

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS

Full Council Meeting

Wednesday, September 22, 2021, 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM

GACDA MEMBER		PRESENT	PROXY	PROXY NAME	ABSENT
Kathy	Allen	√			
Mary	Breaud				X
Walter	Carpenter				XXXX
Karen	Collins	√			
Timothy	Delaney	√			
Sharon	Delvisco				X
Beau	Ellerbee	√			
Lynette	Fontenot	√			
Robert	Garcia				X
Kirsten	Gladen				X
Tarj	Hamilton				X
Elaine	Harmon	√			
Sharon	Hennessey	√			
Andrew	Kuyoro	√			
Andrea	Lowe	√			
Jessica	Michot	√			
Jim	Mitchell	√			
Kelly	Monroe	√			
John	Moran				X
Mark	Raymond, Jr.	√			
Karen	Scallan	√			
Tabatha	Taylor	√			
Erica	Wallace				XX
Jerrie	Williams				XX
Gerald	Boudreaux	√			
Malinda	White				X
Attendees		Agency/Affiliate	Attendees		Agency/Affiliate
Amanda Mitchell			Karen Artus		LACAN
Anne Jayes		Lighthouse	Kevin George		OCDD
Ashley McReynolds		Arc LA	Kathy Dwyer		OCDD SAC
Brenda Sharp		LDH-OCDD	Kristie Curtis		LaCAN
Brenton Andrus		LA DDC	Lynn Stevens		Goodwill
Carol Lee		LDH- OCDD	Marsha Andrews		
Charles Tate			Melissa Bayham		LWC-LRS
Cheri Crain		GOEA	Nicole Flores		FHF Acadiana
Cindy Obier		SFM	Pasquel Nguyen		
Erin K. Downing		LDH- OCDD	Rikki David		ADA Coordinator
Harlon Cowsar		LCG, FHF Acad	Sherlyn Sullivan		LDH- OAAS
Julie Foster Hagan		OCDD	Tory Rocca		DRLA
Staff		Title	Staff		Title
Bambi Polotzola		GODA Director	Jamar Ennis		SILC Director
Lillian Dejean		GODA Coordinator	Melanie Washington		SICC Director

Full Council Meeting
Wednesday, September 22, 2021
12:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Call to Order and Introductions

The September 22, 2021 GACDA meeting was called to order by GACA Chairperson Lynette Fontenot. Roll was called determining that a quorum was established.

Approval of June 2021 Minutes

A motion was made by Kathy Allen and seconded by Elaine Harmon to approve the June 2021 GACDA minutes. The motion passed without any objections nor abstentions.

Committee Reports and Discussions:

Housing

Sharon Hennesey provided an update on behalf of the Housing Committee.

The Housing Committee made recommendations for approval from the full Council

- ***Connect with GOHSEP;***
- ***GACDA to identify the person responsible for determining the person responsible for determining FEMA mitigation allocations;***
- ***GACDA to request GOHSEP assess mitigation needs specific to people living with disabilities;***
- ***GACDA to request GOHSEP to review that assessment's results with GACDA to develop recommendations for those mitigation efforts.***

The motion was unanimously approved without objections nor abstentions.

- ***Request access to any and all data collected by partners relative to determine the needs of constituents after natural disasters.***

The motion was unanimously approved without objections nor abstentions.

Transportation

Beau Ellerbee provided an update on behalf of the Transportation Committee. Please see the minutes from the September 20, 2021 meeting.

Accessibility

Andrew Kuyoro provided an update on behalf of the Accessibility Committee. Please see the minutes from the September 20, 2021 meeting.

The Accessibility Committee made recommendation for approval from the full Council:

A legislative resolution regarding

- 1. accessibility in shelters (availability of PCAs, communication accessibility, and physical accessibility),***
- 2. current procedures for evacuating individuals with disabilities, and***
- 3. what other states are doing in regards to emergency response for individuals with disabilities.***

Legislative

Kelly Monroe provided an update on behalf of the Legislative Committee. Please see the minutes from the September 21, 2021 meeting.

