



North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities

3125 Poplarwood Court
Suite 200
Raleigh, NC 27604

February 27, 2015

The Honorable Patrick McCrory
Governor of the State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor McCrory:

I write to thank you for your leadership and vision for the State of North Carolina and to offer our resources to you as you implement the goals outlined in your *2015 State of the State* address. I am serving, at your pleasure, as chairman of the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) along with the Council's 40 members, of whom 60%, by law, are families and people with I/DD. The NCCDD is part of a national network, funded under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. Our mandate is to effect system-wide changes for North Carolinians with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families through the release of approximately two million federal dollars in grants and contracts. The NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the designated state agency for the Council, and is represented on the Council by Secretary Aldona Wos, MD and six DHHS divisions. The NCCDD's membership also includes the Department of Public Instruction; the Department of Public Safety; the University of North Carolina; members of the General Assembly; Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organizations; and providers of human services. Further information on the NCCDD may be obtained through the Council's Executive Director, Chris Egan at Chris.Egan@dhhs.nc.gov; 919-850-2901.

We appreciate your remarks on the need to focus on whole person outcomes in the Medicaid program. As you and other lawmakers consider new strategies to reform Medicaid, please consider that Medicaid is a lifeline for the estimated 177,000 North Carolina residents with I/DD and their family members and is often the only source of comprehensive coverage for medical care and long term services and supports. Medicaid allows children access to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program. For people with spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, or cerebral palsy, Medicaid provides durable medical equipment (e.g., wheelchairs, prosthetic devices) and assistive technology that facilitates independent living. Medicaid is also the main source of services and supports for community living versus more costly congregate residential nursing homes and/or institutions (e.g., home and community based waivers).

The NCCDD believes that any Medicaid long term services and supports system should be driven by person centered outcomes, provide flexible benefits packages, promote choice of providers with expertise in supporting individuals with I/DD, eliminate waiting lists, navigate and coordinate individual care, and provide access to due processes. We know that in order to deliver true whole person care in a capitated model as you describe, we must ensure that primary and specialty health care and long term support needs of individuals with I/DD are appropriately defined and incorporated across the life course. The NCCDD currently funds a statewide initiative to study models that will build the capacity of our

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An independent organization residing within the NC Department of Health and Human Services

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health, dental, disability, and academic systems to address the needs of people with I/DD and their families so they can achieve and sustain good health and find the “right door” for accessing health care within a managed care structure. We offer the resources and expertise of this multi-disciplinary health home collaborative as you seek to implement system level improvements to our Medicaid program.

Our Council also shares your goals to strengthen our state economy and add jobs for our residents. We believe that the employment of people with disabilities within the general workforce is a critical component of our state’s workforce development goals. The current unemployment rate among persons with disabilities in North Carolina is a deplorable 70%. The results of unemployment for individuals with disabilities have been dependency, poverty and segregation; lost talent for employers; services that are not allocated to those most in need; and lost tax revenue. With your support, the NCCDD hopes to change this.

To improve employment outcomes for North Carolinians with disabilities, the NCCDD has taken the lead in our State in advancing the nationwide “Employment First” initiative. This initiative has been a key focus of the National Governors Association in recent years. The implementation of Employment First strategies increases independence, productivity, integration and inclusion in the workplace for people with disabilities. An Employment First approach changes attitudes, beliefs and policy, rather than creating new programs or requiring additional funds. Successfully implemented, it means that employment is the expected and preferred outcome of *all* publicly funded services provided to those with disabilities is employment and careers. This outcome could become foremost for North Carolina’s Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), as well as other state agencies providing services to people with disabilities.

With the NCCDD’s leadership, North Carolina has become one of the 29 member states in the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN). The SELN initiative works with DHHS divisions, such that their policy and practices foster the outcome of competitive, integrated employment for people with disabilities. This year, NCCDD has also partnered with DHHS to become one of only 15 states designated by the US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment as a Core Leadership and Mentoring State for Employment First.

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities offers these and other consumer-driven resources and stands ready to assist you in forging a new path for people with disabilities, aligned with your vision and goals for our State. I would deeply appreciate an opportunity to meet you to discuss the activities of the NCCDD. I thank you in advance for joining with the NCCDD in fostering better lives for those with disabilities throughout our state and will work with your office to schedule a meeting at your convenience.

Respectfully,



Ronald D. (Ron) Reeve
Chairman

cc: Aldona Wos, MD, Secretary, DHHS
Sherry Bradsher, Deputy Secretary, DHHS

