

**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS**

**Full Council Meeting**

Wednesday, June 16, 2021, 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM

<b>GACDA MEMBER</b>		<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>PROXY</b>	<b>PROXY NAME</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Kathy	Allen				X
Mary	Breaud	√			
Walter	Carpenter				XXX
Karen	Collins	√			
Timothy	Delaney	√			
Sharon	Delvisco	√			
Beau	Ellerbee	√			
Lynette	Fontenot	√			
Robert	Garcia	√			
Kirsten	Gladen	√			
Tarj	Hamilton	√			
Elaine	Harmon	√			
Sharon	Hennessey	√			
Andrew	Kuyoro	√			
Andrea	Lowe				X
Jessica	Michot	√			
Jim	Mitchell	√			
Kelly	Monroe	√			
John	Moran	√			
Mark	Raymond, Jr.	√			
Karen	Scallan	√			
Tabatha	Taylor	√			
Erica	Wallace				X
Jerrie	Williams				X
Gerald	Boudreaux				X
Malinda	White				XX
<b>Attendees</b>		<b>Agency/Affiliate</b>	<b>Attendees</b>		<b>Agency/Affiliate</b>
Amy Dawson		GOHSEP	Jana Broussard		LCD
Anne Jayes		Lighthouse	Karen Artus		LACAN
Fernando Lopez		LDH- OAAS	Kathleen Cannino		
Bernard Brown		LDH- OCDD	Kathy Dwyer		OCDD SAC
Brenda Cosse			John Schweitzer		LWC-LRS
Carol Lee		LDH- OCDD	Kristie Curtis		LaCAN
Caroline Meehan		CPA	Melissa Bayham		LWC-LRS
Cindy Obier		SFM	Patti Barovechio		LDH- OPH
Corhonda Corley			Tory Rocca		DRLA
Ebony Haven		LA DDC	Vanessa Magnon		LCD
Erin K. Downing		LDH- OCDD			
<b>Staff</b>		<b>Title</b>	<b>Staff</b>		<b>Title</b>
Bambi Polotzola		GODA Director	Jamar Ennis		GODA Asst. Dir.
Jessica Lewis		SILC Director			

## Call to Order and Introductions

The June 16, 2021 GACDA Meeting was called to order at 12:04 PM. The members in attendance were recognized in their official capacities by the GACDA Chairperson, Lynette Fontenot. Quorum was established.

## Approval of [March 2021 Minutes](#)

The GACDA Members in attendance reviewed the March 2021 Meeting Minutes. Tabatha Taylor made a motion to approve the minutes, Elaine Harmon seconded the motion. The March 2021 Minutes were approved.

## Committee Reports and Discussions

### Ø Education

Bambi Polotzola provided a recap of the discussion and activities from the June 15, 2021 Education Committee meeting. Please see the attached June 15, 2021 Education Committee Meeting Minutes.

### Ø Housing

Sharon Hennessey provided a recap of the discussion and activities from the June 15, 2021 Housing Committee meeting. Please see the attached June 15, 2021 Housing Committee Meeting Minutes.

### Ø Transportation

Mark Raymond and Beau Ellerbee provided a recap of the discussion and activities from the June 15, 2021 Transportation meeting. Please see the attached June 15, 2021 Transportation Meeting Minutes.

### Ø Accessibility

Dr. Jim Mitchell provided a recap of the discussion and activities from the June 15, 2021 Accessibility Committee Meeting. Please see the attached June 15, 2021 Accessibility Committee Meeting Minutes.

### Ø Legislative

Catherine Meech provided a recap of the discussion and activities from the June 15, 2021 Legislative Committee Meeting. Please see the attached June 15, 2021 Legislative Committee Meeting

The full council approved the committee's motion that GACDA draft a letter addressed to the legislature in support of Parity in service rate across DD HCBS, ICF/DD, and elderly HCBS service systems. There were no objections, abstention, or discussion in regards to the above motion.

## Update on Employment initiatives

Melissa Bayham (LRS)

LRS was levelly funded as a result of the advocacy from the 2021 legislative session.

- LRS is making an effort to improve upon the electronic services.
- The department is working on pre-ets program initiatives, flyers, and awareness in an effort to increase participation amongst high school students.
- LRS is working on their employment programs, ensuring the mitigation of unmet needs. The department is in the process of training vendors and other interested parties to ensure that services are properly provided to eligible consumers.