The Accessibility Committee made recommendation for approval from the full Council:

Write a letter to Louisiana's congressional delegation in support of the Build Back Better Act, the Better Care Better Jobs Act, and ABLE Age Adjustment Act, while also suggesting that the ABLE Age Limit be removed in its entirety as soon as is practical.

The motion was unanimously approved without objections nor abstentions.

Update on Employment initiatives

Melissa Bayham provided an update on behalf of LRS. The LRS offices in certain areas affected by Hurricane Ida are closed (Harvey and Houma). LRS is having a difficult time recruiting staff persons. There are six openings on the civil service website, there are 4 openings in shreveport. There will be meetings with civil service in the near future to determine a solution to the issues relative to recruiting. LRS encourages GACDA to spread the word about the openings at LRS.

Bambi Polotzola provided an update on behalf of the SAME Taskforce. The SAME Taskforce did not meet during September due to Hurricane Ida. In August, the annual SAME survey was sent to all state employees to complete anonymously to gain access to data points regarding employment for people with disabilities in state agencies. Also in the month of August, [a video featuring Governor Edwards, and other state department heads](#) was created to promote the SAME initiatives. 2021 marks the highest participation rate in the annual SAME survey. Master level students are currently putting the SAME data together. The report relative to the SAME data should be ready in the near future. The next SAME meeting will take place on October 8, 2021.

Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)

Julie Foster Hagan of OCDD provided the following written report to GACDA regarding the department's employment updates:

- No significant updates to report

- OCDD continues to work on updating service definitions and rates for vocational services in order to incentivize supported / competitive employment

La Department of Health updates

Office of Adult and Aging Services (OAAS)

Sherlyn Sullivan shared that OAAS is monitoring the COVID-19 numbers and have implemented an appropriate response to ramp up vaccination efforts. The registry currently has 10,874 on the registry, and those who are not receiving any form of assistance is down to just over 5,000. PACE will assist in the efforts of distributing the third vaccination shot.

Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)

Julie Foster Hagan of OCDD provided the following written report to GACDA:

- A rate increase for OCDD Home and Community Based Waiver services provided by a direct support professional will begin October 1st, 2021. Rate increase equates to \$2.50 per hour for these services. Providers will be required to pay direct support workers a minimum of \$9.00 per hour, and this will be audited by OCDD.
- The New Opportunities Waiver is in the process of renewal; it expires on January 1st, 2022. We received public comment on the waiver, and this is being considered at this time.
 - The major changes were related to changes requested for once the public health emergency ends, such as allowances for family to be paid caregivers in certain circumstances, legally responsible relatives to be paid caregivers for per diem services, and continuation of “virtual” and small group options for day habilitation.
 - OCDD will be making waiver changes / amendments to the other 3 waivers to reflect changes as well, and we anticipate submitting these amendments prior to December 1st.
 - All exceptions through Appendix K will be in place for 6 months after the end of the Public Health Emergency. The Public Health Emergency can only be extended for 90 days at a time; the current PHE is scheduled to end in October, but the Biden Administration has stated that they will likely extend at least through the end of this calendar year. That means that the exceptions will likely be in place until at least June of 2022. We will have changes finalized in our waivers prior to that time.

- LDH is continuing to work on the American Rescue Plan Act spending plan for the enhanced 10% federal match dollars that are available through March of 2024. An initial plan was submitted to CMS to meet the timelines, and this plan can be updated on a quarterly basis. We have received a lot of feedback on the original spending plan, and we do anticipate additions to the plan that will be made public once finalized.

