

Moving Forward

The Developmental Disabilities Advocates'
Guide to Legislation

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Volume 18—Issue 1

Brought to you by the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities



Happy New Year! This is the first issue of Moving Forward for the 2013 Legislative Session. In this issue, we review the leadership changes in the House and Senate, the budget items of interest to the disabilities community (still in the proposed stage), and give an overview of legislative terminology and effective advocacy. We anxiously await the release of the Governor's budget, expected January 16.

Revenue collections are up, and unemployment continues to fall, though the relative pace of both remains slow. From July 2012 to November 2012, revenue increases averaged 3.7% higher than the same months in 2011. State agencies were asked to reduce their budgets by 3%, plus an additional 2% cut to Medicaid. After two previous years of similar budget reductions, there aren't many places left to cut.

We are pleased to announce that Ms. D'Arcy Robb is the new Public Policy Director for the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities. Please extend a warm welcome to her!

House and Senate News:

House Leadership — Speaker of the House: David Ralston, 7th; **Speaker Pro Tempore:** Jan Jones, 46th. The Speaker vote is held the opening day of the session, but we do not expect any changes. **Majority Leader:** Larry O'Neal, 146th; **Minority Leader:** Stacey Abrams, 84th.

Senate Leadership—Presiding: **Lt. Gov.** Casey Cagle; **President Pro Tempore:** David Shafer, 48th. The Pro Tem is voted on by the members, but we do not expect any changes. **Majority Leader:** Ronnie Chance, 16th; **Minority Leader:** Steve Henson, 41st.

Contact information for the Governor—The Honorable Nathan Deal, 203 State Capitol, Atlanta, Georgia, 30334; 404-656-1776, <http://gov.state.ga.us>

Visit www.vote-smart.org to identify your legislators. Find your legislators' contact information at www.legis.state.ga.us House Information, 1-800-282-5800; Senate Information 1-800-282-5803.

Budget Information:

The 2013 Session tackles the 2013 supplemental budget, referred to here as FY 2013A, (ending June 30, 2013) and the 2014 FY budget (beginning July 1, 2013).

Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities; FY 2013A and FY 2014

This will be the fourth full year budget for the DBHDD. The Department is in the third year of the Settlement Agreement with the Department of Justice, which was signed on October 19, 2010. The agreement lays out five years of deliverables to better serve people with mental illness and developmental disabilities currently living in state institutions or at risk of institutionalization. The governor's budget instructions for FY 2014 call for a 3% cut, plus an additional 2% for Medicaid. The budget package for the settlement is listed following. UNLOCK the waiting list is requesting additional funding for populations considered "most in need."

We await the Governor's State of the State address and budget release to hear what he will propose to the legislature for funding.

Take Action—Advocacy Questions and Answers

How can I take action on legislation? (1) Form a relationship with your representatives and senators by calling, emailing, faxing, and scheduling meetings to tell them about how their decisions on the budget and laws affect the quality of life for you and your family. (2) Visit GCDD's website for additional resources like fact sheets to utilize in your advocacy efforts: www.gcdd.org/public-policy. (3) Visit www.unlockthewaitinglists.com and click on Action Center.

How can I contact my state representative or senator? Every member has an email address. However, the most effective way to communicate is by letter or phone. Legislators prefer to hear from their own constituents and may not pay attention to mass emails or form letters from people outside their districts. Information about legislators is also available in the "White Book," available at www.legis.state.ga.us, click on "Picture Book" or obtain them from the House or Senate Clerks' Offices in the Capitol.

How did my legislators vote? Voting Records are online by bill number, not by legislator. This may take up to five days following the actual vote. Go to www.legis.state.ga.us then click on House or Senate, then click on House votes or Senate votes for a complete roll call on how each person voted on a certain bill. Printed copies may be obtained from the Clerk of the House (404) 656-5015 or the Secretary of the Senate (404) 656-5040. A complete record of votes on every bill is available for a fee.

Budget for the Settlement Agreement between the US Department of Justice and the State of Georgia:

The following summarizes the DBHDD's budget package for the settlement agreement for persons with developmental disabilities.