Bambi Polotzola (GODA)

- The SAME Task Force will meet on the second Friday of each month.
- There are several recordings of the SAME Task Force featuring presentations by individuals and groups.
- Additionally, there will be efforts to market the employment survey created by the SAME Taskforce.
- The Taskforce is also working on regional resources to share with the public.
- There will be several legislative items including placing The SAME Task Force in a permanent fixture within state government.

Ashley Jefferson (OBH)

- Merged efforts between the current Employment First initiatives. LA Dept. of Health-Office of Behavioral Health is working on joint initiatives with the Louisiana Workforce Commission - Louisiana Rehabilitation Services and the Governor's Office on Disability Affairs
- Continued planning and implementation surrounding enhancement of employment services for the behavioral health population in the state. This is in conjunction with efforts to expand access and availability of these services to the public.
- OBH is actively researching and engaging in the application and acceptance practices for entry into the IPS learning collaborative as well. More information will be forthcoming, as we are in the early stages of this process.
- OBH is currently in the process of hiring a Supported Employment Specialist.
- The individual in this position will lead OBH efforts for the development and implementation of supported employment services and programs for individuals with behavioral health conditions, to include serious mental illness and substance use disorder.
- Will act as principle staff to the organization and implementation of Supported Employment services.

Bernard Brown (OCDD)

- OCDD is 75% finished as it relates to the vocational design, and added a virtual option via the appendix K for individuals who do not desire to return to an in person setting.

#### La Department of Health updates

Patti Barrovecchio (OPH)- Most of the clinics are providing direct services to children services clinics. OPH has established a virtual family resource and referral center.

Jana Broussard (LCD) requested information regarding an assessment of the state capitol, to review their technology for individuals who deaf, blind, or hard of hearing. It was also mentioned that, as a result of HCR 89 of 2019 (pertaining to communication access), LDH should support the adoption of best practices. There will be an assessment and guideline book, on how to properly communicate with a deaf, blind, or deaf and blind patient.

Dr. Lopez (OAAS) OAAS has continued to provide vaccination support through community based settings and support coordination. 5,800 of participants of the agency have been fully vaccinated.

#### Ashley Jefferson (OBH)

- Education series including sessions in the *Community Opioid Symposium Virtual Series* hosted by Woman's Foundation
- This next session is entitled "Non Opioid Treatment Options for Pain Management" that is to be held on Thursday, June 17th at 12:00 p.m.
- The web link to register is <http://womansfoundation.com/cos>.
- There are several more sessions upcoming, and all are invited to participate.
- For questions, please contact Ashley Thibodeaux by phone at 337-806-9392 or by email at [ashley@womansfoundation.com](mailto:ashley@womansfoundation.com).
- The Office of Behavioral Health (OBH) COVID-19 Response efforts are still ongoing (i.e., the COVID-19 specific grants, phone helplines, telehealth flexibilities, etc.).
- The majority of LGEs are participating in the COVID- 19 Emergency Grant from SAMHSA that allows us to provide distinct services for Serious Mental Illness/Serious Emotional Disturbance (SMI/SED) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) designated clients who have COVID-19 complications, and some support to health care practitioners, including the publicized "warm line" for recovery.

#### *Behavioral Health Resources for the Public*

- There's an additional resource for parents and youth. Via Link offers a Louisiana Parent Line, which provided parents with free, confidential, 24/7 access to a live specialist. Louisiana Parent Line specialists can offer emotional support, de-escalation, crisis intervention, information & referral, and plans for coping. The phone number is **833-LA-CHILD (833-522-4453)**; text is available at **(225) 424-1533**.
- We can provide an attachment with the information for a support group that is available through a collaboration with Via Link and Grief Recovery (ages 13-17).

- VIA LINK also has a crisis teen text number for Louisiana (ages 12-24). That number operates 24/7. It's **504-777-3273 (EASE)**.
- We continue to offer free and confidential support for citizens experiencing emotional distress through our call lines that are free, confidential, available 24 hours/7days, and make available to callers compassionate counselors skilled in helping. One line is the Keep Calm phone line that allows people to get phone support as they address their feelings and emotional needs. That number is **1-866-310-7977**.
- As mentioned earlier, another source of support is the Behavioral Health Recovery Outreach Line that offers the same type of emotional support and resources. This line is open to all, and specifically welcomes health care providers and individuals in recovery. You can call **1-833-333-1132**.
- All resource information has been updated may be found on our website at this link: <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3883>

#### LDH/OBH My Choice (DOJ Agreement) Updates

- The My Choice initiative is still ongoing and progressing.
- OBH has successfully transitioned 66 individuals from nursing facilities back into the community (to-date). For more information, please visit the LDH webpage for more information: [ldh.la.gov/mychoice](http://ldh.la.gov/mychoice) or <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3264>. Or, contact the LDH My Choice Project Director, Christy Johnson ([Christy.Johnson@la.gov](mailto:Christy.Johnson@la.gov)).