State Agency/ Member Updates

2021 GODA Conference Recap

The GODA Conference took place in July. Almost 800 individuals registered. All participants were volunteers. The feedback received has been very positive. All of the sessions were recorded and are available to Youtube for viewing. GODA placed an extra emphasis on diversity

2021 GOLD Awards and Inclusive Arts Contest

The 2021 GOLD Awards and 2021 Inclusive Art Contest flyers are available and have been shared via constant contact and the GODA newsletter. The deadline for applications and submissions for both the GOLD Awards and Inclusive Art Contest is November 1, 2021. Participants of the Inclusive Art Contest may submit other forms of art including but not limited to poetry, songs, dance, etc. that illustrate this year's theme of "Accessibility of the Future"

Both the inclusive Art Contest and the GOLD Awards require the support of GACDA to select winning entries and recipients, respectfully. It was mentioned that an award honoring the late April Dunn will be featured next year.

Due to concerns surrounding COVID-19, GODA has yet to decide whether or not both ceremonies will be held virtually or in person. The date and time of the ceremony for both the Inclusive Art Contest and the GOLD Awards is to be determined.

Adjournment

Kelly Monroe Made a motion to adjourn and Tabatha Taylor seconded the motion.

HOUSING COMMITTEE
 Tuesday, September 21, 2021
 12:00 PM to 1:20 PM

Committee Members	Present	Proxy	Proxy Name	Absent	Agency/Affiliate / Representing
Andrea Lowe*	√				
Jerrie Williams*	√				
Jim Mitchell*	√				
John Moran*				X	
Karen Collins*	√				
Karen Scallan*	√				
Kelly Monroe*	√				
Kirsten Gladen*				X	
Sharon Hennessey	√				
Tarj Hamilton*				X	
Cecile Alexander	√				DCFS
Gordon Levine	√				LHC
Janae Burr	√				LDH-OCDD
John Schweitzer	√				LWC-LRS
Alison Vuljoin	√				LDH-OAAS
Lynette Fontenot*	√				Chairperson
Kathy Allen	√				Vice-Chair
Bambi Polotzola	√				GODA
Attendees	Agency/Affiliate/ Representing		Attendees	Agency/Affiliate / Representing	
Brandy Gautreau			Keisha Fleming		
Brenda Barras			Kristie Curtis	LACAN	
Charles Tate			Marsha Andrews		
Cheri Crain			Nicole Flores		
Cindy Obier			Pasqual Nguyen		
Erin Downing	OCDD		Rikki David		
			Tony Rocca	DRLA	
Staff	Agency		Staff	Agency	
Jamar Ennis	SILC/GODA		Melanie Washington	SICC/GODA	
Lillian Dejean	GODA				

Co-Chairperson Sharon Hennesy called the meeting to order. Roll call was conducted.

Response to Hurricane Ida (*Louisiana Housing Corp*)

Josh Dean was unable to participate due to Hurricane Ida Response work, Gordon Levine provided an overview in his stead.

LHC is in “recovery mode.” They are in partnership with several agencies such as FEMA, Red Cross, and HUD. There are ongoing efforts to draw down on sheltering, and finding avenues to assist individuals to find more sustainable living arrangements. There will be LHC programs including, but not limited to, on-site casework initiatives in the shelters. There are no tropical impacts to be expected in Louisiana in the next 10 days. There are many individuals who remain without power. LHC and its partners have responded appropriately while in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and dealing with the Hurricane Ida recovery.

It was mentioned that things should be done on a state level to ensure individuals with disabilities have a safe and accessible environment after natural disasters. It was also mentioned that funding for mitigation should automatically go to serve the needs of individuals with disabilities.

There are not many individuals who have disabilities who are not in the systems that we work with, unless they do not identify as having a disability. There is a need for disability integration within FEMA and other disaster relief programs.

Participants of the meeting asked various questions relative to FEMA’s policies including and not limited to exceptions within IA.

A motion was made by Gordon Levine, seconded by Sharon Hennesey, to recommend the full council:

- 1. Connect with GOHSEP;**
- 2. GACDA to identify the person responsible for determining the person responsible for determining FEMA mitigation allocations;**
- 3. GACDA to request GOHSEP assess mitigation needs specific to people living with disabilities;**
- 4. GACDA to request GOHSEP to review that assessment’s results with GACDA to develop recommendations for those mitigation efforts.**

The motion was unanimously approved without objections nor abstentions.

