the paperwork must be completed before her name can be released. She is expected to begin work on July 8<sup>th</sup>.

**DD Network Public Survey**

Together with the Advocacy Center and the Human Development Center, the Council solicited input for our five-year plan through an online survey. A total of 113 people responded, indicating the issues of most importance to them and/or their families. This information will be considered by the Planning Ad Hoc Committee on June 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Ad Hoc Committees**

Two Ad Hoc Committees met this quarter:

- The **Council Format Ad Hoc** discussed the Council meeting format that has been in place since April 2014 and made recommendations for a new format to go into effect in January 2016 after the discussion of all selected areas of emphasis has been completed. These recommendations for the Council's consideration and vote are included in the Council meeting packet.
- The **Nominating Committee** recommended a slate of officers that will be voted on during the July meeting. The recommended slate was mailed to you separately and is also included in your packet.

**Disability Rights Day**

- Disability Rights Day was held April 29<sup>th</sup> with confirmed attendance of 398 participants. Participants visited legislators in the House and Senate before convening on the Capitol steps for a rally program. Speakers recognized the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and participants celebrated by signing a pledge online to recommit to its full implementation.
- Participants were also in attendance as Senator Jack Donahue presented SCR 37 on the Senate Floor commending the DD Council and LaCAN for its advocacy efforts and officially designating April 29, 2015, Disability Rights Day in Louisiana. Representative Jim Fannin also presented HCR 47 on the House Floor that included the same designation and commendations.

**Advocacy Activities and Provision of Information**

## Community Supports

- Planned and implemented LaCAN's advocacy campaign. In spite of a \$1.6 Billion deficit at the beginning of the legislative session, legislators appropriated funds to fill all waiver slots for people with developmental disabilities, restored the cut to the Families Helping Families (FHF) Centers, and provided funding for EarlySteps. This was not every item on LaCAN's legislative agenda, but it was a significant accomplishment.
  - Provided information and support to eleven LaCAN members in testifying before the Appropriations and Senate Finance Committees in support of funding for waiver slots, FHF, and EarlySteps. Provided information to legislators on all of these programs. Organized five "yellow shirt days" in these Committees with a total of 110 LaCAN members attending.
- Advocated/discussed the following issues in the Council's quarterly meeting with Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) Secretary Kliebert (verbally reported at the April Council meeting):
  - The Council's legislative agenda and legislative issues of interest to DHH and the Council
  - Use of Act 378 funds and Act 378 policy issues
- A letter was sent to Governor Jindal urging him to release the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Managed Long Term Supports and Services (MLTSS) as submitted by DHH to the Division of Administration. A letter was sent to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) expressing concerns over the delay in the RFP release due to the Nursing Home Association's attempt to have nursing homes carved out of MLTSS. The CMS response, as well as our letters, can be found on the Council's website at <http://www.laddc.org/content.cfm?id=565>.
- A letter was sent to Capital Area Human Services District (CAHSD) regarding the use of Act 378 Funds for a civil service employee's salary. A response was received by CAHSD's Executive Director that this would be discontinued effective July 1, 2015.

## Education

- Planned and implemented LaTEACH's advocacy campaign. The legislature passed SB 267 to clarify that all schools receive funding based on the same funding formula beginning in the 15/16 school year, despite attempts to delay implementation. The Council/LaTEACH advocated for equity in school funding for over three years so this was a long awaited victory for students with disabilities and their families.
  - Provided support to three LaTEACH members in testifying before the House Education Committee in support of equitable funding and fifteen LaTEACH members attended this "purple shirt day." Provided information to legislators, legislative staff, BESE and the La. Charter School Association on this issue.
- Provided input and feedback to the LSU-Human Development Center on IEP training modules.
- Provided information regarding Act 833 Alternative Pathways for students with disabilities to be promoted and graduate:
  - To parents and educators at FHF-Northeast LA Education Conference
  - To La. Dept. of Education (LDOE)/Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) regarding recommendations to change policy language related to diploma pathway for students on LAA-1
    - BESE agreed with DD Council staff recommendation and amended proposed policy to replace the term "LAA-1 Diploma" with "alternative pathway to a diploma."
  - To LDOE/BESE in support of expansion of existing rule related to counting End-of-Course scores as five percent of final grade for students on an alternate pathway for a diploma.
  - In meeting between Superintendent John White and local school system special education directors.

