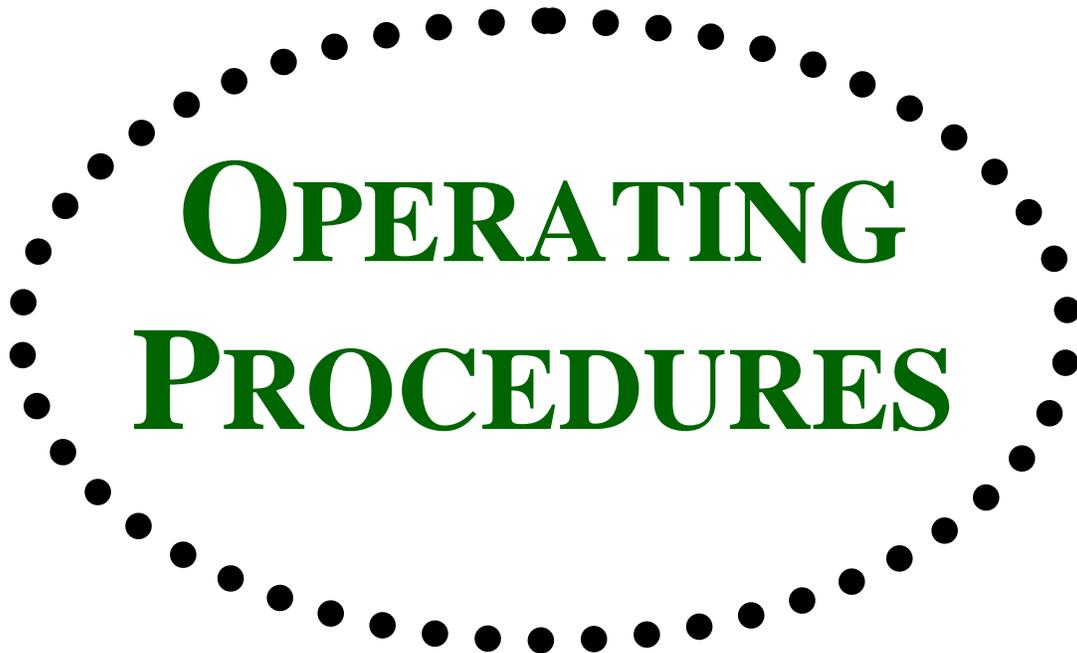


Developmental Disabilities Services

State Program Standing Committee



OCTOBER 2007



CHAPTER 204A: DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ACT
18 V.S.A. § 8733. ADVISORY BOARD

TITLE 18
Health
PART VIII
Mental Health

CHAPTER 204A. DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ACT
Subchapter I. Services to People with Developmental Disabilities and
Their Families

§ 8733. Advisory board

(a) An advisory board is created to advise the department on the status and needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families. The board shall also advise the commissioner regarding the development of the system of care plan described in section 8725 of this title and recommend legislation, rules, policies and standards to implement the system of care plan.

(b) The board shall consist of 15 members appointed by the governor: five persons shall be recipients, five members shall be advocates that represent people with developmental disabilities, and five members shall be professionals with expertise in the area of developmental disabilities.

(c) Members of the board shall be appointed for staggered terms of three years, beginning April 1 and shall serve until a successor is appointed.

(d) The board shall elect a chair from among its members. The board shall meet at least annually at the time and place determined by the chair, and at such other times and places as the chair may determine to be necessary.

(e) Members shall be entitled to reimbursement for necessary and actual expenses incurred in performance of their duties under this chapter. (Added 1995, No. 174 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

**DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
STATE PROGRAM STANDING COMMITTEE**

OPERATING PROCEDURES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
Membership on the Committee	1
Meetings	1
How to Get on the Committee	2
Responsibilities of Members	2
Attendance	3
Co-Chairpersons.....	3
Responsibilities of Co-Chairpersons	3
How to Make Decisions.....	4
What is a Quorum	5
Agenda	5
Accessibility.....	5
System of Care Plan	6
Designation	6
Helpful Hints.....	7

**DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
STATE PROGRAM STANDING COMMITTEE**

OPERATING PROCEDURES

Membership on the Committee – The Committee has 15 members. There are three (3) categories of members:

- 5 members are recipients
- 5 members are advocates
- 5 members are professionals



People with developmental disabilities or family members can be nominated to serve in any of the 3 categories. The maximum number of individuals with developmental disabilities and family members across all three categories is eight (8). The maximum number of professionals and advocates who are not individuals with developmental disabilities or family members is seven (7).

Members of the board shall be appointed for staggered terms of three years, beginning April 1 and shall serve until a successor is appointed. The Committee has no term limits. However, the Committee recommends that, if possible, not more than two complete terms be served; and a member can be nominated to return to the committee after he or she has been off the committee for at least one year.