There should be efforts and programs that will prepare individuals who are not able to leave during a natural disaster to shelter in place. Not every parish has an OEP center, and those parishes that do may not have a full-time operation.

A motion was made by Karen Scallan and seconded by John Schweitzer to recommend to the full Council for:

The Housing Committee to request access to any and all data collected by partners relative to determine the needs of constituents after natural disasters.

The motion was unanimously approved without objections nor abstentions.

Adjourn

Lynette Fontenot made the motion to adjourn the September 21, 2021 Housing Committee meeting. John Schweitzer seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved without any objections, abstentions, or discussion.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

1:30 PM to 2:50 PM

Committee Members	Present	Proxy	Proxy Name	Absent	Agency/Affiliate/Representing
Andrea Lowe*	√				
Beau Ellerbee*	√				
Elaine Harmon*	√				
Jim Mitchell	√				
Karen Collins*	√				
Karen Scallan*	√				
Kristen Gladen*				X	
Mark Raymond, Jr.*				X	
Sharon Hennessey*	√				
Amy Dawson				X	GOHSEP
Jamie Ainsworth	√				DOTD
Kevin George	√				LDH-OCDD
Melanie Doucet				XXX	LDH- Medicaid
Teresa Frank	√				LDH-OCDD
Lynette Fontenot*	√				Chairperson
Kathy Allen	√				Vice-Chair
Bambi Polotzola	√				GODA
Attendees	Agency/Affiliate/Representing		Attendees	Agency/Affiliate/Representing	
Brenda Barras	FHF Acadiana		Keisha Fleming		
Charles Tate			Laura Dake	ITN America	
Cheri Crain	GOEA		Lynette Bech		
Erin Downing	LDH-OCDD		Marsha Andrews		
Harlon Cowsar	FHF Acadiana		Nicole Flores	FHF Acadiana	
John Schweitzer	LWC-LRS		Pasqual Nguyen		
Jonathan Bolen	Rapides Trans		Rikki David	State ADA Coor	
Karen Artus	LACAN		Tony Rocca	DRLA	
Staff	Agency		Staff	Agency	
Jamar Ennis	SILC		Melanie Washington	SICC	
Lillian Dejean	GODA				

Co-Chairperson Beau Ellerbee called the meeting to order. Roll call was conducted.

Rapides Parish Planning Commission *(Jonathan Bolen)*

Jonathan Bolen of the Rapides Parish Planning Commission provided an overview of the recently completed twelve parish [ATRANS Service Planning & Asset Study](#), which focuses on two different aspects of transportation services (1) a urban public

transportation (ATrans) and (2) Rural Transit initiative (RTA), that produced recommendations on how to improve services to the community in Region VI (including the city of Alexandria and surrounding areas). It was mentioned that it has been over 30 years since the last transportation study for the aforementioned areas.

There will be efforts to ensure that these recommended improvements are applied. The recommendations are inclusive of public input. The plan is to build a long lasting system. There are efforts to become a 5311 program to provide services in central Louisiana (within two parishes to start). The current plan is being submitted to the board.

Hurricane Ida Response

DOTD reported that 185 buses were staged for Hurricane Ida.

Laura Dake of ITN

Laura Dake of ITN provided an overview of her company's program. ITN is a national nonprofit transportation network for older people and adults with visual impairments. ITNCountry is a transportation platform specially designed for rural and small communities. This year, ITNCountry is launching in 10 communities across the U.S. A broader national rollout is scheduled for early 2022.

ITN Country/America operates as a volunteer driver program. It can be viewed as an alternative to Uber and Lyft, especially for the targeted audience with little or now income. The program will give greater options for individuals to travel to essential appointments and other important destinations.

Laura Dake provided a PowerPoint Presentation that highlights ITN Country's initiative geared towards rural and small communities. Information related to ITN Country's transportation initiative can be found [here](#).

Public Comment

Kevin George shared concerns relative to the lack of training/education about using the public transportation system.

Adjournment

Kevin George made a motion to adjourn, Karen Collins seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved without any objections, abstentions, or discussion. The meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.

ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

3:00 PM to 4:20 PM

Committee Members	Present	Proxy	Proxy Name	Absent	Agency/Affiliate/Representing
Andrea Lowe*	√				
Andrew Kuyoro*	√				
Beau Ellerbee*	√				
Erica Wallace*				XX	
Jerrie Williams*				XX	
Jessica Michot*	√				
Jim Mitchell	√				
Karen Collins*	√				
Karen Scallan*	√				
Sharon Hennessey*	√				
Tim Delaney*	√				
Amy Dawson	√				GOHSEP
Brett Domangue				X	LDH-OCDD
Celia Alexander	√				DCFS
Cindy Obier	√				State Fire Marshall
Erin Downing				X	LDH-OCDD
Lynette Fontenot*	√				Chairperson
Kathy Allen				XXX	Vice-Chair
Bambi Polotzola	√				GODA
Attendees	Agency/Affiliate/Representing		Attendees	Agency/Affiliate/Representing	
Brenda Barras			Keiara Fort		
Charles Tate			Keisha Fleming		
Cheri Crain	GOEA		Kristie Curtis	FHF Acadiana	
Erin Downing			Lynette Bech		
Harlon Cowsar	FHF Acadiana		Marsha Andrews		
Jana Broussard	LA Comm for Deaf		Pasqual Nguyen		
John Schweitzer	LWC- LRS		Rikki David	State ADA Coor	
			Tony Rocca	DRLA	
Staff	Agency		Staff	Agency	
Jamar Ennis	SILC		Melanie Washington	SICC	
			Lilian Dejean	GODA	

Call to Order and Roll Call

The September 21, 2021 GACDA Accessibility Committee was called to order at 3:00 pm. Roll call was conducted.

REVUP & National Disability Voter Registration Week

Lillian DeJean of GODA provided updates regarding REVUP and the National Disability Voter Registration Week. There are ongoing efforts to:

1. Establish a Louisiana REVUP Committee. It was mentioned that she reached out to 20 organizations to support the National Disability Voter Registration Week.
2. Create policy proposals to improve voter accessibility, including advocating for poll worker training and remote ballot return. The possibility of securing a grant for poll worker training is being looked into.

Participants of the meeting suggested that we contact the Secretary of State to involve them in our plans.

Update from the State ADA Office

Rikki David of the State ADA Office provided an overview of the position. It was mentioned that there are ongoing efforts to increase information relative to the ADA Office's resources. David mentioned that she has reached out to several ADA Coordinators of the various departments within the Louisiana state government. She also mentioned that the ADA Office will focus on digital accessibility and listen to other concerns of stakeholders. Moving forward, David suggested that individuals shift to using password protected word documents as opposed to using PDF documents.

How will it be assessed whether or not a website is accessible? It was mentioned that the WCAG standard will likely be applied to the extent that it is not covered by section 508.

Update from Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD)

Jana Broussard provided an update. The Commission is putting together a website to appeal to individuals who communicate using ASL.

Broussard provided an update on the RFI for accessibility of the state capitol. There has been a technology review committee created to examine the accessibility of the state capitol, and LCD is looking for an agency/vendor who is able to handle the data collection of the RFI.

LCD created a subcommittee to create Louisiana standards for interpreting.

The supports and services program has been released to an RFP; if parties are interested in being a provider are encouraged to contact LCD

LCD partnered with FEMA to provide a hurricane relief event. Participants provided interpreting and AT technology services to survivors so that they could complete their FEMA application(s). A second event will take place in Metairie, LA on September 24, 2021. LCD assisted DCFS during the DNSAP application process.

Hurricane Ida Response

Amy Dawson provided an update on behalf of EMDAC and GOHSEP. It was mentioned that there are currently a few hundred individuals who are currently residing in shelters, mostly in their own parishes. Because it will take months to secure FEMA trailers, there are several options being considered to serve individuals housing needs in the interim.