#### Bernard Brown (OCDD)

- HB 172, has been signed into law and LDH is coordinating a workgroup led by Medicaid that will lead the next steps.
- There are efforts to provide updates to Representative Turner's legislation, in regards to the rule-making relative to appendix K services. The department is looking at other services in appendix K that were not included in HB 204 of the 2021 Regular Legislative Session.
- A work group has been established that will determine the best course of action relative to creating rules to pay workers.
- Additionally, there are research efforts relative to "F Map Services." There is emphasis from CMS to provide this assistance to Home and Community Based Settings.

#### State Agency/ Member Updates

GOHSEP- The office is monitoring invest 92. There should be ongoing efforts to plan for emergency disasters, and to contact parish leaders for more assistance.

Dr. Jim Mitchel provided an update relative to a presentation centered around Artificial Intelligence (AI) screening in state government. This technology can be misused. This is mostly due to the fact that the AI technology was used to screen state employees in a way that is not equitable or fair for individuals with disabilities. It was suggested that we monitor the use of this technology.

## 2021 GODA Conference

The GODA staff provided an overview of the 2021 GODA Conference, which is scheduled for the week of July 26, 2021 to take place via zoom. A digital link was shared with the meeting attendees that contained the proposed topics and guest speakers who will likely participate in the GODA Conference. The theme of the 2021 GODA Conference is "Moving Forward, the Journey Ahead". The link and other important information will be shared in early July 2021.

The members of GACDA and the guest in attendance suggested the following ideas for topics for the GODA Conference:

- children, and going back to school, and what parents can look forward to in the upcoming school year.
- vaccinations for youth and safety.
- disability racial diversity and inclusion, professionals with disabilities in the workforce.
- fear of receiving the COVID-19 vaccination.
- Transportation companies performing services that Uber and Lyft refuse to perform, plans to address concerns in Jefferson and Orleans Parishes, and transportation across parish lines,
- HB 91,

## Public Comment

The most recent GODA Conference video is on the Governor's Office of Community Programs YouTube channel.

There are 4 vacant positions on GACDA, and that there will be ongoing efforts to publicly seek for new members.

## Adjournment

Chairperson Lynette Fontenot made a motion to adjourn the June 16, 2021 GACDA meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:14 without any abstention, objections, or discussion.

## EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, June 16 2021

10:00 AM to 11:20 AM

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Proxy</b>	<b>Proxy Name</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>
Amber Boykin*				X	
Andrea Lowe*				X	
Erica Wallace*				X	
Jerrie Williams*				X	
Jessica Michot*				XXX	
Karen Collins*	√				
Kelly Monroe*				X	
Mary Breaud*	√				
Robert Garcia*	√				
Tim Delaney*	√				
Alice Higginbotham				XXX	Dyslexia Assoc
Anne Jayes	√				Lighthouse LA
Brenda Sharp	√				LDH-OCDD
Brock Banos				X	Special Olympics LA
Faith Boudreaux	√				LDH-OPH
Kelli Peterson		√	Ashley Augustine		LDE
Melissa Bayham		√	John Schweitzer		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>
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>		<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>	
Elaine Harmon*			Laureen Mayfield		
Jim Mitchell*			Leslie Hill		
Sharon Hennessey*			Patti Barovechio	OPH	
April Morgan			Sarah Barnes	Lighthouse LA	
Erin Downing			Tony Rocca	DRLA	
Kristie Curtis	FHF Acadiana		Scott T		
<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>		<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>	
Jamar Ennis	GODA		Melanie Washington	SICC/GODA	
Jessica Lewis	SILC/GODA		Lilian Dejean	GODA Intern	

### *Call to Order and Attendance*

The June 15, 2021 Education Committee Meeting was officially called to order at 10:01 am. GACDA Chairperson recognized all of the committee members and guests in

attendance. Due to several extraordinary circumstances, quorum was not established.

#### *Transition Services Updates in Certain School Districts*

April Morgan of the Livingston Parish School System provided a PowerPoint Presentation of Transition Services Updates in Certain Schools. April provided a brief overview of the 20 indicators of the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) Act, specifically emphasizing indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14 which pertain to transition.

