Pat Morse: In terms of “Why would parents need to know about Medicaid waivers so early,” is if they feel like their child is always going to live at home, but in transition meetings it is clear that this student maybe doesn’t want to live at home for the rest of their life. Or, the parents are understanding that the student wants to at some point go to a post-secondary type of a class or be able to work in the community. They really want to live independently in the community, or with roommates, but they do not want to live in the household of the family. So, what do parents do? One of the things that is super important at an early age is to try to think ahead and say “What might my child need”? And not wait until eighteen or twenty-two and decide, “The school is out of the picture now,” and all the responsibility comes to the parent or the guardian. In order to know there are community resources for you, super important especially for teachers, to be able to tell parents “this is where you can call, these are the community resources. It is complicated to get into but there are people that will help you.” Then refer them to Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living or directly to MHMR of the Brazos Valley. Make the call and just try to get the information. In terms of getting on interest lists, the reason it is important is because a lot of interest lists have years of wait. As I say for Home and Community Service currently it’s over ten years. So that that is not alarming, what I have found for parents that sometimes come to transition meetings, transition fairs – they come in and see a lot of community support. Instead of it being encouraging as in “Wow, look what is available,” it’s overwhelming. I can honestly understand why because there are a lot of parents in the room. Some parents have told me after the fact that ‘I went in the room and couldn’t handle it so this isn’t for me. Now at transition, and my son is twenty-two my son is aging out what do I do? I don’t have the financial resources to pay for a care provider or transportation when I have to work all day.’ I feel like as early as you can just get informed for teachers to be able to say ‘Have you considered what your life is going to look like? What is your son or daughter’s life going to look like when they are finished with school?’

Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan: To access the DADs website and learn more about registering, please visit our helpful links page (http://ctsp.tamu.edu/helpful-links).