



**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS**
OFFICE OF GOV. JEFF LANDRY

**Full Council Meeting
Friday, June 21, 2024
10:00 AM to 2:00 PM**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Friday, June 21, 2024, GACDA's Full Council meeting was called to order at 10:08 AM. The meeting took place in the press room on the fourth floor of the state capitol and via the virtual platform Zoom.

Role was called by GODA Assistant Director Liam Doyle. A quorum was reached.

GACDA Member		Present	Proxy	Proxy Name	Absent
Ashley	Allen				X
Rhonda	Butler	X			
Rikki	David	X			
Jamar	Ennis	X			
Franklin	Foil				X
Rocky	Fuselier	X			
Barry	Mele				X
Julia	Tanner	X			
Attendees		Agency/Affiliate			Present
Ashley McReynolds		Arc of Louisiana			X
Jazmyne Lemar		Louisiana Commission of the Deaf			X
Nikki Barnes		Deaf Focus- ASL Interpreter			X
Landus Walker		Deaf Focus- ASL Interpreter			X
Steve Kabel		Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs			X
Amanda Smith		Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs			X
Ebony Haven		LaDDC			X
Melissa Bayham		LRS			X
Staff		Title			
Jamar Ennis		GODA Executive Director			X
Liam Ennis		GODA Assistant Director			X
Tillie Carrier		GODA Senior Coordinator			X

2. Introductions

Liam Doyle introduced the GODA staff and offered for any participants to introduce themselves.

Andree Miller, Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Landry addressed the council. Andree spoke on the Administration's commitment to doing whatever possible to aid Louisiana's disabled community. She stated that Jamar, Liam, and Tillie are the right team to help create positive movement and progress for persons with disabilities statewide in the Landry Administration.

3. **Approval of June 21, 2024 GACDA Meeting Agenda**

Rikki David made a motion to approve the June 2024 [meeting agenda](#). Julia Tanner seconded the motion. The motion to approve the June 2024 meeting agenda passed without any objections, abstentions, or discussion.

4. **Approval of March 2024 GACDA Meeting Minutes**

Rikki David made a motion to approve the March 2024 [meeting minutes](#). Julia Tanner seconded the motion. The motion to approve the March 2024 meeting minutes passed without any objections, abstentions, or discussion.

5. **GACDA Orientation**

GODA staff presented a [power point presentation](#) addressing the creation, composition, duties, expectations, and guidelines of the advisory council. In addition, programs and initiatives of the advisory council were discussed and resources were provided. The power point presentation and agenda were provided to attendees.

6. **Lunch Break**

The meeting was adjourned for a 45 minutes lunch break.

7. **Updates from the Louisiana Commission of Deaf**

Jazmyne Lemar with Louisiana Commission of Deaf presented an overview of the agency, their mission, and their 3 year strategic plan and priorities. The [power point presentation](#) included:

- Six priorities
 - To enhance community engagement
 - Address gaps in the mental health services.
 - Establish interpreting standards and systems
 - Modernize the telecommunication access programs
 - Address racial disparities in the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf Services
 - Improve services for deaf blind citizens
 - The report can be read here: [LCD Strategic Planning Report](#)
- LCD's 4 main programs
 - Hearing aid program
 - Assistive Technology
 - Support Service Providers (SSP)
 - Interpreting Program