Dr. Mary Breaud suggested that there be more efforts to coordinate between College Programs and local high school systems.

#### *LDOE Update on April Dunn Act*

Ashley Augustine from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) provided a brief update on the April Dunn Act. LDOE has created a resource guide for professionals titled [\*The April Dunn Act: Alternate Means of Graduation for Students with Disabilities\*](#). Included in this document is a table outlining graduation requirements; a comparison between standard graduation requirements and the requirements for students eligible for the April Dunn act; a comparison between the April Dunn Act and LEAP Pathways; access to professional development webinars for IEP personnel; and other resources.

#### [\*Legislative Update \(Education Related\)\*](#)

Bambi Polotzola, Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs, provided an update on the education-related bills tracked throughout the legislative session. She provided specific information on the bills listed below:

**HB253 (passed):** Provides relative to the governance and funding of the Special School District, which provides special education services through its schools and programs

**HB324 (failed):** Prohibits corporal punishment in public elementary and secondary schools

- *Note:* There was a bill passed previously that prohibited corporal punishment for students with a 504 plans and IEPs. But some students with disabilities do not have a 504 plan nor an IEP. This legislation would have extended protection to these students not covered under that law.

**SB86 (passed):** Requires the governing authority of each public school to develop and adopt policies for the installation and operation of video cameras in certain classrooms

- *Note:* Moving forward, there needs to be active monitoring to ensure school districts are implementing and funding this legislation in a timely and effective manner.

#### [\*GODA Conference \(Education Related\)\*](#)

Anne Jayes suggested LDOE be included in the panel regarding the needs of deaf and/or blind children in school, especially while discussing the recent changes to the Special School Systems 'governance.



*Strategic Goal Teams Update*

Co-Chair Robert Garcia provided an update on the Strategic Goal Teams.

As it relates to communication plans, LDOE has stated that the monitoring team is now in process of updating its monitoring checklists, which are utilized for the monitoring and implementation of communication plans. Among other suggestions, it was also recommended that Louisiana Rehabilitative Services begin collaborating with school systems to implement Pre-ETS.

**HOUSING COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, June 16, 2021

12:00 PM to 1:20 PM

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Proxy</b>	<b>Proxy Name</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate / Representing</b>
Andrea Lowe*				X	
Jerrie Williams*				X	
Jim Mitchell*	√				
John Moran*	√				
Karen Collins*	√				
Karen Scallan*	√				
Kelly Monroe*				X	
Kirsten Gladen*	√				
Linda Kocher*				X	
Sharon Hennessey	√				
Tarj Hamilton*	√				
Walter Carpenter*				XXX	
Cecile Alexander		√	Dominick Abrams		DCFS
Gordon Levine				X	LHC
Janae Burr	√				LDH-OCDD
John Schweitzer	√				LWC-LRS
Robin Wagner	√				LDH-OAAS
Lynette Fontenot*	√				Chairperson
Kathy Allen				XX	Vice-Chair
Bambi Polotzola	√				GODA
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/ Representing</b>		<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate / Representing</b>	
Elaine Harmon*			Patti Barovechio	OPH	
Brenda Cosse			Scott Tuma	OCDD	
Harlon Cowsar	FHF Acadiana		Stephen Kauffman	DRLA	
Lidia Hurtado	Intern- FHF		Tony Rocca	DRLA	
<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>		<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>	
Jamar Ennis	GODA		Melanie Washington	SICC/GODA	
Jessica Lewis	SILC/GODA				

### *Call to Order and Introductions*

The June 15, 2021 Housing Committee Meeting was officially called to order at 12:02 pm. GACDA Chairperson recognized all of the committee members and guests in attendance. A quorum was established.

### *Dissemination of information (Jamar Ennis)*

Jamar Lanier Ennis, Assistant Director of Governor's Office of Disability Affairs, shared he following information:

The Louisiana Office of Community Development, the Department of Treasury, and the Louisiana Housing Commission collaborated to create a virtual guide surrounding COVID-19 housing assistance for renters and landlords. These resources can be found at <https://www.lastaterent.com>

The Louisiana Housing Corporation has also compiled resources on their website for housing, similar to the guide mentioned above. These resources can be found at <https://www.lhc.la.gov/covid19>

### *Fair Housing Act & Fair Housing Action Center (Sharon)*

Sharon solicited input from the committee regarding how to make this information accessible to the individuals who need it.

