



DELAWARE ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES

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Connie Hughes
Executive Director

Member Agencies

AHEDD
AIDS Delaware
Autism Delaware
Bancroft Neurohealth
Benedictine OCP
Brain Injury Association of DE
Brandywine Counseling, Inc.
Center for Disabilities Studies, UD
Chimes of Delaware
Choices for Community Living, DE
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
MOSAIC Delaware
NAMI Delaware
Open Door, Inc.
Opportunity Center, Inc.
Psychotherapeutic Services, Inc.
Salvation Army
ResCare / VOCA DE
The Arc of Delaware

To: Ms. Ann S. Visalli, Director

Office of Management and Budget

From: Connie Hughes, DelARF Executive Director

Date: November 23, 2009

Re: Governor's FY 2011 Budget Hearing, DelARF Testimony

Good afternoon, I'm Connie Hughes, Executive Director of the Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, also known as DelARF. I am here today to speak on behalf of our 40 member agencies, their 5,000 staff members, and the 50,000 consumers they serve.

I want to begin by publicly thanking Budget Director Visalli and her staff and Secretary Landgraf and her staff, including her Division Directors, for your herculean efforts last year to preserve funding for core services to individuals with disabilities. Your efforts have helped us to continue to do what we do best: serve people in their own homes and communities. This afternoon, our members will share some examples of how your work has made a difference in the lives of so many people.

By now we all know that FY 11 will be another difficult year – a year when funding for services will shrink while demand for those same services will increase. We understand that you may be forced to make budget cuts but **these cuts need to be cost effective. Cuts to our community-based services are not cost effective.** Let me cite a few examples:

- Within DDDS, funding is needed to serve 77 special needs grads who want to continue on their path to independence. The cost to serve ALL of them in community based day programs is less than the cost to place just three of them at the Stockley Center.
- Within DSAMH, half of their budget – about \$44 million --now goes to support the 200 individuals served at DPC (all general fund dollars). Our members who run Community Continuum of Care Programs can sustain a person in the community for less than \$30 a day (over half of that cost is born by Federal Medicaid dollars and the remainder covered by the state.)
- DSAAPD's Personal Attendant Program costs only \$14,000 a year and allows a person with a physical disability to remain in his home, school or job. Without this support, a young person with a bright future may have no alternative but placement in a nursing home where the average annual cost is \$78,000.

This afternoon, I would like to make several recommendations for this year:

- Support existing community-based programs that are maintaining people in their own homes and communities. Cuts to these services will increase the number of people migrating to unnecessary and more expensive long term care facilities;

- Use Delaware's network of quality community providers to help you meet spikes in demand for services. We are nimble and can more easily adjust to changing needs;
- Work with the provider community to design innovative program models that can be used to serve those now inappropriately placed in long term care programs such as DPC, Stockley, or nursing homes. The state will save funds while providing the kind of care that people with disabilities want.

In partnership with the State, our members will do all they can to continue offering core services such as job training, day programs, residential supports, counseling and a host of other services to Delawareans with disabilities. These core services are what every citizen should expect in a caring society and what you would expect for your son or daughter or loved one. We have a professional obligation as well as a personal commitment to provide high quality services to our constituents.

We also have an obligation to tell you about the unintended consequences that may occur if the state does cut funding for our programs. Because we have not received increases in our rates for 7 or more years, further cuts may jeopardize our ability to provide services in a safe and healthy environment. These cuts would leave us with no alternative but to begin lay-offs, increasing the number of unemployed Delawareans and resulting in even more people relying on state-funded social services.

As your partner, we ask that you continue to work with us to find the most sensible and practical ways to manage the current budget crisis. This strong working partnership will allow individuals with disabilities to continue to receive the services they need and deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.