



DELAWARE ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES

100 W. 10th St., Suite 103 ♦ Wilmington, Delaware ♦ 302-622-9177 ♦ Fax: 302-777-5386

Connie Hughes
Executive Director

Member Agencies

AHEDD

AIDS Delaware

Autism Delaware

Bancroft Neurohealth

Benedictine OCP

Brandywine Counseling, Inc.

Center for Disabilities Studies, UD

Chimes of Delaware

Choices for Community Living

Cleanworks Janitorial Services

Client Assistance Program

Community Integrated Services

Community Interactions, Inc.

Connections CSP, Inc.

DE Council on Gambling Problems

Delaware Mentor Healthcare

Delmarva Community Services

Dove Pointe

Easter Seals Delaware and
Maryland's Eastern Shore

Elwyn Delaware

Freedom Center for Independent
Living

Gaudenzia Fresh Start

Goodwill Delaware

Homeless Planning Council of DE

Horizon House Delaware

Independent Resources, Inc.

KenCrest Services

Kent Sussex Counseling Services

Keystone Services MidAtlantic

MOSAIC Delaware

NAMI Delaware

NHS Human Services

Open Door, Inc.

Opportunity Center, Inc.

Psychotherapeutic Services, Inc.

Salvation Army

ResCare / VOCA DE

The Arc of Delaware

To: Members of the Joint Finance Committee

From: Karen Reiss, DelARF Developmental Disabilities Commission

Date: March 3, 2010

**Re: JFC -- Division of Developmental Disabilities Services
Budget Hearing**

Senator Cook, Representative Williams and members of the Joint Finance Committee, good afternoon, I am Karen Reiss, chair of the Developmental Disabilities Commission of DelARF. I am speaking today on behalf of DelARF's 24 members and their more than 1,900 staff who serve over 2,600 Delawareans with developmental disabilities annually. Under contracts with DDDS, we provide vocational training, adult day care, supported employment and 24 hour residential care in the community. We are the organizations that the state uses to provide 80 percent of its services to Delawareans with disabilities.

We have reviewed the Governor's Recommended Budget for the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and have seen several significant cuts in funding.

- The budget shows a decrease in base funding of about \$3 million or 5% of the total budget. We are concerned about the implications of these cuts on those we serve. Funding for important support services such as psychiatry, dental care and counseling may be significantly reduced. Many of those in our residential programs have multiple needs including ongoing behavioral support. We know that 1 in 3 persons with a cognitive impairment will experience behavioral health issues in their lifetime. Access to counseling becomes crucial to their care. We also have a concern that a cut of that size may require the Division to reduce funding for direct services in the near future. We ask you to reinstate these essential funds to the FY 10 levels.
- There is no new money in the budget to serve the 77 special needs school graduates leaving high school in June. We understand that you are aware of this need and that DHSS is working on finding funding for this group.
- There is also no new money for emergency residential placements. DDDS places about 30 individuals annually into residential programs on an emergency basis. These are individuals who live at home, usually with elderly parents. In the event that their father dies and their mother goes into a nursing home, they could need a residential placement. Currently, there are 167 people between the ages of 50 and 60 with a developmental disability who live at home with their families. There are 75 in a similar situation aged 61 and older. Their parents are well into their 80's and it is highly likely that many of them will soon need

emergency placements. Currently there are no residential openings in community based programs. If only three of these individuals are placed at the Stockley Center, it will cost the state \$1 million dollars or \$331,000 per person. We can serve them in a 24-7 staffed home for an average cost of \$79,000 per year.

We understand the state's fiscal situation and we want you to know that our number one goal is to work with you to provide cost effective, quality services to those for whom we are a lifeline. Here are some facts that need to be considered before your final decisions are made:

1. We know that once again this year, there is no money for increases for our members and we are not asking for that. But, we must remind the Committee that our current reimbursement rates are based on 2002 costs. Our members are struggling to cover expenses reimbursed at rates based on 8-year-old cost estimates. Think about how much prices for food, gas, heating oil and electric have gone up since 2002. Without increases for the past 8 years, our members have essentially experienced at least a 20 % cut in reimbursement. And, even though our funds have been cut, the expectations on us to deliver quality programs remain the same. We are concerned about our ability to provide superior programs in the safest and healthiest environments.
2. The \$2.9 million reduction in this year's DDDS budget will have implications far into the future. Unfortunately due to the aging of this population more and more individuals and families will need partial or full support for their adult children. This is not the time to make this large a cut in the DDDS budget.
3. In closing, we want to thank Secretary Landgraf and Director LaFontaine for the increased levels of cooperation between the Department, the Division and our provider network. Please remember that we are your strong partners in the delivery of **core services** to the state's most vulnerable citizens and continue to invest in us.

Thank you for your consideration.