

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 27, 2009

TO: All Members of the Delaware State Senate
and House of Representatives

FROM: Ms. Daniese McMullin-Powell
Chairperson
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

RE: H.B. 6 [DPC Employee Dress Code]

The State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) has reviewed H.B. 6 which would require the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) to implement a mandatory dress code applicable to all Department employees working at the Delaware Psychiatric Center within one year after enactment. The Governor's Task Force on the Delaware Psychiatric Center (DPC) Final Report (December 18, 2007) did not address uniforms or attire for DPC employees. However, Finding #20 from the Legislative DPC Investigative Committee Report (January, 2008) supported uniforms for DPC staff. See attachment.

Conceptually, some indicia of employee status would be appropriate in a mental hospital setting. Such "official" status could be manifest through an identification badge or distinctive aspect of attire. For example, other hospitals routinely implement standards facilitating the identification of employees. Such identification would logically be more important in the context of a mental hospital. DPC patients may periodically be somewhat disoriented and benefit from visual cues that someone is an employee. Indeed, SCPD would be surprised if an entity as large as DPC did not have some form of dress code already.

SCPD recommends that the sponsors ascertain if DHSS will voluntarily commit to maintenance of a dress or identification system to obviate the necessity of the legislation. In the absence of such a commitment, SCPD endorses the bill.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact SCPD if you have any questions regarding our position on the proposed legislation.

cc: The Honorable Jack Markell
Mr. Rita Landgraf
Mr. Brian Hartman, Esq.
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Developmental Disabilities Council