It was advised that a hazard mitigation specialist be consulted to discuss needs of people with disabilities and include those needs in future decisions about projects and programs for Louisiana. Hazard mitigation dollars come with a 25% match.

Each disaster is different and will yield various federal resources.

Bambi reported that EMDAC is looking into accessibility issues at shelters, such as inaccessible bathrooms/showers and lack of Personal Care Assistants. There were more individuals with access and functional needs at shelters this year due the abundance of evacuated nursing homes. She suggested that there be contracts established with personal care entities across the state before a disaster happens, so resources for PCAs are already in place. Bambi also emphasized the importance of web accessibility for recovery programs for individuals with differing communication needs.

Jim Mitchell inquired if there was a state transportation plan in place for non-mandatory evacuations. Amy Dawson explained that DOTD does have a transportation contract, and it was activated for Ida with a fleet of coach buses and paratransit vehicles.

A motion was made by Jessica Michot, seconded by Celia Alexander, to recommend to the full Council the creation of ***a legislative resolution regarding***

- 1. accessibility in shelters (availability of PCAs, communication accessibility, and physical accessibility),***
- 2. current procedures for evacuating individuals with disabilities, and***
- 3. what other states are doing in regards to emergency response for individuals with disabilities.***

The motion was unanimously approved without objections nor abstentions.

Adjournment

The Accessibility Committee was adjourned at 4:21pm.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
 Wednesday, September 22, 2021
 10:00 AM to 11:20 AM

Committee Members	Present	Proxy	Proxy Name	Absent	Agency/Affiliate/Representing
Andrea Lowe*	√				
Elaine Harmon*	√				
Erica Wallace*				XX	
Jerrie Williams*				X	
Jessica Michot*	√				
Karen Collins*	√				
Karen Scallan*	√				
Kelly Monroe*	√				
Sharon Hennessey				X	
Tabatha Taylor*	√				
Allison Vuljoin	√				LDH - OAAS
Anne Jayes	√				Lighthouse LA
Brenton Andrus	√				DD Council
Carol Lee				XX	LDH-OCDD
Lacey Gero	√				LDH-OPH
Lynette Fontenot*				XX	Chairperson
Kathy Allen	√				Vice-Chair
Bambi Polotzola	√				GODA
Attendees	Agency/Affiliate/Representing		Attendees		Agency/Affiliate/Representing
Jim Mitchell*			Erin Downing		
Rep. Malinda White*			Keisha Fleming		
Annette Fruge	FHF Acadiana		Kristie Curtis		FHF Acadiana
Ashley McReynolds	Arc LA		Marsha Andrews		
Caroline Meehan	CPA		Rosemary Morales		OCDD
Cheri Crain	GOEA		Tory Rocca		DRLA
Staff	Agency		Staff		Agency
Jamar Ennis	SILC		Lillian Dejean		GODA

Call to Order and Introductions

The September 22, 2021 GACDA Legislative Committee was called to order at 10:00am. Roll call was conducted.

Discuss Federal Legislative Issues

Better Care Better Jobs/Build Back Better Resolution and reconciliation

Chairperson Monroe provided an overview of the Better Care Better Jobs Act and the Build Back Better Resolution and Reconciliation. This is an act that would make

investments in the disability service systems by expanding access to services. For Louisiana specifically, 8,309 additional people will be able to receive services and 1000 new jobs would be created for DSWs.

In Biden's plan, the areas of focus are:

- SSI: The asset limit would be adjusted from \$2,000 to \$10,000. The rules regarding food and rent will also be adjusted.
- HCBS: Some of the goals for Home and Community Based Services include, but aren't limited to, incentivising the workforce, increasing quality and accountability, additional oversight, and provision of technical assistance.
- Paid Leave

Able Age Adjustment Bill

This bill would make ABLE Accounts available to people who become disabled before their 46th birthday. Currently, ABLE Accounts are only available to individuals who have an onset of disability by age 26.

