



State of Tennessee

Justin P. Wilson, State Comptroller

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Audit Exposes Problems at the Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) must remedy serious problems in its service recipient safety practices, service delivery system, and information system implementation efforts, according to a report released today by the Comptroller's office.

The department provides services directly to recipients or indirectly through contracts with community providers in a variety of settings, ranging from institutional care to individual supported living in the community. DIDD was serving 8,096 individuals as of May 31 of this year.

Among other findings, state auditors reported that:

- DIDD's former deputy commissioner of the Office of Policy and Innovation improperly assumed authority to overturn two substantiated allegations of misconduct against provider employees and therefore did not intend to hold the provider accountable for service recipient deaths;
- The department did not establish appropriate safeguards to govern the background checks of DIDD employees, volunteers, or provider employees. That deficiency resulted in employees beginning work before background checks were completed, volunteers who had no background checks performed, and provider employees with disqualifying drug convictions that went undetected;
- DIDD was not providing adequate services for individuals with developmental disabilities in violation of statutory requirements and its own mission statement;
- Until top state officials find a sufficient funding solution, the high number of individuals with intellectual disabilities on the waiting list for Medicaid services will continue to plague the department; and
- Since 1994, DIDD has spent at least \$4.3 million to replace its outdated information system with little to show for the expense. DIDD has estimated that it will spend another \$11.8 million to complete the project.

"DIDD serves some of the state's most vulnerable citizens," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "Therefore, the department must do its utmost to ensure the safety of each individual served and to enhance the quality of life of all Tennesseans with intellectual and developmental disabilities."

Auditors will present their findings at a meeting of the General Assembly's Government Operations Joint Subcommittee on Education, Health and General Welfare on October 23. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. in Hearing Room 16 at Legislative Plaza in downtown Nashville.

To view the DIDD report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/repository/SA/pa13043.pdf>

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