

*Paul Blaustein, Chair Person*  
*Mercedes Witowsky, Executive Director*

## **COUNCIL HYBRID MEETING MINUTES**

### **Thursday, May 8, 2025**

The first quarter of the regular public meeting for the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities was held on Thursday, May 8, 2025, at the Hilton Garden Inn, Hamilton, New Jersey. The meeting was called to order by Paul Blaustein, Council Chair, who presided and declared a quorum present.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

The Open Public Meeting Act and Council Vision were read. The meeting notice was published in the *Trenton Times and Star Ledger*. Everyone around the table introduced themselves.

### **MINUTES**

The minutes from March 13, 2025, meeting were distributed in the meeting packet.

#### **ACTION:**

**Vote:** Motion made by Kevin Nunez to approve the minutes as presented;  
Second, by Helen Steinberg. Minutes approved  
March 13, 2025, Approved Meeting Minutes will be posted on the Council Website.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no morning public comments.

### **PRESENTATION**

Five Year Plan Process was presented by Brenda Considine, Consultant, to the Council.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- ❖ **Executive Committee and Chair Report** was given by Paul Blaustein.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee will change its name in response to the Federal Government's announcements regarding certain language that federal contracts use.

#### **ACTION:**

Motion made by Todd Emmons to change the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee name to Access For All Subcommittee. Seconded by Kevin Nunez. The name change has been approved.

16 Yes      0 No      1 Abstain, Gwen Orłowski

- Self-Advocate Advisory Subcommittee Report was given by Ryan Roy.
- ❖ Public Policy Committee Report was given by Nantanee Koppstein.
  - Children and Youth Services Subcommittee Report was given by Peg Kinsell.
  - Health and Wellness Committee Report Elizabeth Dalzell.
- ❖ State Plan Committee Report was given by Helen Steinberg.
  - Access For All Subcommittee Report was given by Annette Smith
- ❖ Grants Committee Report was given by Kevin Nunez.

## STAFF REPORT

- ❖ Executive Director Report was given by Mercedes Witowsky

Mercedes pointed out 5 key areas to point out from her report:

1. Protect Medicaid Awareness Campaign was shared as Council Member Andrew McGeady and his family
2. The ACL, which funds the Council activities will dissolve at the end of June. We will continue working until we are told we no longer have any funds. We have no assurance beyond September. Updates to come.
3. Legislative Disability Caucus is scheduled for Tuesday July 22, 2025 from 12pm to 1pm. The session is recorded and can be found on the Council Website.
4. Candidates for Governor were shared with the members so they are aware of who is in their county and key points of interests when speaking with them.
5. Abuse and neglect in New Jersey

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Blaustein read the Public Comment Guidelines before comments were made. There were three public comments made in person:

1. Laura Weinberg was present and made a public comment.

Meeting adjourned at 12:13pm

Minutes prepared by Jacinta Williams, Executive Assistant

**Next Consumer Caucus is August 6, 2025 - 6 pm - 8 pm @ Hilton Garden Inn**  
**Next Council meeting is August 7, 2025 - 9:30 am-2:30 pm @ Hilton Garden Inn**

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Self-Advocates, Family Members In Person**

Myrta Rosa	Annette Smith	Andrew McGeady	Pam King
Michelle Solomon	Yana Mermel	Elizabeth Dalzell	Peg Kinsell
Todd Emmons	Paul Blaustein	Helen Steinberg	Sarah Aziz
Nantanee Koppstein	Ryan Roy	Kevin Nunez	

### **ZOOM**

Kelly Stout  
Michael McCarthy

### **Excused**

Laura Williams, Executive Director, Arc Ocean County

### **DD Act Agencies Representatives & Government Agencies**

Joyce Jelley, Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities  
Gwen Orlowski, Executive Director, Disability Rights New Jersey  
Kim Murray, Director, Office of Special Education Programs  
No Representation Division of Family Health Services  
Jacqueline Moskowitz, Division of Disability Services  
Jonathan Seifried, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Developmental Disabilities  
Phyllis Melendez, Division of Medical Asst. & Health Services  
No Representative Division of Voc. Rehab. Services

### **Personal Care Attendant**

Sean Kenny, PCA for Andrew McGeady  
Edna Bond, PCA for Kevin Nunez

### **Public Attendees**

Julia Simko  
Ray Vercruysse  
Christine Bakter, Deputy Director, Office of the Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families  
Laura Weinberg  
Walter Kalman, MSW, LSW, CAE

### **Council Staff**

Jacinta Williams	Jodi Fox	Jade Pollock	Bob Titus
Frank Latham	Kerry McGrath	Kyoko Coco	Adam Kubler
Ebony Freeman	Alison Malnak	Mercedes Witowsky	