



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES

# PRESS RELEASE



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## FORMER DISABILITY SERVICE DIRECTOR RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE

**Washington, DC**—The National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) presented **Laura Nuss** with the **Ben Censoni Award for Excellence in Public Service** during the NASDDDS mid-year conference in Kansas City, Missouri. The Ben Censoni Award for Excellence is the only award that recognizes public officials who strive to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. It is named after the late Ben Censoni, former developmental disabilities director for Michigan and chair of the association's Governmental Affairs Committee.

Nuss has more than 30 years of experience supporting people to achieve valued personal outcomes and employment from her work in Pennsylvania spending 15 years in the private sector, followed by public service in North Carolina, Connecticut and the District of Columbia. As the former director of the D.C. Department on Disability Services (DDS), she spearheaded transformative systems change in both the intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and vocational rehabilitation service delivery systems helping to establish D.C. as a leader in person-centered thinking, Employment First, Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) best practice in I/DD services, and early implementation of the Workforce Innovation Opportunities Act (WIOA).

Nuss was the first leader of I/DD services in the District to stay on the job beyond 10 months. With DDS more than eight years, she guided the agency through a progression of organizational and systems change efforts to establish robust performance management and quality assurance and improvement systems, HCBS waiver reforms and legislation to reform the I/DD service delivery system and set the stage to end the 40-year-old class action litigation now known as *Evans v. Bowser*. She resigned as director of DDS in April 2016.

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