

News

In September families gathered for music, food and sharing at the **FETF picnic at Hammonasset Beach State Park**. DDS Commissioner Macy made a surprise appearance and personally spoke with each and every family there.

The administration finally achieved a budget agreement that avoided the implementation of drastic "Plan B" reductions to DDS funding, however the Department has disclosed potential **midterm budget reductions** that total \$48 million in FY 2013. The largest proposed decreases are \$24 million in private provider residential services and \$10 million in private provider day services. These cuts would be included in the Governor's prospective midterm budget adjustments.

Now is the time to contact the Governor and your state legislators and ask them to support a larger budget for private providers at DDS!

The new **DDS Five Year Plan** document is now on line at <http://www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/report/draft5yearplancolor.pdf> or you may view a video presentation at <http://www.ct.gov/dds/cwp/view.asp?a=3589&Q=489044>

The **Program Review and Investigations Committee** is completing its investigation of the Provision of Selected Services for Clients with Intellectual Disabilities. This investigation follows earlier studies by OPM's Commission on Nonprofit Health and Human Services and the legislature's Advisory Committee that studied the impact of the shift from Purchase of Service contracts to attendance-based, fee-for-service reimbursement at DDS. The current investigation will compare the cost of providing public and private services to determine the most cost-effective means to deliver those services. The preliminary report is available on line at http://www.cga.ct.gov/pri/docs/2011/Provision_of_Selected_Services_for_Clients_with_Intellectual_Disabilities_September_Briefing.pdf

DDS is introducing new **LON-based rates** for private providers and families need to understand this major change in the way that DDS will pay for services because it may alter our individual budgets. Learn more at www.ct.gov/dds/lib/dds/operations_center/rate/lac_final_report.pdf Ask your service provider and your case manager about the changes that are coming and how your individual budget will be affected.

In August the **FETF launched a website** at <http://family-empowerment.weebly.com> Please visit the site and tell us what you think.

In our **on-line communities**, families are engaged in many interesting threads of discussion. Please visit our on-line discussion groups for the latest news and opinions.

Upcoming Events

We are planning more **local meetings** for families where we will share more information about the FETF, legislative advocacy, the DDS Five-Year Plan, the new DDS LON-Based Rates and the DDS Budget. Dates and locations will be announced on our Internet groups. You may request an informational meeting near to you by sending an email to family-empowerment@comcast.net.

The **2012 General Assembly** will convene on February 8, 2012. We expect the legislature to consider midterm budget reductions. Stand by for announcements of public hearings on the budget and other matters of concern to families.

The FETF will be scheduling events where families can voice their concerns to the Governor and to the legislature. Stay tuned for announcements.

For more information about upcoming events, check our groups on Yahoo or Facebook – or send an email to family-empowerment@comcast.net

Join us on the Internet

Website: <http://family-empowerment.weebly.com> (NEW!)

Facebook: CT DDS Family Empowerment Task Force

Yahoo: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/family-empowerment/>

Email: family-empowerment@comcast.net

Support the FETF

You may support the FETF with a donation to the Arc of Connecticut. Make your check payable to The Arc of Connecticut and please note on the check that it is for the FETF. Mail your donations to the FETF, c/o The Arc of Connecticut, 43 Woodland Street, Suite 260, Hartford, CT 06105 - or you may donate online using your bank card at <http://family-empowerment.weebly.com/donate.html>

About the FETF

The Family Empowerment Task Force (FETF) is an informal, unincorporated, organization of parents, siblings, guardians, caregivers and self-advocates that works to sustain, enhance and grow the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) that are offered by DDS through its private provider network by: 1) Developing a supportive network of families and individuals who receive services; 2) Educating families about DDS services; and 3) Educating legislators and public officials about the needs of families.