



Budget Crisis Update - June 1, 2009

Consumers and Families:

The State is making decisions right now that will seriously impact your services and your future. Drastic proposals to cut services and change public policy are on the table for action in Sacramento. You must act now if you want to protect your services and your rights.

Most of you already know what has happened so far:

- Supported Employment Services received a 10% rate cut effective 7-1-08.
- All other community services and Regional Centers received a 3% cut effective 2-1-09.
- In February, the Legislature directed the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to cut an additional \$100 million from the DDS budget. If this is not accomplished, the Legislature will institute a devastating additional 7.1% rate cut to all community service providers on September 1, 2009.

Although a 3% cut may sound manageable, it is on top of decades of grossly inadequate funding for community services, and threatens the survival of an already broken developmental disabilities system in California. This is in addition to major reductions also being proposed for Medi-Cal, IHSS, SSI and other services that are essential to the health, safety and well-being of all people with disabilities. And once a cut has been imposed, it is extremely difficult to reverse even when the state has increased its revenue.

Then, just days ago, the Governor instructed DDS to recommend another \$234 million in cuts to the developmental disabilities system! Advocates were stunned. No one can expect the system to survive cuts of this magnitude.

The Legislature will be taking action on these budget cuts very soon. Actions could begin as soon as Saturday, June 6. We must reach our legislators immediately and tell them to reject these terrible cuts and accept the reasonable and responsible alternatives being proposed by advocacy groups. The following information will give you more detail about what has happened and what is at stake.

What's happening with the cuts that started in July, 2008 and February, 2009?

Service providers and regional centers are working to find ways to survive. Some community programs have already closed and others are on the brink of closure. But given the seriousness of the State's budget problem, the community is trying to do its fair share by accepting these cuts.

What's happening about the \$100 million cut?

Many of you participated in the state-wide stakeholder input process that took place in February and March. At these meetings, DDS staff heard from people all over the state about how to save the required \$100 million and avoid the threatened 7.1% rate cut for service providers.

At those meetings the voices of consumers, parents and family members were loud and clear. DDS was asked to protect community services and secure all available additional federal funds to help solve the problem. The community said if there must be cuts that they be shared among all 4 parts of the system: Developmental Centers, DDS Headquarters, Regional Centers and community services.

DDS took this community input and worked with a small stakeholder group to develop recommendations to the Legislature about how to save the \$100 million. Unfortunately, the final DDS recommendations do not reflect the vast majority of community

input. DDS made 15 proposals to the Legislature and 94% of the cuts in these proposals primarily impact community service providers or families directly. The DDS proposals can be viewed on the DDS website. Go to www.dds.ca.gov and click on “What’s New” in “Popular Links.” Then scroll down to “DDS Budget Proposals” (4-7-09). There you can read a general description of each of the 15 proposals.

But there is something you won’t see on the website and it is much more important than these general descriptions of the 15 proposals. You cannot see the actual language that DDS is proposing to put into law to *implement* these proposals. The actual language that becomes law is the only thing that matters. It is referred to as “trailer bill language” because it goes into law in bills that are passed along with the budget (bills that “trail” the budget) to implement the budget actions. Those who have seen the actual trailer bill language to implement the 15 proposals are very concerned. While some of it is reasonable and consistent with the general descriptions of the proposals, some of it does something very different and will have very severe negative impacts on consumers, families and the community service system.

Here are a few of the things DDS’s proposed trailer bill language will put into law:

- Many children between 24 and 36 months of age with certain developmental delays who are now eligible for early intervention (Early Start) services will no longer be eligible.
- Day programs will be required to change their services for adults over age 50 and serve them in groups of 8 at a reduced rate, making community participation impossible.
- All day programs and transportation services will be forced to close for the week between Christmas and New Year’s.

- Regional Centers will be given explicit control over what services are written into some IPPs and IFSPs. This violates the most fundamental element of the Lanterman Act – the right of the individual planning team to determine what is in your IPP or IFSP. This means that you no longer have a choice about the services you receive.

- A few of the specific things Regional Centers will be required to do include:
 - Purchase group training for parents instead of in-home behavioral intervention services.

