

**Today's Quote:** *"You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you are going because you might not get there."* 'Yogi' Berra, 1925 - , American Baseball Player, Catcher

## The Assistant Commissioner's Perspective:

My one year anniversary with the Department of Human Services' Division of Developmental Disabilities occurred on March 5, 2008. During the year, I traveled around the state and met with families, stakeholders, self advocates and our consumers to better understand our issues, answering questions when possible. My journey extended from Bergen to Cape May Counties and, along the way, included discussions with many caring, dedicated and passionate people.

As initially shared and mentioned to you (See September 2007 [DDD Today's](#) 1st Issue), I envision my work as threefold: to support consumers and their families with services in the best way possible; to maximize the federal funding DDD receives; and, to expand services on the Community Care Waiver (CCW). Now, let me share with you a few projects that are underway, which are helping us to accomplishing these goals.

- There is dedicated staff in my office to work with regional staff in furthering our mission to support consumers and their families in the community. We have been working hard on "case management redesign," which is one of the major steps to our goal of offering more support and services. As we further develop this system, we will begin to share more details with you on our progress.
- The Food Stamp Project is another new way of providing more for our consumers without costing the state more money. DDD is beginning to roll out a plan to enroll individuals to receive Food Stamps. Currently, fewer than ten percent of our consumers receive food stamps, although about 80 percent are eligible. As we are moving toward self-directed services, it is important for our consumers to have benefits in their names rather than have services paid for them. These benefits would be 100 percent federally funded, with no cost to the state. More details regarding this new project will be shared at a later date.
- If you didn't know, we are well on our way to amending the CCW as was mentioned earlier in January. Our waiver amendment was submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and we expect to hear back soon on our proposed changes. Once approved, it will enhance the list of waiver eligible services, drawing down more federal reimbursement.

- We partnered with several agencies as well as other components under the department to form the Dually Diagnosed Task Force (DD Task Force) and to expand statewide the DDD Crisis Response System through the Trinitas Hospital's Statewide Clinical Consultation and Training Program (SCCAT). We continue to seek your input and comments on these initiatives, so feel free to contact us via e-mail. Go to the Web at: <http://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddd/index.html>.
- Last fall, we issued an open invitation to an information session regarding the Children's Placement Enhancement Pilot (C-PEP) program. Forty-four DDD providers attended this C-PEP session on November 1, 2007, which outlined the division's goal to build in-state capacity for children with significantly challenging behaviors. The need for greater in-state infrastructure, facilities and appropriately trained staff to serve these children has resulted in more than 100 DDD children being placed into 100 percent state funded out-of-state facilities. To begin to reverse this trend, DDD is working with interested licensed providers to pilot a number of model programs statewide.
- Currently, six agencies have volunteered to participate in the C-PEP program. The pilots are anticipated to run for two years, and there will be two enrollment windows in the first year to encourage thoughtful operational planning and participation. The Boggs Center at UMDNJ will provide child specific contract training and on-site technical support for these pilot programs. The pilot programs that successfully stabilize a child for one year will receive a one-time funding enhancement payment at the end of the 12 month period.
- In Olmstead, we have moved 167 individuals from institutions into homes in the community (since the beginning of the fiscal year 2007, July '06-June '07).

Again, I would like to acknowledge those advocates and stakeholders who were instrumental in preparing and supporting all of these efforts. I also would like to thank DDD staff for their hard work and dedication.

I am looking forward to this year's challenges and moving closer to our goals. Thank you for an eventful first year!

*Ken Ritchey, Assistant Commissioner*