- ACT 128 of 2022 regular Legislation session-The focus is on rules related to interpreters working in K-12 education settings which include minimum qualifications standards, registration and renewal processes, and ongoing professional development requirements- Currently with the La Dept. of Health with a notice of intent expected by Fall 2024.
 - Deaf-Blind Advisory Council by the Louisiana Commission – The commission will address some missing gaps and identify some areas of opportunity to continue to serve our deaf blind. Dr. Megan Wimberley, chairperson, maybe contacted at meganbwimberly@gmail.com. For topics to be considered for the advisory council, email LCD@la.gov
 - Active statewide American Sign Language Interpreter registry – It will be used to maintain oversight of ASL interpreters. They are looking for members to add to the list. You can visit <https://www.la.egov.com/ldh/LCDInterpreterRegistry>
 - Mentorship for prospective interpreters- For someone interested in a career as an interpreter LCD is here to assist. For more information: LCD@la.gov
 - Commission Board's next meeting is scheduled for July 12th, 2024 from 9:00 am -1:00pm. Check the website for locations. <https://ldh.la.gov/page/LCD> All meetings are also livestreamed.
 - On-going watches:
 - Accessibility to legislation access with Lighthouse Louisiana
 - Voting polls accessibility
 - STEMM-UP- exploring partnership with LRS to include the deaf-blind community
 - Resources- Please visit <https://ldh.la.gov/page/LCD>
 - Training Opportunities
 - Public Interpreting agency list creation
 - Developing additional guidance manuals
 - Questions-
 - Jamar Ennis, Executive Director of GODA, requested access to the Lighthouse Louisiana report and to work with the Louisiana Commission of the Deaf to provide access to all.
 - Question was posed about ULL's new ASL minor program and if that would be included into their feed line of interpreting as a working partner with LCD.
8. **Updates from the Office of Public Health**- Jazmyne Lemar with Louisiana Commission of Deaf presented an agency update on the behalf of the Louisiana Office of Public Health. Her [power point presentation](#) included the department's divisions and programs:
- The Louisiana Commission for the Deaf- update recently presented.
 - Children's Special Health Care Services- Provide direct specialist care clinics for the youth and special health care needs in all regions with the exception of regions 1 and 7 to meet the specialty care needs in provider shortage in those areas.
 - Family Resource Center - the Bureau Family Health (BFH) offers resources and referrals, services to families and providers statewide through the family resource center. Service

requests can be submitted via phone 504-896-1340. For more information email: BFH-FamilyResourceCenter@la.gov

- [Louisiana Birth Defects Monitoring Network](#) (LBDMN)- It's mission is to prevent birth defects and birth defect-related disabilities in Louisiana's children.
 - Title 5 Developmental Screening Initiative- Aims to improve early detection and developmental delays and disabilities in children by promoting a comprehensive developmental screening standards in the pediatric primary care. More information can be found here; <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/740>
 - Bureau of Family Health (BFH)- Hosts a health provider perinatal depression screening resource webpage to support implementation of the Perinatal Mental Health Policy (ACT 188) PartnersForFamilyHealth.org
 - Screening Tool Kits-
 - [Developmental Screening Toolkit](#) - To help providers integrate developmental screening services into their day-to-day practice
 - [Care Coordination Toolkit](#) - To support health providers with improving or expanding clinic care coordination services.
 - [Louisiana Early Hearing Detection and Intervention](#) -(LA-EHDI)- supports coordinated systems of care that ensure families of babies and children who are deaf or hard-of-hearing (D/HH) receive appropriate and timely services. These services include hearing screening, diagnosis, early intervention (EI) and family to family support.
 - Health Resources Services Administration Competitive Supplemental Fund- Recently award LAEHDI to ensure that families receive the services they need to address language acquisition and other developmental milestones through; enhancing LA EHDI's infrastructure to improve language acquisition for D/HH children up to age 3; support of LA EHDI's system of services so that D/HH newborns, infants, and young children up to age 3 receive appropriate and timely services, including hearing screening, diagnosis, and early intervention; emphasis on data collection, family engagement, provider education, and partnerships
 - Questions and comment- A question was posed by Vivienne Webb inquiring if there is something similar for autism. A big problem is that autistic children go undiagnosed and unsupported for years which causes their mental health to decline. Dr. Marilyn Thornton responded in the chat room that Families Helping Families of Greater Baton Rouge may be able to assist with a response. She requested that those seeking information email questions to her at mthornton.fhfgbr.org.
9. **Updates from the Arc of Louisiana** – Ashley McDonald, Program Director filled in for the Executive Director- Kelly Monroe. She presented an agency update on initiatives during this past legislative session. They are as follows:
- \$5.00 rate increase (House Bill 1) with Representative McFarland for providers to bring night workers' pay to match day workers' pay- Hopefully by October this should be available.

