

**Fenty e-Transition – What’s Happening 1 Year Later?  
Developmental Disability Services  
Community Meeting, January 12, 2008**

**Notes on Audience Q&A and Recommendations for 2008**

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Before Mayor Fenty took office, he organized a series of e-Transition Teams to make suggestions for his first year in office. The Human Services e-Transition Team included a Developmental Disability Services Work Group, which in December of 2006 submitted recommendations to Mayor Fenty on improving services and supports for residents with developmental disabilities and their families. These recommendations came out of a series of online chats as well as a well-attended community town hall meeting, co-hosted with Project ACTION!.

One year later, on January 12, 2008, the Developmental Disability Services Work Group and Project ACTION! co-hosted a second community town hall meeting. Approximately 75 people attended, including individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, community advocates, service providers and government officials. The purpose of the meeting was to review progress made on the community's recommendations to Mayor Fenty during his first year, and to generate ideas for continued action in 2008.

Judith E. Heumann, Director of the Department on Disability Services (DDS); Laura Nuss, Deputy Director for the DDS Developmental Disabilities Administration; and Eve L. Hill, Director of the Office of Disability Rights opened the meeting with presentations on relevant activities of their agencies during the last year. This was followed by an audience question-and-answer segment, and then by an audience brainstorming session on ideas for 2008.

This document includes highlights from the question-and-answer session as well as a summary of the audience recommendations for 2008. The summary was compiled from flip charts as well as notes taken by Karen Davis and Shelley Ougheltree.

For more information on the Developmental Disability Services Work Group, contact T.J. Sutcliffe, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy at The Arc of the District of Columbia, at (202) 636-2963 or [tjsutcliffe@arcdc.net](mailto:tjsutcliffe@arcdc.net); or Kim Jones, Executive Director of Advocates for Justice and Education, at (202) 678-8060 or [kim.jones@aje-dc.org](mailto:kim.jones@aje-dc.org).

## **Audience Question & Answer**

**Q: What in-home services are available and how do I access them?** (parent)

A: In-home services are available through DDA and the Medicaid Waiver program. To access them it is important that you work through your case manager. (Laura Nuss, DDA)

**Q: As an individual with a disability I feel like my individual rights are not respected (i.e. clients have been told they cannot have company in their bedrooms), but I know I have the same rights as everyone else.** (Bernard)

A: We agree that individuals with disabilities should have all the rights they are afforded under the law and that they need to be respected. (Laura Nuss, DDA)

**Q: Transportation is a huge issue. There should be aides helping people on and off buses because it is very difficult for bus drivers to do so themselves. Why aren't there any aides?** (parent)

A: There is a lot of miscommunication regarding transportation but there *is* funding for Metro Access aides through a contract with Medicaid. Individuals need a paper that says they need an aide for transportation. It is important for you to be in touch with your case worker regarding this issue. For complaints regarding transportation, DDA keeps a log. (Dawn Rudolph, DDA)

**Q: I am finding a lot of issues with the transition from early childhood intervention into the school system. There need to be proper services, such as therapists, and schools available to address a child's needs. As a parent I see major gaps in services and some schools tell me none are available for my daughter. What can I do to make this transition easier for her?** (Rhonda White, parent)

A: Continue to be proactive. There are services available to address the needs of children with disabilities within the school system and it is unacceptable for schools to tell you these services are not available for your daughter. You should also contact the Parent Training and Information Center; we have two offices, one in NW and one in SE. (L. Thomas Mangrum, Project ACTION! and Kim Jones, Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.)

**Q: We received a statement showing that Medicaid paid for physical therapy services that my daughter never received. When I called Medicaid they said it was a billing or coding error, but that money went somewhere! Where can I report concerns about Medicaid paperwork such as this?** (Tyrone Neal, parent)

A: It is imperative that fraud is reported and you can report Medicaid fraud by contacting DDA. (Laura Nuss, DDA)

**Q: My agency provides community support (i.e. home care and respite) to individuals with disabilities; however, we are not being reimbursed for the services we provide. How can I fix this?** (service provider)

A: DDS has a technical assistance hotline for services providers that can assist you in billing and reimbursement. (Laura Nuss, DDA)

**Q: What is being done to improve front-line staffing for DDS and providers?** (service provider)

A: We are improving our training by focusing on quality, best-practice, customer service, skills in social work, etc. With better training we hope to develop qualified leadership and services to ensure that the whole system is accountable. (Judy Heumann, DDS)

**Q: My clients are dissatisfied with transportation services. Rides do not arrive on time and sometimes do not come at all. Furthermore, transportation providers are assigned and there is no personal choice.** (in-home service provider)

A: DDA wants to pursue self-determination regarding transportation. (Judy Heumann, DDS)

## Ideas for 2008 -- Audience Recommendations

*What would improve the lives of residents with developmental disabilities and their families in 2008? How might DDS improve its services?*

- JOBS!!!
- There needs to be ONE VOICE and individuals with developmental disabilities need to be the power behind changes
  - Self-advocacy
- Values should drive what is being done
- CHOICES
  - Respecting individual choice and self-determination
  - Information needs to be available for individuals and families so they can make informed choices.
- Improved transportation
  - Timeliness
  - Accessibility
    - Getting on and off Metro Access buses
- Inter-agency collaboration
- Increase the number of services that are available
- Increase the ability of individuals to access and receive services
- Improve service delivery
  - Make sure services promised are *really* delivered
  - There should be a "consumer report," describing what providers do and how well they do it
  - More information is needed on quality of services
- Increase the number of individuals with disabilities who work in the D.C. and Federal Governments – this will help agencies understand what the issues are *first hand*
- “The system needs to realize that everyone has a handicap, whether you can see it or not. Some people have heart problems and some have attitude problems; no one is perfect,”  
Thelma Greene (Project ACTION!)
- “No one can speak for the disabled better than the disabled can speak for themselves,” L.  
Thomas Mangrum (Project ACTION!)
  - ATTEND HEARINGS!
  - TESTIFY!
- Improve grievance process
  - There needs to be a meaningful and responsive problem resolution system
  - Case management is not enough!
- Develop a client satisfaction survey on:
  - Services
  - Case management
- Need more affordable housing
- There needs to be follow-up on annual residential evaluations and I.S.P. recommendations

- For those with dual-diagnoses who require services from multiple agencies, there needs to be a clearer understanding of agency roles and responsibilities.
  - Inter-agency communication
- Education on disabilities both
  - In D.C.
  - And in the metro area.
- Improve the timeliness of case management