



Carol Grigsby, Chair, DC Developmental Disabilities Council
COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
OCTOBER 28, 2020

My name is Carol Grigsby, and I come before you today as chair of the D.C. Developmental Disabilities Council, also known as the DD Council. I also am the mother of a 27-year-old young man receiving supports under the D.C. I/DD Medicaid waiver. The DD Council's role is to strengthen the voice of DC residents with developmental disabilities and their families in support of greater independence, inclusion, and empowerment.

Early on in the pandemic, people with disabilities who receive services through the D.C. Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) were being infected and dying at much higher rates than the general population. At the time, we expressed concern, along with other disability advocates, that there was not quicker action and guidance from DC Health to limit exposure and control the spread of COVID-19. Fortunately, this situation has improved of late, but we continue to monitor developments carefully.

We also have concerns about DC residents with developmental disabilities who are not being reached by DDS but are certainly affected by the pandemic. The fact that services under the I/DD waiver target only people falling below a specific IQ score makes these people invisible to the DC government, making reconsideration of the eligibility criteria for waiver services even more urgent.

While we have appreciated DC Health's recent engagement in community discussions led by the Department on Disability Services, overall we've been concerned that there has not been more substantial coordination between DC Health and DDS. Guidance from DC Health with respect to Medicaid waiver settings has too often not benefited from advance consultation with DDS, and we main particularly concerned that guidance pertaining to Intermediate Care Facilities (ICFs) does not reflect a thorough understanding of the small size of ICFs in the District, unlike many other states where ICFs are larger, institutional settings. More broadly, careful coordination with DDS would, we believe, lead DC Health to place fewer blanket restrictions on people's free movement and safeguard their individual rights.

We also have been concerned at the lack of consideration for reasonable accommodations to be provided in hospital and other healthcare settings for people with developmental disabilities who

need support with communication. We believe a clear and definitive mandate is needed to remind hospitals and healthcare settings of their obligation under the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide reasonable accommodations.

On behalf of the Developmental Disabilities Council, I thank the committee members for your attention.