John Moran stated that it would be useful for tenants to be informed on whether or not a property utilizes federal funds. This way, tenants will know the right questions to ask.

Council Chair Lynette Fontenot suggested the creation of flyers to disseminate this information. Bambi Polotzola of GODA asked if the Fair Housing Action Center already has user-friendly information available. Co-Chair Sharon Hennessey explained that they are currently in the process of creating a one-page education guide that outlines all relevant information currently available.

Robin Wagner emphasized that it is most important for the consumers to be informed of this information, and grassroots networks may be the most effective platforms to share this information. Jim Mitchell stated this may be most effectively shared in the public domain; for example, through public service announcements.

Bambi Polotzola of GODA suggested Housing Co-Chairs Sharon Hennessey and Tarj Hamilton work with GODA staff to address this issue. Jim Mitchell volunteered to make contact with various Housing Associations regarding this, as well.

### *Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) public comment (Sharon)*

While some comments may not be addressed in the QAP, they will be addressed in policy. Co-Chair Hennessey emphasized how important and powerful public comments can be.

Co-Chair Hennessey mentioned that while universal design is still required for new construction, there *is* an alternative to universal design in the Fair Housing Design Manual allowed. This is disconcerting because universal design is completely inclusive, but this alternative may require retro-fitting later on.

Co-Chair Hennessey opened up the floor for suggestions on neutralizing developer pushback. Robin Wagner suggested identifying champions of universal design within the developer community, and using them as an example for other developers. Additionally, she suggested reaching out to HUD.

It was discussed that the GACDA Housing Committee appears at the July 8th QAP hearing, to participate in public comment. It was discussed that the committee creates and submits written comments in addition to appearing at the July 8th Hearing. It was suggested that the written comments will be of great benefit to ensuring that there is a unified message, and to share with other groups and boards with an interest. Written comment timeline was extended until July 7, 2021

[GODA Conference](#) (Housing related)

Bambi Polotzola asked members to advise GODA staff if there are any suggestions relative to topics relative to Housing for consideration.

GACDA Council member Elaine Harmon made the motion to adjourn, GACDA Chairperson Lynette Fontenot seconded the motion. The committee adjourned at 1:20pm.

**TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, March 16 2021

1:30 PM to 2:50 PM

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Proxy</b>	<b>Proxy Name</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>
Andrea Lowe*				X	
Beau Ellerbee*	√				
Elaine Harmon*	√				
Jim Mitchell	√				
Karen Collins*	√				
Karen Scallan*	√				
Kristen Gladen*	√				
Mark Raymond, Jr.*	√				
Sharon Hennessey*	√				

Walter Carpenter*				XXX	
Amy Dawson	√				GOHSEP
Jamie Ainsworth				X	DOTD
Kevin George	√				LDH-OCDD
Melanie Doucet				XX	LDH- Medicaid
Teresa Frank	√				LDH-OCDD
Lynette Fontenot*	√				Chairperson
Kathy Allen				XX	Vice-Chair
Bambi Polotzola	√				GODA
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/ Representing</b>		<b>Attendees</b>		<b>Agency/Affiliate/ Representing</b>
Brenda Cosse			John Schweitzer		LWC-LRS
Burness Bickman			Kristie Curtis		FHF Acadiana
Cindy Obier	SFM		Patti Barovechio		OPH - BFH
Erin Downing	LDH-OCDD		Stephen Kauffman		DRLA
Harlon Cowsar	FHF Acadiana		Tony Rocca		DRLA
<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>		<b>Staff</b>		<b>Agency</b>
Jamar Ennis	GODA		Melanie Washington		SICC/GODA
Jessica Lewis	SILC/GODA				

#### Call to Order and Introductions

The Transportation Committee was called to order at 1:31 pm. The Co-Chairperson, Mark Raymond and Beau Ellerbee formally acknowledged GACDA members, committee members, and guest in attendance. Quorum was not established.

#### Introduce Burness Bickham (Slidell Resident)

Mr. Burness Bickham, a private citizen, provided remarks and his experiences relative to the lack of public transportation in Slidell and St. Tammany Parish. Mr. Burness provided that, without personally knowing an individual with private transportation, there are concerns relative to traveling to work and other essential places. John S. provided a link of resources relative to transportation in the Slidell area. Furthermore, Amy Dawson of GOSHEP provided information relative to guides and resources on the GOSHEP web page for assistance. GODA Staff provided their contact information to Mr. Bickham if further assistance is needed.