- Senate Concurrent Resolution 17 by Senator McMath. This bill requested the Department of Health to change the financial requirement for the Medicaid buy-in which would allow individuals with disabilities to go to work and earn a living wage without having to jeopardize their benefits.
- House Concurrent Resolution 73 by Dustin Miller which urges the Department of Health to work with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to develop a professional consulting nursing service code for reimbursement of certain services for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- House Bill 362 by Representative Kerner which would require schools to provide information regarding tutorship to the parents of certain students at the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings along with legal options available such as supportive decision making, power of attorney, ABLE accounts, limited and full interdictions.
- McDonald continued with the agency's main Developmental Disabilities Council contract which is with Southwest ADA center in Houston, TX. She is currently working with the Department of Corrections training employees on inmates with intellectual and developmental disabilities and how to best identify and communicate with them.
- Questions-
 - There was a question in the chat room from Felicia Woolens asking if there was a senator associated with the Medicaid buy-in program. Response: The senator is Senator McMath from the Mandeville area.
 - Kathy Dwyer has one concern raising the pay raise for night workers to be equal to day workers. Frequently day workers utilize their vehicles and transportation costs are absorbed by them. What will be done to make sure that day workers are compensated for this expense. The new federal access rule will require that 70% reimbursement rates will go to workers. Response: Arc of Louisiana is not currently working on this, however, Ashley McDonald stated that CMS approved the use of the ARCA funds to do the rate methodology for an appropriate rate for all direct support professionals. In addition, they do plan on changing the language in the manuals that night support personnel will not be allowed to sleep with the increase.

10. **Updates from the Developmental Disabilities Council of Louisiana-** Ebony Haven, Executive Director for the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, presented an update as follows:

- New Leadership:
 - Executive Director – Ebony Haven
 - Deputy Director - Mr. Brenton Andrews
 - Program Manager position- open - advertisement coming soon
- Legislative updates:
 - Secured \$500,000 again for the Families Helping Families the past 3 fiscal years
 - Collaborated with the increase in the night rate to the day rate for the IDD waivers mentioned previously by the Arc of Louisiana
 - Not successful in securing \$9.4 million for the Flexible Family Fund to eliminate the waitlist. Will try again in 2025.
- Opportunities:

Recruiting new council members -The announcement will probably go out next week. Looking for self-advocates, family members, and immediate relatives of individuals with disabilities who can't advocate for themselves. Go to <https://laddc.org/get-involved/apply-for-dd-council-membership/> to apply to be part of the council.

- Legislative advocacy agenda -LaCAN leaders (Louisiana Council's Advocacy Network), will host community input meetings across the state in each region. Anyone who is interested in having the council consider agenda items should attend and have voices heard. More information may be found: [LaCANN](#)
- Partners in Policymaking graduates- Graduated June 1st. DD is now recruiting for the 2025 year. Information to come soon.
- July is Disability Pride month- Celebrating Inclusion and Acceptance. They are collecting and sharing stories of lived experiences of people with disabilities. Anyone can submit a story at: [Disability Pride](#)
- DD's quarterly meeting will be held July 17th-18th - The location is the council's office on Corporate Boulevard. Can be accessed virtually. Find out how at the meeting website: [Council meetings](#)

11. **Updates from the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs** - Amanda Smith, GOEA Executive Director, presented a basic background of the department.

- An advocate for the elderly population of Louisiana serving ages 60 plus
- Designated state unit on aging to operate some of the programs utilizing the area agencies on aging and the councils on aging, home delivered meals, congregate meals, and senior centers
- Programs and Activities:
 - Long term care- advocates for residents in nursing homes
 - Elderly protective services- investigates cases of elderly neglect and abuse. Elder abuse and awareness day was June 15 at the state capitol.
 - Aging and disability resource centers- located in Aging and Adult Services offices throughout the state
 - MIPA- Louisiana Medicare Improvements for patients and providers- provides education, outreach and enrollment assistance to Medicare eligible individuals
 - House Bill 1- Provided extra funding to increase personnel in the elderly protective services department
 - Hosted Senior day at the capitol in May
 - Compliance and Planning Division was selected to make their whole state disaster preparation for a culturally and geographically diverse older population at the US Aging conference in Tampa.
 - MDAC – Disaster Emergency Management for Disabled and Aged Coalition to assist in emergencies.

