

EHS #655 & 656

DMR Name Change

Outside Section

- **COST:** Language Only (possibly \$20,000 for new letterhead, etc.)

- **WHAT:**
 - ⇒ Changes the name of DMR to Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

- **WHY:**
 - ⇒ Thank Senator Berry for taking the lead on this important issue. Further thank Senators Brewer and Panagiotakos on their leadership. All have been a champion on this issue.

 - ⇒ Massachusetts is one of only 6 states to still use the term Mental Retardation in the name of a state department.

 - ⇒ Many states have changed their name to Developmental Disabilities (37 total) during the past decade.

 - ⇒ More recently Connecticut went through an extensive name change process and along with New Hampshire and Nevada they choose Department of Developmental Disabilities.

 - ⇒ Our first thought was to change the name to Developmental Disabilities due to the fact that so many other states used this title. Upon further research we learned that the states that use Developmental Services have completed their name change process more recently. The term Developmental Disabilities reflects the most up-to-date thinking on this issue.

- ⇒ The climate can and probably will change in the next 5-10 years and we would rather be keeping up with the most up-to-date thinking NOW then have to change the title **again** in a few years.
- ⇒ Another reason to amend Developmental Disabilities to Developmental Services is because of the translation of the word 'disabilities.' In Spanish that word translates to '**incapacitated**,' which in my opinion is a step backwards not forward.
- ⇒ We have taken steps to include a definition to maintain the eligibility standards that DMR currently serves. To expand DDS' population would take more resources and we are not trying to do that.
- ⇒ This change from Mental Retardation to Developmental Services is the first step in reversing the stigma that has followed this population for generations. We can begin to extend to them the respect that they deserve.
- ⇒ Go into personal story about Suzie, growing up with a sister who has Down 's syndrome and life now as her guardian, as well as the hundreds of phone calls, letters and emails that you receive from residents that tell a heart-wrenching tale of how the words "mental retardation" diminish their sense of accomplishment in all they do.
- ⇒ This is a great day for the citizens of this community and I am proud to be a part of this monumental change for the Commonwealth.