#### Update on Committee Objectives

Next meeting, we can get the 211 Director to attend the meeting in order to update them on the information available.

#### Establish contacts with Uber and Lyft (Mark Raymond)

Mark had a meeting with the Mayor and Laurel Bryan, Director of RTA. It has been a bit challenging but they will discuss the progress that has been made in Jefferson Parish.

#### Emergency Evacuation Procedures (Amy Dawson)

Each Parish has their own plans for critical transportation needs (people who don't have rides). It has been a challenge for parishes to identify buses with the lift capability. Find out if your parish has a registry and if you have to sign up for one. Make sure you contact your local OSHEP if you know your area is high risk because regular evacuations have limited resources for access.

DOTD does not have buses or own any resources but they are responsible for that in an emergency. They got several million dollars that they needed to activate. They wouldn't activate bus contracts during small disasters. They agreed to get smaller contracts with the local Council on Aging to use their vehicles for smaller disasters to help evacuate people. The new contract is a lot more flexible than it has been in the past.

#### Discuss Medicaid MCOs Transportation

Medicaid is taking commentary on non-emergency medical transportation services in Louisiana. Please submit comments at the link below. They will take comments until June 21st. <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/form/241>

#### Legislative Update (Transportation Related)

There were two legislative bills dealing with non-medical transportation but none of them passed.

HB 570 by Rodney Lyons - didn't pass but was changed to a house resolution. The House of Representative will study the rates.

HB 91 by Eckels - did not pass but not sure if there is any other movement on the bill. Members will get in touch with him to get more information and find out his plans going forward.

#### GODA Conference (Transportation related)

Suggestions for transportation session topics:

- Medicaid is having a hearing. Can they present the information from the information they collect from constituents at the GODA Conference. To be considered.

Assign Committee Members outreach to paratransit directors

Beau would like help contacting paratransit coordinators.

- Lafayette Area - Mike Mitchell
- Monroe - Mark Keenan:
- Lake Charles - Al Hoover:
- Tangipahoa Parish - Mary Dowling
- Jefferson Parish - Jim Pritching

Some areas are using Uber and Lyft for paratransit and it seems to be working well. They use contract companies for specialized vehicles for individuals with specific needs.

Mark and Harlan will research what is being done in other places and have that information shared at the next meeting.

Elaine Harmon motioned to adjourn, Kevin George seconded. Motion passed.

## ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, March 16 2021

3:00 PM to 4:20 PM

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Proxy</b>	<b>Proxy Name</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>
Andrea Lowe*				X	
Andrew Kuyoro*	√				
Beau Ellerbee*	√				
Erica Wallace*				X	
Jerrie Williams*				X	
Jessica Michot*	√				
Jim Mitchell	√				
Karen Collins*	√				
Karen Scallan*	√				
Sharon Hennessey*	√				
Tim Delaney*	√				
Amy Dawson	√				GOHSEP
Brett Domangue		√	Rosemary Morales		LDH-OCDD
Celia Alexander		√	Dominick Abrams		DCFS
Cindy Obier	√				State Fire Marshall
Erin Downing	√				LDH-OCDD
Lynette Fontenot*	√				Chairperson
Kathy Allen				XX	Vice-Chair
Bambi Polotzola	√				GODA
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>		<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>	
Ashley Jefferson	OBH		Lesia Warren	DOTD	
Belinda Barron	DOTD		Lisa Williams	Board of Regents	
Brenda Cosse			Lyndee Leek		
Doug Bordelon	DEQ		Marcella Jones	LDH	
Gena Doucet	LCTCS		Nicole Williams	FHF NOLA	
Glenn Frazier	State Buildings		Patti Barovechio	OPH BFH	
Harlon Cowsar	FHF Acadiana		Scott Tuma	OCDD	
Jana Broussard	LA Comm for Deaf		Shelly Johnson	DCFS	
John Schweitzer	LWC- LRS		Stephen Kauffman	DRLA	
Johnny Manela	BRCC PSE		Stephanie Dorsey	State Buildings	
Kathy Dwyer	OCDD SAC		Tony Rocca	DRLA	
Keiara Fort			Tracy Barker	Medicaid	
Kristie Curtis	FHF Acadiana				
<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>		<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>	
Jamar Ennis	GODA		Melanie Washington	SICC/GODA	
Jessica Lewis	SILC/GODA		Lilian Dejean	GODA Intern	

Andrew Kuyoro called the meeting to order. Bambi Polotzola called roll.