12. **Updates from the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS)**- Melissa Bayham presented a [report](#) from LRS which included the following:

- Participants- the most recent number of open cases in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and open cases in potentially eligible for students with disabilities only receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

- Order of selection – Discussed the 3 categories of participants receiving services to ensure that individuals with the most significant disabilities are served first.
- Compliance- Discussing possible solutions to address the number of referrals in a timely manner to meet federal guidelines
- Projection STEM- Has ended. Contracts will be closed with Michigan Rehabilitation Services. Current participants will continue to receive services through LRS.
- Annual reviews in process- LRS rehabilitation counselors are currently in the process of contacting participants in post-secondary education for required annual reviews of their cases.
- LSU-Shreveport Rehabilitation Counseling Programs: The Louisiana Board of Regents has approved LSU-Shreveport's 12 hour Certificate Program in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and a Master of Science Degree in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling.
- LDOE Collaboration: The Louisiana Department of Education was awarded a Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) grant by RSA to partner with relevant entities to provide intensive technical assistance and universal support for transition services to integrate individuals with disabilities with existing and emerging employment opportunities. This effort will be targeted for implementation in the north-central regions of the state. The MOU for this project has been signed, and activities with LDOE will begin in the near future.
- Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) Collaboration: LRS Director participated in recording an employment services webinar with the LDH's Office of Behavioral Health
- DCFS Collaboration: LRS Director, along with other Office of Workforce Development administrators, are scheduled for an initial meeting with staff from DCFS to discuss collaboration and social services integration.
- New Administration- the Louisiana Workforce Commission is now led by Secretary Susie Schowen and the Assistant Secretary Osmar Padilla
- Working Partners- LRS is working collaboratively with the Louisiana Department of Education, Office of Behavioral Health, and the Department of Children and Family Services.
- Questions/Comments- Rocky Fuselier commented that LRS has been very good to him through the years and wanted to say kudos to them.

13. **Updates from the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD)** - Tillie Carrier, GODA Senior Coordinator, presented the [GACDA quarterly report](#).

- **ARPA Initiatives:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has approved the activities for spending through Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The ARPA funds originally had to be expended by March 2025, however, Louisiana asked for, and received, an extension to spend the money until December 2025. CMS has approved the following initiatives:

- *Systemic therapeutic assessment resources and treatment (START) model assessment and pilot*
 - Infrastructure Standup for Technology First Initiative
 - Implementation of Value Based Payment (VBP) Model
 - Community Practitioners Training
 - *Enhanced Services for people with co-occurring I/DD and behavioral health needs*
 - *University Partnerships and Curriculum Development for Capacity Building in the I/DD Service Delivery System*
 - System Modernization to Support an Electronic Individual Support Plan
- **The Access Rule** was finalized in May, 2024 and will bring sweeping changes to the I/DD delivery system. The rule will be effective July 9, 2024. States will have to implement the changes over the next several years. The changes in the rule include:
 - Payment Adequacy and Transparency
 - Critical Incidents
 - Timeliness of Access
 - Quality Measure Set
 - FFS Grievance Process
 - MAC & BAC
- **Legislative Updates**
 - *House Bill 1 (Representative Jack McFarland)*
 - Added funding for the SICCC Coordinator position in OCDD
 - Equalized the IFS-night and IFS-day rate (approximately \$18/hr)
 - Added money for private ICFs (\$15M)
 - *House Bill 829 (Representative Rodney Lyons)/Act 240 of the 2024 Regular Legislative Session*
 - Moves the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) from the Governor's Office to OCDD.
 - The SICC was created by federal law to advise and assist the state's Early Intervention lead agency (EarlySteps).
 - Works with EarlySteps to help design and oversee the implementation of family-centered, community-based, comprehensive interagency system for infants and toddlers who are eligible for services. This move aligns Louisiana with 52 other states and US territories.
 - The SICC coordinator will be a full time position in OCDD.
 - **National Core Indicators Survey** - Last fiscal year, OCDD participated in the National Core Indicators (NCI) State of the Work Force Survey for calendar year 2022. The goal of the State of the Workforce survey allows states to look at the DSP workforce, examine areas that they need to address, and to compare their workforce data against other states. The survey also helps states identify challenges and provide data that states can use to improve their DSP workforce population.

