

STATE OF COLORADO



Colorado Department of Human Services
people who help people




Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

Karen L. Beye
Executive Director

OFFICE OF ADULT, DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION SERVICES
Susan R. Hunt, Interim Director

DIVISION FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
Sharon Jacksi, Ph.D., Director
4055 South Lowell Blvd.
Denver, Colorado 80236
Phone 303-866-7450
TDD 303-866-7471
FAX 303-866-7470
www.cdhs.state.co.us

TO: Definition for Developmental Disabilities Task Force

FROM: Susan R. Hunt 
Interim Director

SUBJECT: Charge of the Task Force

DATE: September 8, 2008

I want to thank the members of the Definition for Developmental Disabilities Task Force in advance for your commitment to persons with developmental disabilities. Your interest in helping Colorado to examine the definition and eligibility criteria for services in the developmental disabilities service system is appreciated.

The task before you is not an easy one. Most of you probably know this is a complex public policy issue and there are many differing views of what the definition should look like in Colorado. This memorandum serves to outline the specific outcomes with which the Task Force is charged.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Task Force is to develop two recommendations to submit to the Department and the Governor's Office for consideration.

1. The Task Force is to determine what changes may be necessary through rule making or other processes to more clearly operationalize the existing statutory definition for developmental disabilities in C.R.S 27-10.5-102, and to specify what criteria will be used to determine whether someone meets the definition of a developmental disability.
2. The Task Force is to develop a potential new statutory definition and criteria to determine eligibility for developmental disabilities services that are funded under C.R.S. 27-10.5-104 in Colorado. The new definition must use clear and unambiguous language that is readily understood by the reader. This recommendation must also include specific criteria to be used to determine whether someone meets the new definition of a developmental disability.

In both situations, the Task Force must also consider and report the fiscal implications of any proposed changes. In cases of a recommendation that would require increased funding, the Task Force must include realistic recommendations for potential additional funding sources to support the revised or new definition.

Process:

The Task Force may set its own ground rules and operating procedures to accomplish the work assigned in the identified time frame. It is expected that all deliberations will work toward a consensus of opinion of the members of the Task Force. At a minimum, the Task Force should review Colorado's current definition and eligibility criteria, definitions from other states, available data regarding the prevalence of eligible individuals under various definitions, and the policy issues involved in changing the current definition. Members of the Task Force may also solicit input from their constituencies, as necessary and appropriate, to inform the deliberations of the Task Force.

In recognition of the scope of the duties assigned to the Task Force, the Department has contracted with two national experts, Ric Zaharia and Daniel Overbeck from the Consortium on Innovative Practices, to provide technical expertise, background material on what definitions are used by other states, analysis of the potential implications to the state for the various definitions that may be developed, and general advice and consultation to the Task Force. In order to assure that all participants and opinions are heard and to help ensure that the Task Force completes its work in the time allotted, the Department has hired an independent facilitator, Jean McAllister. She will be available to:

- Facilitate the meetings,
- Ensure that the Task Force adheres to the ground rules and guidelines it sets for its deliberations,
- Ensure that the Task Force remains within the scope of the charge of the Task Force regarding the development of two viable options,
- Ensure that at least the minimum criteria for definitions are met as set forth in the parameters listed above, and
- Assist the Task Force with writing a final report within the established time frame.

Additionally, staff from the Division for Developmental Disabilities, as well the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, the Attorney General's Office, and the Governor's Office will be available to answer questions, provide technical assistance and support during the deliberations of the Task Force.

Product:

The Task Force must develop a final report and submit it to the Department and the Governor's Office by November 15, 2008. At a minimum, the report must include an overview of the Task Force process, identification of the information considered in forming the recommendations, and the two identified recommendations and their service, policy and fiscal implications. The Task Force may decide to add additional material to the report should it determine that to be necessary.

Again, I want to thank you for your efforts with this challenging assignment and I look forward to viewing your final report. If you have any other questions, please contact John Miles at 303-866-7459 or John.Miles@state.co.us.

cc: Task Force State Support Staff
Leslie Herod, Governor's Office
Sarah Sills, OSPB