#### HB 446 of the 2021 Regular Session Recommendations

- GACDA Accessibility should be contacting DOA about requirements for the position.
- The committee can also provide feedback to the HR manager about what the position should be evaluated on.
- Make sure to include web accessibility for screen readers.
- Considering the budget, this position will require travel and training. The position will also oversee training for the statewide/local agencies.
- Jamar Lanier Ennis made the following recommendations:
- GACDA would like to review the job descriptions once it is put together and be part of the hiring committee.
- Possibly consider consulting with Kristy Avalos, expert in ADA accessibility, for guidance on requirements and expectations for this position.
- Maybe have a smaller subcommittee of this group to work on a job description for this position. Send it out and let people react to it on what the expectations should be. 5-7 people will be sufficient (Lisa V. Williams, Andrew Kuyoro, Lynette Fontentot...)
- (Dr. Lisa V. Williams) Check with the experts that are already in place in the DOA (or in the state?) vs. hiring a consultant.

#### Accommodations and Accessibility of State Buildings

- Jana Broussard - Louisiana Commission for the Deaf: Senator Sharon Hewitt has expressed some interest in seeing this come to fruition. A small group met to talk about how to see this through. LCD is drafting a request for information (RFI) so they provide a needs assessment for communication technology. They would also provide a proposed budget. Next, they would move to a secondary consultant to implement the solutions. These will be specific to communication accommodations (Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard-of-hearing specific). There was no language or guidance about how to allocate the funding, what exactly would be funded, and for how long. They have decided to put those questions aside to get the RFI and needs assessment underway. The ultimate goal is to have this implemented by the next legislative session.
- Stephen - DOA: Almost completed a lighting improvement project at the State Capitol. The lighting levels were not sufficient but they have been improved. Sidewalk improvement projects at the Capitol will be rehabbed. It is a \$250,000 project that will start next week. DOA completed the projects they were comfortable improving. Others they haven't started on because they need to get involvement from the Senate. Issues to consider: Draining issues at the Capitol on sidewalk near the Azaleas when it rains. There are issues with getting wheelchairs into the women's restroom on the ground level.

GODA Conference July 26th - July 29th. A draft of the sessions is available.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE  
 Wednesday, March 17, 2021  
 10:00 AM to 11:20 AM

<b>Committee Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Proxy</b>	<b>Proxy Name</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>
Amber Boykin*				X	
Andrea Lowe*				X	
Elaine Harmon*	√				
Erica Wallace*				X	
Jerrie Williams*				X	
Jessica Michot*	√				
Karen Collins*	√				
Karen Scallan*	√				
Kelly Monroe*		√	Caroline Meehan		
Sharon Hennessey	√				
Tabatha Taylor*	√				
Allison Vuljoin	√				LDH - OAAS
Anne Jayes	√				Lighthouse LA
Brenton Andrus		√	Ebony Haven		DD Council
Carol Lee	√				LDH-OCDD
Lacey Gero				X	LDH-OPH
Lynette Fontenot*	√				Chairperson
Kathy Allen				X	Vice-Chair
Bambi Polotzola	√				GODA
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>		<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Agency/Affiliate/Representing</b>	
Jim Mitchell*			Karen Artus	LACAN	
Amy Dawson	GOHSEP		Kathleen Cannino		
Brenda Cosse			Kathy Dwyer	SAC for OCDD	
Corhonda Corley			Kristie Curtis	FHF Acadiana	
Erin Downing			Lyndee Leek		
John Schweitzer	LWC - LRS		Stephen Kauffman	DRLA	
<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>		<b>Staff</b>	<b>Agency</b>	
Jamar Ennis	GODA				
Jessica Lewis	SILC/GODA		Lilian Dejean	GODA Intern	

*Call to Order and Introductions*

The meeting was called to order at 10:03am. A quorum was established.

*Discuss the 2021 Legislative Session (Caroline)*

*10:05am*

[Link to GODA Legislative Tracking List](#)



Caroline, the Executive Director of the Community Provider Association, provided an overview of the 2021 Regular Legislative Session using the Legislative Tracking Tool created by GODA. She specifically discussed the bills listed below:

**HB 1:** 16.3 Million of State General Fund equates to approximately 50 million dollars with the Federal Match

There are several legislators that do not fully understand the importance of equitably funding the various waiver services. While there was an increase in funding for DD services in HB1, a HCR had to be passed later on to specifically amend for the lack of funding for aging services. The Medicaid Oversight Committee will be meeting the week of the 21st to discuss these issues and other needs of the disability community.

