

## Council Seeks Expansion of Valued Minnesota Consumer-Directed Support System

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) is seeking to expand self-directed support options, armed with opinion survey results revealing a "strong preference" for self-direction among participants in the state Department of Public Welfare's Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS)

program. Of the 650 respondents to an April survey commissioned by the Council, 93 percent gave the program a rating of between "5" and "7" on a seven point scale, and more than 80 percent said they would recommend the program to others.

Participation in the consumer-directed support system is currently estimated at approximately 2,400 people, or ten percent of those who are likely to be eligible for the program, which gives recipients of financial assistance and care greater decision making authority and flexibility. The model increases the autonomy of participants and their families by letting them make basic judgments about their daily needs rather than having case workers or administrators make these routine choices.

According to GCDD Executive Director Colleen Wieck, the strong ratings that the consumer-directed support system receives from participants for increased flexibility, less stress, and confidence in the allocation of the money "demonstrate[s] the benefits that can be derived from this consumer-oriented approach, all without increasing the state resources required."

The research was conducted as a part of the federally funded "Stronger Voices" demonstration project, designed to further independence and self-

determination for adults and children with developmental disabilities and their families, by providing information about potential opportunities and leadership training. The federal Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) provided funding for the project.



**FMI:** A summary report on the Consumer Directed Community Supports Program Survey Results can be accessed through the Minnesota

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities' Web site at <http://www.mncdd.org/news/cdcs-survey.html>.

(*Connecticut* continued from page 3)

between \$9.5 million to \$19.0 million, while the comparable estimates for new recipients of adult services would range from \$79.0 million to \$128.0 million.

Given the substantial fiscal impact of the proposed expansion as well as the practical ramifications of creating a service system that is responsive to the needs of persons who are developmentally disabled but not mentally retarded, the commission recommended that the implementation process proceed "in an incremental fashion, beginning with infrastructure development and proceeding, over the course of five years, toward full rollout of services."

**FMI.** To obtain a copy of the commission's final report, entitled *Supporting Connecticut's Citizens with Developmental Disabilities*, contact Diana J. LaRocco, Ed.D., Connecticut Department of Mental Retardation, 460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106. The full text of the report also can be accessed through the department's Web site at [http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/advisory/adv\\_report.htm](http://www.dmr.state.ct.us/advisory/adv_report.htm).