



**March 2012**

Dear Stakeholder:

It has been a busy start to the New Year. Fiscal year 2013 budget discussions are well underway; in fact last week, I testified on the status of the comprehensive Medicaid waiver.

I hope you all received my post-budget address email, which outlined the Governor's proposed restructuring of state government and this department's role. To summarize:

- On July 1, programs and services for seniors will move from the Department of Health to DHS to form the new Division of Aging Services, which will be led by Kathy Mason, with Nancy Day continuing on that leadership team. Jeanette Page-Hawkins will continue to manage the Division of Family Development, along with her Deputy Director, Natasha Johnson. Both divisions will report to the Department's newly appointed Deputy Commissioner, Lowell Arye, former policy advisor to the Governor and expert in the fields of aging, disability and anti-poverty issues.
- Another significant part of the Governor's plan is to integrate all programs, services and supports that serve children into the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Over the upcoming fiscal year, all children – including children now served by the Divisions of Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health and Addiction Services – will transition to DCF.
- And, Graduate Medical Education and the Hospital Relief Subsidy Fund, currently managed by DHS' Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services will transition to the (newly-renamed) Department of Health, which is also responsible for the distribution of Charity Care funding.

**It's important to note that funding for Olmstead and community services for both DD and mental health consumers has been increased. In addition, the Governor boosted funding for the community services waiting list. Programs and services among the Department's other divisions were kept whole.**

On a final note, March is a big month for service designations. It's National Brain Injury Awareness Month, Professional Social Workers' Month, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, and Save Your Vision Month. We expect this month's department activities to include proclamations, letters to the editor and a few press releases. We'll be sure to forward them to you as the month progresses.

Regards,

*Jennifer Velez*

Commissioner