A motion was made by Karen Scallan and seconded by Elaine Harmon to recommend to the full Council to

Write a letter to Louisiana's congressional delegation in support of the Build Back Better Act, the Better Care Better Jobs Act, and ABLE Age Adjustment Act, while also suggesting that the ABLE Age Limit be removed in its entirety as soon as is practical.

The motion was unanimously approved without objections nor abstentions.

Discuss Legislative Committee [Goals](#)

Virtual participation in public meetings

Expanding ABA insurance coverage to other diagnosis

Currently, ABA therapy is typically only available to individuals with a diagnosis of autism. This suggested legislation would aim to:

- Expand private health insurance coverage to mirror Legacy Medicaid coverage, in order to also include diagnosis other than autism
- Expand the age limit
- Consider the addition of other types of therapy (speech, physical, etc.) into legislation
- Senator Foil, who will be assisting in this endeavor, thinks that there will be pushback from insurance companies.

Require pharmacies (especially larger ones) and pharmacy distribution centers and warehouses to maintain working generators.

After Hurricane Ida, power outages forced many pharmacies to throw out refrigerated medications, impacting medication supply significantly. This proposed legislation would

attempt to mitigate the problem of individuals being left without life-sustaining medications after natural disasters. It was recommended that the “lobbyist team” discuss any shortfalls. It was also recommended that the concept of the potential legislation should be framed and presented at the appropriate time.

Study the feasibility and what would be needed to make Legacy Medicaid services more portable across state lines.

Currently, individuals who have Managed Care Organizations for health care and prescription drug assistance are able to receive services out of state. However, Legacy Medicaid recipients who happen to be out-of-state have to pay out of pocket for medications (even during emergency evacuations). Legacy is an important choice for people with disabilities because not everyone is able to receive the services or coverage they need from a Managed Care Organization.

A motion was made by Lynette Fontenot and seconded by Elaine Harmon for the ***Legislative Committee to support the aforementioned slate of proposed legislation.*** The motion was unanimously approved without objections nor abstentions.

Anne Jayes of Lighthouse Louisiana mentioned that they are working in coalition to develop legislation that would:

- Expanding eligibility for kids who are eligible for vision services
- Document and log requirements for assessments for students who are blind
- Strengthen expectations pertaining to braille education
- Develop a companion piece (Blind Child’s Bill of Rights) which would both help parents advocate for their kids, and educate them on what to expect

Lynette Fontenot reminded the committee that the Accessibility Committee requested collaboration on a study resolution proposal pertaining to emergency response for people with disabilities. See Accessibility Committee minutes for full details.

Bambi shared the following:

1. There is ongoing discussion pertaining to potential funding for higher ed programs that serve individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The idea is to expand access to these programs by financially assisting schools in acquiring their certifications.
2. State As a Model Employer (SAME) Task Force is currently running through Executive Order, but the ultimate goal is to get it into statute.

Chairperson Monroe encouraged members of the committee to submit in writing their ideas for policy proposals to GACDA, and for this discussion to continue at the December GACDA meeting.

Adjournment

Elaine Harmon made a motion to adjourn at 11:23am. Karen Scallen seconded the motion.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
 Tuesday, October 12, 2021
 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM

Committee Members	Present	Proxy	Proxy Name	Absent	Agency/Affiliate/Representing
Andrea Lowe*	√				
Erica Wallace*	√				
Jerrie Williams*				X	
Karen Collins*	√				
Kelly Monroe*				X	
Mary Breaud*	√				
Robert Garcia*	√				
Tim Delaney*	√				
Amber Boykin				X	
Anne Jayes	√				Lighthouse LA
Brenda Sharp	√				LDH-OCDD
Peter Hunt	√				Special Olympics LA
Faith Boudreaux	√				LDH-OPH
Meredith Jordan	√				LDE
Melissa Bayham	√				LWC- LRS
<i>Lynette Fontenot*</i>	√				<i>GACDA Chairperson</i>
<i>Kathy Allen*</i>	√				<i>GACDA Vice-Chair</i>
<i>Bambi Polotzola</i>	√				<i>GODA</i>
Attendees	Agency/Affiliate/Representing		Attendees	Agency/Affiliate/Representing	
Jana Broussard			Nicole Flores		
Laureen Mayfield			Rikki David		
Leslie Hill					
Staff	Agency		Staff	Agency	
Jamar Ennis	GODA		Melanie Washington	SICC/GODA	
Jessica Lewis	SILC/GODA		Lilian Dejean	GODA Intern	

Call to Order and Attendance

GACDA's October 12, 2021 Education Committee was called to order at 3:05 pm.