Meetings – The Committee meets at least monthly. Meetings are usually held on the third Thursday of the month. Meetings begin at 9:30 and end at 12:30. Sometimes it might be necessary to have meetings on a different day or for a longer time. Usually one monthly meeting in the summer (July or August) is cancelled. The Committee discusses any changes in the schedule before they happen. Meetings are usually held in Waterbury and are open to the public. Because they are public meetings, Committee meetings have to follow Vermont laws about public meetings and all meetings are held in accessible places.

There are always minutes of the Committee meetings. The Division is responsible to send them out to members. They are also posted on the Department's web site <http://www.dail.vermont.gov>.



How to Get on the Committee – People are appointed to the Committee by the Governor. Individuals are appointed, organizations are not. When there is an opening on the Committee, these things will happen:



- The Division will advertise the specific openings (recipient, advocate, or professional) by mailing information to individuals or groups of individuals who are interested in services for people with developmental disabilities.
- Local Standing Committees will receive a notice of any vacancy.
- Ads will be placed in newspapers in the targeted areas of the State.
- The Committee will appoint a Nominating Committee to review all of the applications that are received. The Nominating Committee will have 1 person who is a recipient, 1 person who is an advocate, and 1 person who is a professional.
- The Nominating Committee will look at all the interested people, talk with people who apply, and take the following into consideration:
 1. parts of the State that need representation;
 2. what category of position is open;
 3. the commitment of the individual to regularly attend meetings and participate in relevant work
 4. if applicable, the desire of an existing Committee member to continue for another term.
- The Nominating Committee will make a report with recommendations to the full Committee. The full Committee will then vote on whom it wants to recommend for membership.
- The Division will be responsible for making sure the Committee's recommendation is sent to the Commissioner.
- The Governor will send an appointment notification and the *Executive Code of Ethics* to the member being appointed or re-appointed.



Responsibilities of Members – Each person who is a member of the Committee has certain responsibilities. Some of these are:

- Representing people you are appointed to represent.
- Attending meetings and arriving at the meeting on time.
- Calling the Division (241-2648) if you cannot attend a meeting.

- Asking questions if you need more information or don't understand something that is being discussed.
- Serving on subcommittees.
- Signing and following the *Executive Code of Ethics*, which includes information about when a person has a conflict of interest.



Attendance – Each member is expected to attend all meetings. If a person cannot attend a meeting, he or she has a responsibility to call the Division to let them know.

- Attending and participating in meetings is a big responsibility because a member is not just representing himself or herself, they are representing a large number of other people.
- If a person misses 3 or more meetings in a year between January and December, one of the Co-Chairs will call him/her to discuss attendance and see if the person is still interested in serving on the Committee or if they need any assistance.
- The Co-Chair will report back to the full Committee.
- The full Committee may decide to notify the Commissioner of the person's absence and ask to submit another person's name for consideration to fulfill the member's responsibilities.



Co-Chairpersons – There are two co-chairs. At least one of the co-chairs is a Recipient or an Advocate. The co-chairs are elected by the Committee in October and serve for two (2) years. Co-chairs may be re-elected by the Committee for one (1) additional term making their total term in office a maximum of four (4) years. The election of co-chairs is staggered so that the terms do not end at the same time.



Responsibilities of Co-Chairpersons – The co-chairs have some specific responsibilities. These are:

- Being in charge of the meeting. This includes making sure the schedule is followed, helping everyone have a chance to speak, encouraging everyone to listen to one another, and beginning and ending on time.
- Assisting the Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living with making the agenda for each meeting.

- Acting as the spokespeople for the Committee.
- Making sure the Committee gets all the work done it needs to for the year.
- Helping people understand their roles as Committee members and helping people understand the *Executive Code of Ethics*.
- Helping each member to understand his or her responsibilities, including attendance at meetings.
- The Co-Chairs may assign duties to other members of the Committee.



How to Make Decisions – Most of the time the Committee makes decisions by consensus. This means that everyone discusses his or her point of view and in the end, everyone can agree with the decision, even though it might not be *exactly* what you wanted.



Sometimes a formal vote is required. When it is, Robert's Rules of Order will be used and a vote will be taken. A formal vote can only be taken if at least 51% of the voting members present are people with developmental disabilities and family members.

You must be present in order to vote unless you have given another member your *proxy*. A proxy is a formal way to tell another member that they can vote at a meeting where you are not present and should be given in writing before the meeting. If you give someone your proxy, you can tell them how you want them to cast your vote or they can vote how they think you would vote.

There are a number of times when a formal vote is necessary:

- When the Committee is deciding on its recommendation for designating agencies;
- When the Committee is deciding on who will be the Co-Chairs;
- When the Committee is taking action on recommendations from the Nominating Committee about new members; or from the Co-Chairs when there is an absentee issue with a member; and
- When the Committee wants to make recommendations to the Commissioner or Agency Secretary regarding issues they feel strongly about.