## Employment

- Advocated for the following during the La. Rehabilitation Council meeting:
  - Co-locating local La. Rehabilitation Services (LRS) offices with Business and Career Solution Centers, also known as job centers;
  - The opportunity to provide input in efforts to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and other initiatives, such as Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS), supported employment, vendor monitoring system, etc.
  - The certification of employment support professionals (job coaches).
- Submitted comments on the U.S. Department of Labor's proposed rules for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

## General

- Met with Gubernatorial Candidates Jay Dardenne and John Bel Edwards regarding issues important to people with developmental disabilities.
- Letters were written and sent to legislators expressing concern or support for several Priority 1 and 2 issues on the Council's legislative list and action alerts were released for Priority 1 issues. A final list with the outcome of all legislation the Council tracked will be provided at the Council meeting.
- Provided information through LaDDC News and Facebook on the elimination of the LaHIPP program, the Council's Annual Report, the online waiver provider questionnaire, the Work Incentives and Planning Assistance Program, the DD Network Public Input Survey, common misconceptions about self-direction, the National Core Indicators Project, and the recruitment of applicants for Council membership.
- Hosted a Legislative Debriefing for LaCAN, LaTEACH and FHF Leaders where we shared information on the outcomes of the legislative session and the current state of affairs in both home and community-based services and education. Information was shared and feedback was solicited on LaCAN and LaTEACH's activities before and during the session, emphasizing what was most effective and what we can do to improve in the future.

## **Collaborative Efforts**

### OCDD System Transformation Core Work Group

- The group endorsed the final draft of the prioritization system for the waiver waiting list and the tool that will be used to assess urgency of need.
- The group made recommendations regarding timelines for those in "emergent need" situations and continued to advocate for ways people outside of the managed care plan can gain access, especially those in emergent need.

### Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

- The LDOE proposed recommendations for students assessed on LAA1 to successfully complete high school with a diploma using an Individual Graduation Plan. The proposal creates options so students on LAA-1 can graduate high school by earning course credits and either meeting standards on assessments or through a portfolio of student achievement. The proposal received positive comments from panel members, parents, and school districts. SEAP unanimously endorsed LDOE's proposal.
- SEAP also endorsed the policy revision to expand the rule related to the percent of End-of-Course (EOC) tests that should be applied to a student's final grade. The rule was expanded so EOC test scores will only be five percent of the final grade for students eligible for Act 833, like it has been for students on LAA-2.

### Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Advisory Council

- Reviewed revisions made to Bulletin 140 (Early Childhood policies) according to stakeholder feedback received from the past two years of Community Network Pilots. ECCE members made recommendations to the bulletin.

### OCDD Mortality Review Committee

- Of the 50 cases reviewed this quarter, two cases were investigated for neglect, one by Health Standards and one by Adult Protection Services, but the allegations of neglect were not confirmed in either of these cases. In a third case, allegations of possible neglect are currently being investigated by Health Standards.
- The committee requested additional information on all three cases, plus two additional ones.

### **Meetings Attended (by Executive Director) Since March 27, 2015**

Executive Committee – April 2

Meeting with Kansas Disability Rights Center Ex. Director, DHH Officials, advocates re: Managed Long Term Supports & Services – April 7

NACDD Member Services Committee Conference Call – April 8

Public Testimony in House Appropriations Committee re: budget – April 14

Meeting with Sec. Kliebert, Mark Thomas, Sam Beech, Michelle Hurst – April 14

Council meeting – April 15 - 16

OCDD System Transformation Core Group – April 17

Senate Finance Committee re: DHH's budget – April 20

Public Affairs Research Council Gubernatorial Candidates Forum – April 23

LaCAN Leaders Conference Call – April 23

Meeting with Jeff Reynolds re: charge by Division of Administration – April 24

Disability Rights Day at the Capitol – April 29

Meeting with Lt. Governor Jay Dardenne and Council leaders – May 26

Meeting with Representative John Bel Edwards and Council leaders – May 26

Public Testimony in Senate Finance Committee re: budget – May 30

Collaborative group to discuss employment and other adult issues – June 9

Nominating Committee – June 12

Council Format Ad Hoc Committee – June 12

Legislative Debriefing for LaCAN, LaTEACH, FHF Leaders – June 25