§ 703. Functions, powers and duties of the council. 1. The council shall develop and oversee the implementation of a comprehensive statewide plan for providing services to individuals of all ages with disabilities in the most integrated setting. Such plan shall be completed within one year of the effective date of this article. Such plan shall include, but not be limited to

(a) the number of individuals of all ages with disabilities who are currently institutionalized and are eligible for services in community-based settings, the number of individuals residing in the community who are dependent on the assistance of community-based services to avoid institutionalization and any improvements necessary to be made to current data collection systems or any new data collection initiatives necessary to obtain such information;

(b) the current assessment procedures utilized to identify individuals of all ages with disabilities who could benefit from services in a more integrated setting and the development of a single assessment process for individuals of all ages with disabilities in need of services, to be implemented by one community-based agency in each county with expertise in community-based services for people of all ages with disabilities through the use of a uniform assessment tool;

(c) the identification of what community-based services are available to individuals of all ages with disabilities in the state of New York and an assessment of the extent to which these programs are able to serve people in the most integrated settings;

(d) the identification of what improvements need to be made to the system of community-based services to ensure that the system is comprehensive, accessible, meets the needs of persons who are likely to require assistance in order to live in the community and provides high quality, adequate supports for individuals of all ages with disabilities;

(e) an evaluation of the supports and services available to assist individuals of all ages with disabilities who reside in their own homes with the presence of other family members or other informal caregivers and an evaluation of the supports and services available to address the needs of individuals of all ages with disabilities who reside in their own homes without family members or other informal caregivers;

(f) an examination of how the identified community-based supports and

services integrate individuals of all ages with disabilities into the community;

(g) a review of what funding sources are available to increase the availability of community-based services and an analysis of how the varied funding sources available to meet the needs of individuals of all ages with disabilities in the most integrated setting can be organized into a coherent system of long term care which affords people reasonable and timely access to community-based services;

(h) an assessment of how well the current service system works for different populations, including but not limited to, elderly people with disabilities, people with physical disabilities, people with developmental disabilities, people with mental illness, and people with HIV and AIDS, and a review of changes that might be desirable to make services a reality in the most integrated setting for all populations;

(i) an examination of waiting lists for community-based services and what might be done to ensure that waiting lists are created and accurately maintained and that people are able to come off waiting lists and receive needed community-based services at a reasonable pace;

(j) an examination of what information, education, outreach and referral systems might be useful to ensure that individuals of all ages with disabilities receive the information necessary to make informed choices regarding how their needs can best be met, including the evaluation of the creation of a toll free hotline with information on community-based services for individuals of all ages with disabilities;

(k) an evaluation of how quality assurance and quality improvement can be conducted effectively as more people of all ages with disabilities live in community settings; and

(l) an examination of how the overall system of health and long term care can best be managed so that placement in the most integrated setting becomes the norm.

2. The council shall contract with an independent organization with expertise in the provision of community-based services for individuals of all ages with disabilities and with expertise in the area of program evaluation research to conduct an evaluation of the council's plan created pursuant to subdivision one of this section and the implementation of such plan. Such evaluation shall be completed three

years after the effective date of this article.

3. Each commissioner and director serving on the council shall ensure that his or her agency implements every aspect of the plan developed pursuant to subdivision one of this section which falls under the responsibilities of his or her agency. The council shall oversee the implementation of the plan created pursuant to subdivision one of this section and shall update such plan as necessary to ensure that waiting lists for community-based services for people of all ages with disabilities are moving at a reasonable pace and to ensure that the state of New York is developing a system of long term care that allows individuals of all ages with disabilities to reside and function in the most integrated setting.

4. The council shall provide a report to the governor, the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly one year after the effective date of this article and annually thereafter. Such report shall detail the plan developed pursuant to subdivision one of this section, any changes made to such plan, all steps taken to implement such plan and their outcome, and any future actions planned.

5. The plan to be developed under this article shall not be construed to increase, decrease, or change the statutory authority of any person or entity and shall be implemented consistent with all otherwise applicable law.