



COMMUNICATIONS

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Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Press Statement *September 3, 2009*

Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara testified today before the Public Health and Human Services Committees on the conversion of 17 publicly operated group homes to DDS qualified private provider agencies that have proven experience will be selected through an RFP process. It is necessary for DDS to convert these homes as a result of the recent Retirement Incentive Program (RIP). DDS had 395 employees retire as of July 1, 2009 of which 162 were direct care workers.

Commissioner O'Meara emphasized in his testimony that none of the 17 group homes in the plan would be closed, no consumers will move, and that all DDS state employees who currently provide support to consumers in these homes would be transferred to vacant positions within the agency.

In 2003-2004 DDS successfully converted 30 homes to private provider agencies and is committed to ensuring a smooth transition for the families and residents involved in the current conversion. The process is expected to take up to nine months to complete.

The department has asked families and individuals affected by this change to participate in the selection process of a new provider agency. To date, 42 providers have submitted letters of intent to provide services to the homes.

Commissioner O'Meara continued during his testimony, "I believe that we all have the same goal, to provide quality services for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. And as a publicly financed service system, we must provide these services in the most fiscally responsible manner possible, especially now, when faced with the current economic challenges."