

Report from MAINE

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2018 ended with setbacks it seemed for all and yet that isn't really true. Activity of groups with a strong commitment to our needs increased and cooperation between professional groups, parent groups, and even some individuals in government seemed to grow. There was more focus on what we could work toward than what we disagreed on. 2019 has started with a new governor, followed quickly by a new Health and Human Services (HHS) Commissioner and now we have a new Director of Aging and Disabilities (OADS). The new Director has already been a speaker at the Maine Coalition (described below) and has indicated an interest in forming a close relationship with the group

The Maine Coalition for Housing and Quality Services developed as a consortium that includes other Councils and groups interested in this subject and connected through email and internet. Although most are parents, anyone interested is included. Just a sample of these include Speaking Up for Us (SUFU), professionals working in this area including the Maine Association for Community Service Providers (MACSP), the Maine Developmental Disabilities Council and other State and local agencies. Although meetings are held in Portland, there are Zoom locations throughout the State and more can be added. When at a Zoom center, you can enter the discussions at will. Detailed minutes are sent out promptly to all members and those who have requested it. Feedback is always welcomed as well as bulletins and information that can be put on the website.

Community Connect Maine, a parent driven group that has separate meetings in active communities, usually offers live access to the Maine Coalition meetings on Facebook and keeps it available for parents to see at their convenience. Community Connect also has developed a project to make it easier for individuals to be in closer contact with their legislators. So information is getting out better than ever, thanks to these groups.

Waitlists: Recent information seems to indicate that in Section 29 the formerly called waitlist is being called an informal queue. This may be to better describe the problem of a service gap between the ending of school and the start of adult services.

The following numbers have not received final approval but are approximate:

Section 21:

5/9 Total: 1580 Priority 1 - 0; Priority 2 - 574; Priority 3 - 1006.

Some on this wait list may be receiving Section 29 services but are in need of Section 21

Section 29:

5/14 Total: 162 people in the informal queue.

One of the problems with the system is that people may be accepted by or the placement opportunity must be offered to the next person. With the shortage of placements, and the closure of some group homes and day activity centers due to lack of staffing, the system is fragmented at best and appropriate services may not be available and are shrinking rather than growing. The hope is that the new administration's initial interest and activity in these issues and their efforts to listen to the families and providers will help us to work together to meet the needs of this population as soon as possible.

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