

Family Empowerment Task Force Conference at the Capitol June 18, 2011

Speaker Biographies

Commissioner Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D. oversees the state agency that serves 19,000 individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families including 4,000 infants and toddlers. He has worked in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities for 40 years working in both the public and private sector. Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Macy was the Executive Director of SARAH Tuxis Residential and Community Resources, Inc., Guilford, Connecticut since 1990. He was instrumental in the development of the person centered planning design which became the norm for both private and public services. Dr. Macy is a Fellow of the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Member of the National Conference of Executive Directors of the ARC, and Chair of the Arc US Board Chapter Excellence Training Committee. Dr. Macy has also taught at Connecticut Colleges and Universities including the University of Connecticut "Understanding Special Education" Program. Commissioner Macy received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Assumption College, Worcester, Massachusetts. He also earned both his Master's and Doctorate degrees in Developmental Disabilities – Developmental Psychology from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Anne Foley is Under Secretary for Policy Development and Planning at the state Office of Policy and Management (OPM). A 23-year veteran employee of OPM, Anne has held various positions in the office including Planning Specialist, Legislative Manager, and Senior Policy Advisor. As Under Secretary, Anne coordinates the implementation of interagency service delivery systems, and improves the effectiveness of state services through research and policy development, identifies and analyzes issues and trends in areas such as long term care financing, and health and human services. Some of Anne's specific responsibilities include coordinating the state allocation of over \$100 million in federal block grant funds, chairing the Tobacco and Health Trust Fund Board and overseeing annual disbursement of these funds, and representing OPM on various statutory committees such as the Interagency Committee on Supportive Housing and Homelessness which has been responsible for the development of over 2000 units of supportive housing in Connecticut. Anne received her B.A. in Social Work from Providence College in 1983, an M.S.W. degree in Policy and Planning from the University of Connecticut in 1987, and an M.A. degree in Social Policy from Brandeis University in 2001.

Representative Betsy Ritter was first elected State Representative for the 38th District in November, 2004. She currently serves as Co Chair of the Committee on Public Health and as vice-chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Human Services. She has been recognized by the Connecticut Community Providers Association for her legislative efforts. In 2007, Betsy was nominated to the Council of State Governments/Eastern Region healthcare committee. She also achieved recognition as a Thompson Fellow that same year. Betsy was first elected to public office in Waterford in 1990 as Registrar of Voters and served three and a half years before becoming Town Treasurer for the next five years. In 1998 she became Waterford's Tax Collector, a position to which she was elected twice. During this time she brought new technology and efficient procedures to the office, provided greater services to the public using fewer resources and staff, minimized departmental expense, increased Town tax relief to elderly and disabled homeowners, worked for and implemented a tax benefit for volunteer firefighters and EMT's, and maintained the collection rate at one of the highest in the state. She is a CT Certified Municipal Collector. Betsy has volunteered for numerous Town and community agencies and organizations including Waterford emergency management, PTA's and school board action planning, school sports, YMCA of Southeastern CT, low-income housing advocacy, and arts in education. She served as president of the New London County Tax Collectors Association and is treasurer of Young Audiences of CT, Inc., a finance committee member for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and a member of Waterford Rotary and the Waterford Democratic Town Committee.

Patrick J. Johnson Jr. is currently President of Oak Hill, a 117 year old private not for profit agency and the largest provider of comprehensive community based services for people with disabilities in CT. Mr. Johnson's most recent service was as Director of Catholic Charities / Catholic Family Services, Inc. which served 20,000 people annually from sites in Hartford, New Haven and Litchfield County. Mr. Johnson has served as the ranking administrator or board member for a whole range of social services including mental health clinics, child guidance clinics, refugee resettlement, residential child care, adoption, foster care, child welfare, community based corrections programs, alternative sanctions programs, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, education and early childhood development programs. He served as Chairman of the CT Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. He is Co-Chair of the CT Non-Profit Human Services Cabinet and Chairman of the CT Community Providers Association. Mr. Johnson holds an undergraduate degree from Central CT State University and a Masters Degree from the University of CT as well as significant additional training including a certificate in Child Welfare Services from Harvard University. He is an adjunct faculty member of the University of CT Graduate School of Social Work and has received a wide variety of recognitions and awards. He resides in West Hartford with his wife, Margie and is the father of two sons.

Leslie Simoes joined The Arc of Connecticut in 2008 as Assistant Executive Director and in March of 2011, became the Interim Executive Director. She has a diverse background in human services and the civil/labor/disability rights movement. Leslie discovered her passion for advocating when she worked in a private sector group home with adults with disabilities in 1993 and then again in a home for adult men and women with HIV/AIDS. Feeling the importance of the unique relationship between worker and individual shaped how she felt about advocacy. She became an organizer for New England Health Care Union, District 1199 for 4 years and the Political Director for Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Connecticut State Council where she coordinated the political agenda for 5 SEIU unions and as a lobbyist worked to pass legislation that supported the health care workforce. Then a Community Political Organizer for the Service Employees International Union. She wrote the legislative language for the Autism Division for DDS and collaborated closely with 3 Connecticut Autism organizations. It was there where she met Jean Bowen and was first introduced to Self advocacy. She became the Legislative Advisor to the statewide self advocacy organization, People First of Connecticut in 2003 and she is still one of their advisors today.

Julia Wilcox is the Senior Public Policy Specialist and a registered lobbyist for the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits (CT Nonprofits.) CT Nonprofits is the largest membership organization in the state dedicated exclusively to working with nonprofits. Representing more than 525 nonprofit agencies, the membership base includes approximately 300 organizations that contract with state government – including the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) - for a variety of human and social services. In her present role, Ms Wilcox provides legislative advocacy and support to Connecticut's DDS funded providers of services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Ms Wilcox has more than twenty years of professional experience in the fields of nonprofit development, advocacy, disability awareness and arts administration. Previously, Ms Wilcox served as Executive Director to Very Special Arts Connecticut (VSA CT.) Other previous appointments and associations include: Facilities Coordinator / Project Director at the Institute for Professional Practice, Program Manager at United Cerebral Palsy, Board of Director appointments to Very Special Arts Connecticut, The Connecticut Coalition on Aging and Developmental Disabilities (CCADD) and the Passageway Gallery Project.