



## Our Care Matters

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) has the primary mission of increasing the capacity of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to be included in their communities. Our Council members are appointed by the Governor, and they oversee the implementation of the Council's 5-Year State Plan.

This year, the FDDC will illustrate the importance of supporting people with I/DD and their families through a powerful video series, **Our Care Matters**, which provides real stories that deepen understanding and empathy to encourage meaningful change.

The Council's three central priorities for this year's platform emerged from national and statewide data for the State Plan, which includes input from people with I/DD, their families, and the people who support them.

## Recommendations

### 1 Access to Services

The Council wants to connect Florida's individuals with I/DD and their families to services and resources. FDDC is dedicated to addressing the confusion created by multiple, existing information and resource platforms and directories.

In addition to being able to find resources, the Council wants people to choose from a variety of services that are truly available.

- The Council recommends centralized and coordinated resource information systems for individuals with I/DD and their families.
- The Council is committed to encouraging systems to maintain the most up-to-date information.



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## 2 Home- and Community-Based Services Delivery System

Medicaid home- and community-based services allow individuals with I/DD and their families to receive the resources and supports needed to live outside of an institution and in a community setting of their choice.

As an individual's needs change over time, understanding living options is critical to ensure that the most appropriate living environment is chosen.

- The Council recommends both case management and service delivery systems that have quality measures and standards that families and organizations can use. This is particularly important as the state pilots a for-profit managed care model to serve individuals with I/DD.
- The Council recommends maintaining Florida's Consumer Directed Care waivers that allow more flexibility to choose service providers at a lower cost to the state. This waiver is particularly helpful in rural communities where service options are limited.

Many individuals with I/DD who receive state home- and community-based waiver services must have access to all required services, with an emphasis on personal support and behavioral services to maintain a safe quality of life. The Council will continue to encourage the development of a robust and stable provider workforce.

Individuals with I/DD with a dual diagnosis (i.e., developmental disability and mental health condition) are being placed in unnecessarily restrictive settings like emergency rooms, institutions, and inpatient hospital programs.

- The Council recommends effective practices for individuals with I/DD with significant behavioral challenges to address individuals with a dual diagnosis being placed in more restrictive settings. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities is piloting the addition of personnel with expertise in developmental disabilities to mobile crisis teams that have a good chance of stabilizing individuals with I/DD, who are having a mental health crisis, in their home.

## 3 Aging Caregivers

A large percentage of people aging with I/DD in Florida live at home with family members, who are also aging. Compared to other states, Florida has the highest percentage of people on a waiting list for Medicaid home- and community-based waiver services.

Caring for a person at home impacts the entire family. Aging caregivers, an aging population of adults with I/DD, and a significant shortfall of long-term care funding, both individually and collectively, are of imminent concern for individuals with I/DD and family caregivers.

- The Council recommends a sustainable partnership between developmental disability and aging networks. This collaboration will create a system of care that is both sensitive to and available for both caregivers and individuals with an I/DD who are growing older.