## Friday, February 1, 2019

## [New DD Chief Focusing On Basics Of Direct Care, Case Management](https://www.gongwer-oh.com/programming/news.cfm?Article_ID=880220203)

Jeffrey Davis wants Ohio's developmental disabilities system to focus on the basics: providing compassionate and reliable direct care and case management for people with disabilities and their families.

The new director of the Department of Developmental Disabilities said those two components are the essential pieces of the state's support system for people with developmental disabilities, and he wants to make sure the government isn't getting in the way.

"Our system, if you boil it down, is very simple. It's about that hands-on delivery of care," he said in an interview. "That's all that matters, is that direct care. Is it good? Can it be better? That's the only reason that we're sitting here, the only reason we have a state department, a county board."

Appointed by [**Gov. Mike DeWine**](https://www.gongwer-oh.com/programming/bio.cfm?nameid=53502) to head the department, Mr. Davis replaces John Martin, who retired after 12 years as director under Gov. John Kasich and Gov. Ted Strickland. (See **[Gongwer Ohio Report, January 11, 2019](http://www.gongwer-oh.com/index.cfm?link=news.cfm&article_id=880080203" \t "_blank)**)

Mr. Davis returned as the head of the agency he served for 16 years as a deputy director during the Voinovich and Taft administrations.

Mr. Davis then worked as director for integrated health services for Buckeye Community Health Plan, and as director of government affairs for the Ohio Provider Resource Association.

In managed care, he said he looked at the integration of behavioral care and acute care in the system. When he returned to work on developmental disabilities at OPRA, he focused on the importance of working with other groups and stakeholders.

"One hopes that you're always listening to every person out there, and you have to if you want to put everything together," he said.

In his new role at DODD, he said he wants to see the state and county boards focus specifically on providing the best service possible for individuals with disabilities and families.

Direct care is vital to providing support for people with disabilities, but it faces struggles, often rooted in high turnover rates for providers, he said. When individuals constantly have new support professionals, that can cause stress.

"We have to support that direct care staff, to be that empathetic, to be that understanding, to be that sensitive, to be competent," he said. "That matters. That's all that matters."

As for case managers, Mr. Davis said he wants to ensure they're doing the best to help families navigate a complicated system.

"Who's that first person they see? It's that case manager at the county board," he said. "They don't know our system, they don't know all the acronyms. All they want is somebody to hold their hand."

"We want a case manager that holds families' hands and is able to put all the puzzle pieces together," he added. "If it's too hard, if we've made it too hard as government, then we're going to start to pare it away."

Gov. DeWine's message has focused on human issues, and the director said his goal is to ensure those basic needs are met for people with developmental disabilities.

"We've got good people throughout our system. They care. They're here for the right reasons. We want to reinforce that, reinforce why we're here, get it to those basics, and hold people's hands. And we want to be kinder all the time," he said. "We reinforce the basics, we get back to the essence of what we're about."

The director said his goal is to ensure the system works for families.

"Zero percent of the people across the state of Ohio know who the director of the state Department of Developmental Disabilities is," he said. "Nor should they. Who cares? All they care about, and they show it every day through their hard-earned tax dollars, is that the system does every day what it's supposed to do on the ground."

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