

ADVISORY, CONSULTATIVE, DELIBERATIVE, CONFIDENTIAL MATERIAL
Governor's Task Force on the Closure of State Developmental Centers
7-23-2012 Meeting Minutes
Adopted by the Task Force Members August 1, 2012

The eighth meeting of the Task Force was convened on Monday, July 23, 2012. The meeting was delayed from its original start time of 11:00 a.m. and convened at 12:00 p.m.

Task Force Members Present:

Allison Murphy, Senate Appointee
Colin Newman, Governor's Appointee
Nancy Thaler, Governor's Appointee

Craig Domalewski, Governor's Appointee
Valessa Goehringer, Assembly Appointee

Call to Order The meeting was called to order by Craig Domalewski, Chairperson, as follows:

“I hereby call to order the July 23, 2012 meeting of the Task Force on the Closure of State Developmental Centers. This is a formal meeting of the Task Force on the Closure of State Developmental Centers.”

Notice Adequate notice of this meeting has been published in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, NJSA § 10:4-6 et seq., of the State of New Jersey entitled, ‘Open Public Meetings Act.’ Notice was sent to the Secretary of State, who posted the notice in a public place. Notices were published in the Star Ledger, Trenton Times and Camden Courier-Post. The notice was also published on the New Jersey Department of Human Services website and the Department of Human Services Facebook page. This statement hereby serves as the “statements in minutes of meeting on adequate notice” in compliance with NJSA § 10:4-10.

Roll Call Barbara Booth conducted a Roll Call as follows: Craig Domalewski, Allison Murphy, Nancy Thaler, Valessa Goehringer and Colin Newman. All responded in the affirmative.

Adopting of Minutes Colin Newman moved to adopt the minutes of the June 18, 2012 meeting prepared by Barbara Booth. Allison Murphy seconded the motion. All members unanimously voted in favor of adopting the minutes with no alterations.

Documents

Task Force members were provided the following documents prior to or at the meeting:

-Revised Overview of Developmental Centers further explaining Operational Needs of the Department of Human Services related to each DC to include:

- the number of two story buildings at North Jersey DC and the number of residents living in those buildings, and
- the number of residents living in the two “Step Down” units and in the Moderate Security Unit at New Lisbon DC.

-Department of Health Survey Results as the heading for the columns was hidden which raised confusion for the members.

-Department of Health reports related to the complaint surveys conducted at Vineland Developmental Center in February 2012 and June 2012.

-The number of employees that will be eligible to retire effective April 30, 2013 and April 30, 2014.

Meeting Discussion

Task Force members spent the meeting deliberating on the five factors identified in the legislation, voting on binding recommendations pursuant to P.L. 2011, c. 143, and approving non-binding recommendations to be included in the final report to the Governor and Legislature. The Task Force completed a comprehensive review of all developmental centers which included meetings, receiving testimony, visiting all seven developmental centers and a number of community residences, and extensive fact finding. Chair Craig Domalewski reviewed the legislative factors and the requirement in the statute that a majority vote – not unanimous – was necessary to close at least one developmental center.

Upon weighing each of the five factors, the Task Force unanimously agreed that four centers should not be considered for closure at this time due, in part, to the operational needs of the Department of Human Services and the difficulty the Department of Human Services would have in replicating the services provided at these centers elsewhere in a cost effective way. Those centers include: Woodbine Developmental Center, New Lisbon Developmental Center, Hunterdon Developmental Center, and Green Brook Regional Center.

The Task Force next discussed the number of developmental centers that should be subject to closure and the timeframe for closure. Among the factors discussed was the system-wide declining census, the number of residents in each center whose Inter-disciplinary teams have recommended a move to community, and the readiness of provider agencies in each

region to expand the community-based residential infrastructure to support residents leaving developmental centers.

Recognizing that the Department of Human Services had previously identified the closure of Vineland Developmental Center, the Task Force expressed concern that the provider infrastructure in that region was not as robust as in the northern part of the state and that closing Vineland may have a significant adverse impact on the local economy in Cumberland County, where the unemployment rate is already the highest in the State.

During the discussion, some Task Force members asserted that the State should close additional centers in the long term to keep pace with national trends. The Task Force members agreed that the Department of Human Services should carry out the closure recommendations within five years. The Task Force agreed that ensuring the health, safety and well-being of center residents was most important and discussion continued on whether to issue a binding recommendation for the closure of two developmental centers at this time. The Task Force voted 4-0-1 to issue the recommendation for the closure of two developmental centers. The tally on whether to issue recommendations to close two developmental centers was as follows: voting yes – Chair Craig Domalewski, Vice Chair Alison Murphy, Colin Newman, Nancy Thaler. Valessa Goehringer abstained.

Vote on Binding Recommendation

Allison Murphy made a formal motion for a vote to issue binding recommendations directing the Department of Human Services to close North Jersey Developmental Center and Woodbridge Developmental Center, within five years. Colin Newman seconded the motion and a vote on the motion was taken. Voting yes to approve the motion: Allison Murphy Nancy Thaler, Colin Murphy and Craig Domalewski. Valessa Goehringer abstained. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0-1 and the binding recommendation will be made as a part of the report to the Governor and Legislature.

The Task Force also agreed on non-binding recommendations to be included in the final report. The non-binding recommendations are as follows:

1. Develop plans for the closure of North Jersey DC and Woodbridge DC ensuring clarity regarding the process and timeframes contained in the binding recommendations.
2. Reinvest the full savings as the result of each closure to enhance or expand the community infrastructure of services and supports to ensure the health, safety and quality of community living and care.
3. Make certain that: direct care personnel are adequately trained; a sufficient number of case managers are in place to plan and monitor services, and; clinical staff are available for behavioral and mental health services
4. Designate sufficient quality assurance staff to assure the health and safety of individuals being moved from the developmental centers,

This includes staff to conduct inspections, investigations and oversight of community programs utilizing information to measure performance in order to improve services and achieve outcomes.

5. Ensure that the transition of every resident is carefully planned by a team that includes individuals and their guardians (when appropriate) prioritizing the health and safety of the residents.
6. Utilize a person-centered process to plan for the transition of individuals to ensure that information is provided to them as well as guardians so they can make an informed choice regarding community living options and arrangements.
7. Continue vigilance at the existing Developmental Centers to ensure that quality care is maintained.
8. Continue to honor the right of residents at all Developmental Centers to move to the community by offering them the opportunity, if they so choose.
9. Honor the rights of residents to continue to live in a Developmental Center if they so choose.

**Meeting
Conclusion**

Colin Newman motioned to adjourn the meeting. Allison Murphy seconded the motion. The members unanimously approved.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Task Force is scheduled for August 1, 2012 at Capital Place One, Conference Room 100, and will begin at 10:00 a.m.

Submitted By

Barbara Booth, DDD Office of Program Support