LDOE Parent Choice Quarantine Option

Nicole Flores led the discussion relative to Louisiana Department of Education's Parent Choice Quarantine Option. [Please click here to gain access to the LA Department of Education's announcement.](#) It was mentioned that it is up to the various school systems to enable the option. Several school systems have decided not to take the option, this decision is unfavorable to many, especially by parents.

It was asked if BESE has the authority to circumvent the various superintendents and health authorities. BESE has not offered any recommendations, guidance, or statements regarding the aforementioned option.

Legislation regarding Students who are Blind – Anne Jayes

Provided that there are various coalitions to create legislation for students who are blind, deaf, and deafblind.

Provided a broad overview of Louisiana Lighthouse activities. It was mentioned that the following legislation was drafted:

- a. Changes the legislative criteria to be deemed visually impaired, adds visual assessment to the criteria.
 - b. Establish best practices and the adoption of the Expanded Core Curriculum
- It was mentioned that Louisiana Lighthouse and Leslie Hill of the Special School District are working on a blind child bill of rights.

Creating grade level expectations for braille. It was mentioned that students are behind due to the lack of standards

It was mentioned that there is a serious lack of interpreters (qualified interpreters) in the schools, and students have not had the benefit of receiving the necessary level of communication for them to be successful. To this end, Lighthouse Louisiana has been working with the Louisiana Commission of the Deaf (LCD) to address the problem.

Jana Brouard provided remarks on behalf of LCD. It was mentioned that LCD had a productive meeting with Meredith Jordan of LDOE. It was mentioned that LCD is committed to fixing the problems.

It was mentioned that BRCC will not offer an interpreting program, instead, it will be an ASL Studies program. It was mentioned that the program is on the agenda of the Boards of Regents. It was mentioned that Delgado has an interpreting program.

Special Olympics Unified Champion School program – Peter Hunt

Peter Hunt gave a PowerPoint Presentation relative to the Special Olympics Unified Champion School Program.

It was mentioned that the Unified Champion School Program is currently in 263 schools in Louisiana. Provide programs and resources to teachers and students to provide a more inclusive environment.

Special Education Advisory Councils in School Districts – Liz Gary

Liz Gary, a parent advocate, provided an overview of the Special Education Advisory Councils in Schools (SEAC) [SB 138](#). It was mentioned that the current legislation must be revised pursuant to the following concerns:

- It was discovered that school districts are appointing staff who are also parents to serve on SEAC attempting to serve dual roles, which is not favorable, because it could cause a conflict.
- Because there is not a specific number of members, school districts are appointing as little as 4 members.
- The meeting times are sometimes set arbitrarily that do not factor the schedules of parents who wish to participate.
- The majority of SEAC members should be parents of students with disabilities attending school in the district who are not employees of the school district.
- SEAP should beef up information, and approach it in a best practices mentality. It was suggested that more rules of law may complicate things further.

Next steps: Find out what is going on, and determine the membership make-ups, when meetings took place.

Post-Secondary Education for Students with Intellectual Disabilities - Dr. Gerlinde Beckers

Dr. Gerlinde Beckers displayed a video and Powerpoint Presentation relative to the Louisiana Alliance of Post Secondary Inclusive Education. She stated that the biggest barrier to implementation of these programs is funding. Moving forward, LAPIE is aiming to gain legislative support for both existing and new inclusive postsecondary education programs.

Melissa Bayham mentioned that LRS may be able to provide financial support. Peter Hunt from Special Olympics stated that they may be able to provide grants.