**HB 7 (AKA the "Pink Tax" bill):** *Provides for a sales and use tax exemption for feminine hygiene products and diapers.* This bill was passed and sent to the Governor for signing.

**HB 91:** *Authorizes transportation network companies to provide nonemergency medical transportation services through the state Medicaid program.* This bill was voluntarily deferred in committee. There were safety concerns due to the lack of background checks performed by rideshare companies of their drivers.

**HB 172:** *Provides for Medicaid coverage of dental care for certain adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities.* The ICF/DD populations were taken out of the bill that provides a comprehensive dental service to individuals with disabilities. HCR 34, required a study to include ICF/DD population.

**HB 204:** *Provides relative to the delivery of Medicaid-funded services for persons with disabilities.* This bill would have continued many of the COVID-19 exceptions afforded to waiver programs, and there was broad support from both legislators and advocates. However, there was a large fiscal note on this legislation, and it was ultimately deferred.

**HB 446:** *Creates and provides for the office of the state Americans with Disabilities Act coordinator within the division of administration.* This bill was passed and sent to the Governor for signing.

**HB 697/Act 80:** This legislation will levy a tax on sports betting, which will ultimately go into a fund that supports DD waivers. This bill was passed and signed by the Governor.

**SB 86:** *Requires the governing authority of each public school to develop and adopt policies for the installation and operation of video cameras in certain classrooms.* In regards to implementation, the school system must create their own cost, and their own policies for camera installations in self-contained classrooms. The legislation passed without fiscal notes, and has now been sent to the Governor for signing.

Advocates should work with each school district to ensure effective policies are implemented. The appropriate local advisory committees are participating in this endeavor.

This year, the narrative of our advocacy community has been shifted to one of empowerment over desperation. Also mentioned was the need for a continued, unified message to ensure that all disability services are adequately funded, especially considering the federal dollars being allocated to Louisiana.

Alison V. raised a concern relative to the discrepancy between DD and aging provider rates. There is a \$5 difference between the two. Karen Scallen inquired if there was a way to divide the funds equally amongst the various providers (aging, DD, etc) as it is written in HB1. Caroline Meehan responded that the funding can only be utilized for DD Waivers. Kelly Monroe explained that, for unknown reasons the elderly population was taken out by legislators. The Medicaid Oversight Committee may provide further explanation for this decision. The oversight committee will meet this Friday, June 18, 2021.

GACDA should draft a formal letter documenting their collective support to make the pay equitable among populations. The motion was made by Karen Scallen, seconded by Elaine Harmon. The letter would outline support from GACDA for the parity of service rates across the spectrum of disability and elderly services systems in Louisiana, including Home and Community Based services and ICF, and DD. The motion passed without any objections, abstention, or further discussion.

**HB 589:** This legislation provides outpatient mental health treatment as an alternative to Judicial Commitment. This bill was passed and sent to the Governor for signing.

**HB 594:** This bill prohibits insurance companies from placing a cap on the amount they will pay towards noninvasive ventilation treatment. This is important because many individuals in the disability community utilize noninvasive ventilation treatment day-to-day. However, insurance companies are often hesitant to cover this treatment due to the extraordinary expense associated with the maintenance and monitoring of this equipment (and patient). This bill was passed and sent to the Governor.

**HB285/Act 22:** Provides relative to how much time an individual may remain in a voting machine. This bill was passed and signed by the Governor. It is now Act 22.

*Discuss Legislative Committee [Goals](#) (Bambi)*

It was mentioned steps should be created to ensure that the passed legislation from the 2021 Regular Legislative Session are implemented as intended. These next steps should likely be implemented prior to the 2022 Legislative Session.

Steve Kauffman suggested that there should be a set standard of how virtual meetings should be conducted.

Kelly Monroe mentioned that there should be an effort to get status updates on all of the passed and failed legislation. It was also suggested that for all of the legislation that did not pass, there be efforts to determine how said legislation can move forward.

The dental taskforce needs funding for the DD population for next year (Approx \$5 million in 2022).

There is an effort to ensure that HCRs from the 2021 Regular Session reports are completed timely.

It was also mentioned that Representative Pat Smith's HCR relative to captioning at the Louisiana State Capitol be revisited.

*Public Comment*

- There should be some consideration to change the burden of proof of parents to pursue litigation against school systems
- There be some parent engagement in the special education advisory councils around the state.

The Legislative Committee meeting adjourned at 11:26pm