What is a Quorum – A quorum is the number of members that need to be present in order for a meeting to be official. The quorum for the Committee is one-third of all members (5 people). Even though a quorum is 5 members, if an official vote is taken, at least 3 of the people voting need to be members representing people with developmental disabilities or their family members.



Agenda – Every meeting must have an agenda. An agenda is a schedule of what is going to be talked about during the meeting. The agenda will also have the time that will be spent on each item.

The Co-Chairs and the Deputy Commissioner of the Division will work together to put together an agenda each month. Other members of the Committee may also ask for items to be put on the agenda. If a person wants to have something on the agenda, he/she needs to let one of the Co-Chairs or the Deputy Commissioner of the Division know. If there are members of the general public at the meeting, time should be set aside for a comment period for the public.

The agenda will be mailed out to all members approximately two weeks in advance of the meeting. All available materials for the meeting will also be mailed in advance. The agenda will also be posted on the Department's web-site and sent to the Department of Libraries, and committee members on e-mail as well.

Accessibility – For everyone's benefit, the Committee must make every effort to make meetings and materials accessible to everyone. To do this, the following will happen:



- The Division will try to have the meeting in a consistent place each month. Members will know ahead of time if the meeting needs to be in a different place.
- Everyone will have a name card.
- Meetings will always be held in a place that is physically accessible to everyone.
- Attention to committee members' comfort will be made (e.g., refreshments; room temperature and lighting, scheduled breaks, table set up, etc.)
- Information to be discussed will be sent to each person ahead of time. If it cannot be sent ahead of time, all items will be read aloud at the meeting.



- The Deputy Commissioner of the Division, or other people that might be appropriate, will be available to meet with any member personally if they have any questions.
- All people present at Committee meetings will allow enough time for everyone to communicate their thoughts.
- Recipients, Advocates and Professionals who are people with developmental disabilities or family members will be paid a \$50 stipend for attendance at Committee meetings, provided they are not otherwise paid by their employer during this time. Committee members will also be reimbursed for mileage expenses at the rate paid to State employees. This includes a higher rate for accessible van transportation.
- Support workers assisting a person with a disability during Committee meetings will be paid a \$50 stipend. At the discretion of the person with a disability, support workers may participate in the discussion.
- Before a formal vote is taken there will be a brief break to allow anyone who might need some additional time to think about their vote and ask questions.



The Developmental Disabilities Advisory Board (DS State Program Standing Committee) was created to advise the department on the status and needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

System of Care Plan – The Committee shall also advise the commissioner regarding the development of the developmental services system of care plan. This is done every three years with an annual update. Members attend one public hearing a year to receive input regarding changes and then discuss it at the next meeting. The department tries to schedule the public hearing on one of the regularly-scheduled meeting dates so all members may attend, either in person or by Vermont Interactive Television.



Designation – Another important thing-the Committee does is make recommendations to the Commissioner about whether an agency meets some specific requirements to be considered a “designated agency.” A designated agency is responsible for managing supports and services in a specific county of the state, or for specific people. There are 10 designated agencies and 4 specialized service agencies that must go through this process.

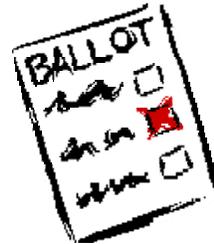
The Committee will appoint a 3 member subcommittee to review all of the information that the Department prepares about an agency's qualifications to be designated. Members on the subcommittee will be: 1 person representing Recipients; 1 person representing Advocates; and, 1 person representing Professionals. The Director of the Quality Management Unit (or his/her representative) will help the subcommittee understand the information and other things about the designation process.



The subcommittee will report its recommendations to the full Committee. The Committee will discuss the report and recommendations and then vote on what recommendation it will make to the Commissioner. The process for making choices about your vote will be explained each time a vote is needed.

Committee members must be present during the majority of the discussion in order to vote on the designation of an agency. If a member must leave early, they may give their proxy to another member.

If a Committee member is an employee, consumer, family member or otherwise associated with the agency, he/she may not participate in the formal vote. The person can, though, participate in the discussion.



The subcommittee is responsible for letting the Commissioner know the full Committee's recommendation. This must be done in writing.

Helpful Hints – The Committee is made up of many different people. People may not know each other, so sometimes it is helpful to think about these things:

- Remember that people come from all walks of life
- Keep a positive attitude to make positive change
- Be willing to take the time to listen carefully
- Make the Committee a place where it is safe to take risks about strong opinions
- Try not to judge based on too little information
- Encourage people to relate personal experiences



- Accept different forms of communication
- Remember the Committee and its members serve as role models for others
- Create good learning experiences for each other
- Ask questions, have fun and laugh!



NOTES

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