



Department of
Developmental Disabilities

Office of the Director

John R. Kasich, Governor
John L. Martin, Director

House Bill 483-Mid Biennium Review
Testimony of John L. Martin, Director
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities
Before the House Committee on Finance and Appropriations

March 26, 2014

Chairman Amstutz, Ranking Member Sykes, and members of the Committee, my name is John Martin and I am the Director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD). Thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss the work of the Department and the recommendations set forth in HB 483. I look forward to working with all of you on behalf of the Ohioans we serve.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ohio's developmental disabilities system supports more than 90,000 citizens and their families. Our services assure individuals' health and safety, foster community participation, and promote employment opportunities. DODD provides leadership, oversight, and funding for 88 county boards, hundreds of providers, and thousands of individuals and families. The Department's efforts in the MBR cannot be successful without the backing of stakeholders; which include county boards, provider organizations, local and state advocacy groups, and self-advocates. DODD is grateful for their continued guidance and support. Likewise, the assistance of OHT Director Greg Moody and OBM Director Tim Keen has been vital to the formation of the recommendations before you.

II. MBR RECOMMENDATIONS

Since taking office, Governor Kasich has made it clear that he cares deeply about the issues that impact the lives of those with a developmental disability and their families. His previous budgets and MBR, have transferred the ICF/IID program and Transitions waiver to DODD, increased available waiver services, provided funding for the new SELF waiver, created financial incentives for the down-sizing or conversion of beds in the ICF program, signed the Employment First executive order to make integrated community employment the administration's priority, empowered individuals to make decisions about their own lives, expanded autism insurance coverage, expanded the reach of telepsychiatry services, and expanded Medicaid. HB 483's recommendations continue this momentum.

1. Helping Ohioans with Autism

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The Department's signature proposal, the language found in HB 483, allows the Department to establish a voluntary online training and certification program to ensure providers are properly trained to work with and meet the needs of individuals with autism. Free for all Ohioans, the training and certification program will increase access to care in an area where the demand for well-qualified personnel exceeds the supply. Frequently, I am contacted by parents that struggle with this very problem. In HB 483, qualified access to care is increased by the establishment of a 3-tiered program.

Tier 1 will increase autism awareness by creating a video that covers characteristics of autism. The intended audience includes police officers, bus drivers, neighbors, babysitters; the general public. Basic behavior intervention strategies will also be explored.

Tier 2, using video and text, will provide instruction in social and behavioral interventions by age level. The intended audience includes those individuals that implement individualized behavioral programs, paraprofessionals, and teachers. Those completing Tier 2 will be able to become certified after an assessment.

Tier 3 will increase autism-specific expertise for those who hold a license in a related social service field. For instance, an occupational therapist or psychologist may want to learn more about how to best serve a client with autism. Those completing Tier 3 will also be able to become certified after an assessment.

Start-up capital has been provided by the Governor's Office of Health Transformation's Health Innovation Fund. After the initial start-up, the program will be self-sustaining with other states subsidizing the cost of updating curriculum content.

2. Helping Ohioans by Sharing Services

The 88 independent County Boards of Developmental Disabilities have a history of sharing services that goes back more than 25 years. Early adopters of the Council of Government model, county boards continue to share executives as well as management positions. For example, 17 counties share the services of 8 superintendents. Building on the county board's tradition of sharing services, language in HB 483 asks them to consider sharing a superintendent or management employees with another county board of developmental disabilities if a vacancy occurs. However, if the county board determines there is no significant efficiency to be gained it may employ a superintendent or a management employee to fill the position.

3. Helping Ohioans make Informed Decisions

HB 483 has given the Department the opportunity to ensure more transparency, allowing individuals, families, and guardians the opportunity to make informed decisions about

where loved ones live and work. HB 483 outlines language which will require survey and compliance reports to be made available online at the Department's website for the public to review. This simple change will allow families to make informed choices about who will provide services for their son or daughter.

4. Other Language Changes

Additional changes found in HB 483 align Early Intervention terminology with federal regulation, make technical corrections to Employment First definitions, expand the definition of "related party," harmonize the Department's confidentiality statute with HIPAA requirements, and make minor adjustments to the Department's ICF/IID program.

III. CONCLUSION

Our MBR proposal requests language changes we feel are crucial to continue the work that goes with our daily responsibilities to Ohio citizens with developmental disabilities. Establishing a comprehensive autism training and certification program has the potential to positively impact the lives of countless Ohioans. Working with our county boards to share services is not only the right thing to do, but also leads to a better, more efficient use of resources. Empowering individuals and families by providing information so they can make informed decisions just makes sense. With your support of these provisions, we can take a few more steps in making Ohio's DD System more comprehensive, more efficient, and more transparent for those we serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. I welcome your questions.