14. **Updates from the DOTD – Public Transit** – Liam Doyle, Assistant Director, gave an update on the [DOTD June Report](#). DOTD Public Transit has distributed accessible vehicles to agencies throughout Louisiana who participate in the FTA grant programs for rural general public services and services for elderly and persons with disabilities for FY 2024. FY 2025 vehicles will be ordered in the fall. It is our hope to distribute them in spring 2025.

- FY 26 Applications for vehicles and operating support will open on July 9th and will be available here:
http://wwwsp.dotd.la.gov/Inside_LaDOTD/Divisions/Multimodal/transit/Pages/default.aspx through the Louisiana Transit Electronic Application Management System (LATEAM)
- For more information, visit:
<https://wwwapps.dotd.la.gov/administration/announcements/Announcement.aspx?key=35741>
- Or call the DOTD-Public Transportation Section at (225) 379-3060
- Electronic applications must be submitted online by November 1, 2024.
- Riders who may be looking for transit services in each parish, can find additional information here.
<https://wwwapps.dotd.la.gov/multimodal/publictransportation/transitresources/>

15. **Updates from the Office of Aging and Adult Services-** Natalie Istre, Deputy Assistant, gave an agency update.

- Services provided:
 - Community base waiver services- community choices waiver & adult day health care center waiver
 - Adult protective services
 - Facility base services –Villa Feliciana transition services
 - Permanent supportive housing
 - Traumatic head & spinal cord injury trust fund programs
 - State personal assistance services
- Legislation:
 - House Bill 1 - Representative Jack McFarland: Created additional 750 slots for community choices waiver effective July 1, 2024.
 - House Bill 687: Created a single license specific to our program for all-inclusive care of the elderly pay centers- The newest center was opened in Alexandria in May.
 - Senate Bill 11: Updated the name of the Traumatic Head and Spinal Cord Injury Program to the Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program
- Extras:
 - Anticipates funding for the community options waiver.
 - Received an extension to the ARPA funds for projects that expand those home and community based services through December of 2025.
 - Engaging the support coordination agencies and providers to review Workflows shortages.

16. **Updates from the Department of Health and Medicaid –** There was no representative. Meeting moved on.

17. **GACDA Elections-** Jamar Ennis, Executive Director of GODA, discussed becoming an officer within the council. The following seats are available: chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. The responsibilities were provided and inquiries were posed to the attendees if anyone was interested in becoming an officer of GACDA. A question was posed that the executive order states that the chair is appointed by the Governor. Jamar responded that he wanted to see if there was anyone interested in a position before the governor made an appointment. He wants to make sure that the person appointed would be willing and able to fill the position. Jamar wanted to make a recommendation to the governor. Jamar was nominated and declined the position since he is the Executive Director of GODA. No volunteers came forward, so the appointment to these positions was tabled until the next GACDA meeting.

The Chairperson shall be responsible for coordinating the activities of the Council through the duly elected officers, committee chairpersons and members-at-large. As chief executive officer of the Council, s/he shall preside at all meetings and perform other duties pertinent to the office or as provided by the bylaws. S/he shall appoint a Parliamentarian and chairpersons of any and all committees and task forces unless otherwise specified in the bylaws. S/he shall also serve as an ex-officio member of all standing committees, with voting privileges.

The Vice-Chairperson shall be responsible for assuming the Chairperson's duties should s/he be unable to perform them. Should the office of Chairperson become vacant, the Vice-Chairperson shall assume that office until such time as a Chairperson is appointed by the Governor. S/he shall also serve as ex-officio member of all standing committees, with voting privileges.

18. **Public Comments:** The floor was opened to public comments.

- Jim Mitchell was acknowledged- "With this morning's acknowledgement of the importance of continuity, I want to ask GACDA to continue working on broadband and state website, 88 accessibility. Response from Jamar Ennis was to keep this important issue in consideration.

19. **Adjournment:** Rikki David made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Julia Tanner seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn the meeting passed without any objections, abstentions, or discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 pm.