Crisis Respite Homes with Medical/Nursing Services	\$3,842,222
Additional 250 waivers: (150 for hospital transition, 100 waiting list)	\$6,041,578
Annualize 250 waivers from the FY 2012 budget: (150 for hospital transition, 100 waiting lists)	\$7,450,534
Provide Family Support for 500 new families to keep children at home and avoid more costly services	\$1,872,000

Restore funding to cuts in program services for the DBHDD: (9,409,552)

There are currently approximately 7500 people on the planning list waiting for DD services.

Budget Package for Unlock the Waiting Lists!

Unlock supports the Settlement Agreement package submitted by the DBHDD presented above. In addition:

750 waivers for youth exiting high school: state match portion, 6 months	\$3,255,937
280 COMP waivers for most in need in the community, 6 months	\$4,132,870
70 NOW waivers for most in need in the community, 6 months	\$303,887

Housing: 20 Housing subsidies to enable person to live or stay in own home or family home with support @4800.00 per person per year average \$98,000

Department of Community Health; FY 2013 Proposed

Unlock supports adding funding to support **100 ICWP waivers for people with physical disabilities** in the community needing services.

FY 2014 state dollars \$1,620,202

Legislation Prefiled:

HOUSE:

HB 9: To amend Code Section 20-2-690.1 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to mandatory education for children between ages six and 16, so as to change the age requirements; **Sponsor:** Waites, K. 60th. **Status:** Prefiled.

HB 15: to require annual reporting of bullying incidents; to provide for input into anti-bullying strategies by school councils; **Sponsor:** Waites, K. 60th. **Status:** Prefiled.

HB 18: relating to educational programs in elementary and secondary education, so as to enact the "Blind Persons' Braille Literacy Rights and Education Act"; to provide definitions; to require an evaluation of a blind or visually impaired child to determine such child's need for Braille instruction; to require Braille instruction in the individualized education program of a blind or visually impaired student; to provide requirements for textbook publishers relating to electronic materials; to provide license requirements relating to Braille for certain teachers; **Sponsor:** Waites, K. 60th. **Status:** Prefiled.

SENATE:

SB 14: Relating to indigent and elderly patients, so as to create a Georgia Alzheimer's and Related Dementias State Plan Task Force; to provide for legislative intent; to provide for its members and vacancies; to provide for duties and responsibilities; to provide for a chairperson; to provide for a quorum for the transaction of business; to provide for a final report; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date; **Sponsor:** Unterman, R. 45th. **Status:** Prefiled

SB 21: Relating to mandatory education for children between ages six and 16, so as to change the ages of mandatory education; **Sponsor:** James, D. 35th. **Status:** Prefiled

SB 23: To establish the "Stacey Nicole English Act" and in her honor to aid in the location of missing persons who may be incapacitated due to serious medical conditions; to amend Title 35 of the O.C.G.A., relating to law enforcement officers and agencies, so as to prohibit minimum waiting periods for initiating a missing person report; to authorize a state-wide endangered person advisory based on a missing person's severe medical condition; to amend Code Section 40-2-26 of the O.C.G.A., relating to form and contents of application for registration of motor vehicles, so as to provide for emergency contact information in vehicle application registration forms; **Sponsor:** Davenport, G. 44th. **Status:** Prefiled.

Glossary:

Appropriation—a specific amount of money that is intended for use by a specific state program

DCH—Department of Community Health

DD—Developmental Disabilities

DHS—Department of Human Services

DBHDD—Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities

DOE—Department of Education

DOL—Department of Labor

FY—Fiscal Year

HB—House Bill

HR—House Resolution

SB—Senate Bill

SR—Senate Resolution

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www.unlockthewaitinglists.com

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Dates to Remember:

Blind Coalition Legislative Day at the Capitol: January 17th

Martin Luther King Remembrance: January 21st

February is Self-Advocates Month at the Capitol

Be There 4 Seniors Rally at the Capitol Feb 7th

Mental Health Day at the Capitol: February 19th

Disability Day at the Capitol: February 21st!



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