

Update regarding SFY 15-16 New York State Budget with regard for implementation of the Transformation Agreement

Prepared for the Assembly Standing Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities

October 20, 2015

Good morning Chairwoman Gunther and other Members of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee, and everyone in attendance. Thank you for the opportunity to update the Committee on how the 2015-16 state budget is helping OPWDD operationalize our transformation agreement. My name is Helene DeSanto, and I am OPWDD's Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Service Delivery.

As you are aware, over the last several years, OPWDD has been undergoing a significant system transformation to a more person-centered, community-based system of services and supports. The 2015-16 New York State Budget serves as an example of how the Legislature and Governor can work together to meet the challenges associated with transforming New York's service delivery system to better meet the needs of individuals while ensuring long-term sustainability.

The Budget provided \$124 million additional dollars to provide new services plus another \$42 million to assist in our ongoing efforts to help individuals move from developmental centers and intermediate care facilities to more integrated homes in the community.

In addition, the budget provided OPWDD with the resources to support our ongoing efforts in developing a roadmap to transforming this system for the future. Specifically, the budget language supported OPWDD's Transformation Panel and tasked the Panel with creating a comprehensive transformation plan and providing OPWDD with guidance on how to best execute the Panel's final recommendations. These recommendations will be delivered to the legislature by February 15, 2016.

As you know, the Transformation Panel includes representation from a diverse group of stakeholders: people receiving services, parents, agency and provider association representatives, union representatives, and other experts in the field of developmental disabilities such as Chairwoman Gunther and Senator Ortt, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities.

The Transformation Panel is focused on providing recommendations around residential supports, self-direction, community-integrated employment, managed care, and long-term sustainability. The Panel has been meeting regularly and has reviewed housing, employment, self-direction and managed care. Subcommittees were established on the specific topics of housing, self-direction, workforce issues, care coordination, and employment-related transportation. In addition, the Panel hosted a series of public



hearings in various regions of the state to solicit more public feedback and an additional video conference is planned.

While recommendations are still being formed, some common themes are emerging: make the system simpler to navigate so families can better understand services available and how to access them; better explain to people how their needs can be met in non-certified settings, and enhance these supports for people with higher needs; grant service providers additional guidance and flexibility; and reinvest savings into the system so we can serve more people and meet more needs.

The Panel will soon be wrapping up their work but there is much yet to do including; analyzing and summarizing public comment, reviewing all of the submitted testimony from the public forums, developing recommendations, and issuing the final report to the legislature.

In addition to the work on the Transformation Panel, the 2015-16 Budget contained funding for OPWDD to perform a review and analysis of all individuals who have indicated an interest in residential services. OPWDD has been working on contacting each person on the request list and publicizing a call-in number for those who cannot be reached but would like to provide updated information, and will soon be compiling the results of this outreach to assist us in long-term planning. While work around this initiative is ongoing, OPWDD will be issuing a review of its results.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today and for your continued advocacy on behalf of individuals with disabilities and their families. We look forward to issuing the various reports and working with the Committee on implementation.