 - Purchase day care in neighborhood preschools instead of professional early intervention services in infant development programs.

 - Purchase transportation for adults only to the lowest cost day program available.

This language proposed by DDS goes too far. The needed cost savings can be achieved without changing the law in ways that undermine your services and your fundamental rights under the Lanterman Act.

What's happening with the proposal for another \$234 million cut?

All advocates agree that this additional reduction cannot come from community services. If further reductions beyond the \$100 million cannot be avoided, the alternative proposal described below provides the Legislature with ways to find the needed savings.

There is another way!

Advocates at The Arc of California (The Arc), the California Disabilities Services Association (Cal-DSA), the Infant Development Association (IDA) and the California Supported Living Network (CSLN) have developed an alternative proposal. This proposal is reasonable and responsible. It accepts some of the 15 DDS proposals but rejects those that do outright harm to consumers, families and community services. It provides the Legislature with alternative trailer bill language and alternative methods of realizing the needed savings. This proposal has been made available to all Legislators, including decision-makers on the Budget Conference Committee. Other advocacy groups are also suggesting alternatives to the 15 DDS proposals and to the Governor's additional \$234 million cut. There is a better way!

The alternative proposal can be described in simple terms. Those who care about people with developmental disabilities in California must contact their own elected Senators and Assembly Members, the members of the Budget Conference Committee, and the Governor to tell them:

1. There can be no more cuts in community services for people with developmental disabilities.
2. Please support the alternative plan being promoted by The Arc and other advocates:
 - Bring in all available federal dollars to offset state costs.
 - Reduce spending at state-run Developmental Centers
 - Reduce administration and bureaucracy, not direct services.
3. Reject the DDS trailer bill language and accept the changes proposed by The Arc, Cal-DSA, IDA and the CSLN.

You can use the information below to reach the decision-makers who are now deciding your future!

1. Call, email, or fax (don't mail) short letters on your group's letterhead to all of the following key decision-makers. All their numbers are in the 916 area code:

- Your own local state senator and Assembly representative. Be sure to give them your address so they know you live in their districts. If emailing them, please use The Arc's web form at www.ArcCalifornia.org, "Write Your Legislators."
- Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, 445-2841, 558-3160 (fax), email using the web form at www.ArcCalifornia.org, "Write Your Legislators."
- Senate President pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg, 651-4006, 323-2263 (fax), senator.steinberg@sen.ca.gov
- Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, 319-2047, 319-2147 (fax), assemblymember.bass@assembly.ca.gov
- Senator Dennis Hollingsworth, 651-4036, 447-9008 (fax), senator.hollingsworth@sen.ca.gov
- Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee, 319-2033, 319-2133 (fax), assemblymember.blakeslee@assembly.ca.gov
- Assemblywoman Noreen Evans, 319-2007, 319-2107 (fax), assemblymember.evans@assembly.ca.gov
- Senator Denise Ducheny, 651-4040, 327-3522 (fax), senator.ducheny@sen.ca.gov
- Senator Robert Dutton, 651-4031, 327-2272 (fax), senator.dutton@sen.ca.gov
- Senator Mark Leno, 651-4003, 445-4722 (fax), senator.leno@sen.ca.gov
- Senator Alan Lowenthal, 651-4027, 327-9113 (fax), senator.lowenthal@sen.ca.gov
- Senator Mimi Walters, 651-4033, 445-9754 (fax), senator.walters@sen.ca.gov
- Assemblyman Roger Niello, 916-319-2005, 319-2105 (fax), assemblymember.niello@assembly.ca.gov
- Assemblyman Kevin de Leon, 319-2045, 319-2145 (fax), assemblymember.deleon@assembly.ca.gov
- Assemblyman Bob Blumenfield, 319-2040, 319-2140 (fax), assemblymember.blumenfield@assembly.ca.gov
- Assemblyman Jim Nielsen, 319-2002, 319-2102 (fax), assemblymember.nielsen@assembly.ca.gov

2. Distribute this Action Alert widely.

3. Join The Arc's Action E-List at www.ArcCalifornia.org, "Write Your Legislators."