



DELAWARE ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES

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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: Connie Hughes, DelARF Executive Director
Date: March 1, 2010
Re: JFC Department of Health and Social Services Hearing

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 annually. We are the organizations that the state uses to provide 80 percent of its services to Delawareans with disabilities. Through contracts with the state, DelARF members provide job training, residential care, counseling and support services each and every day

I want to begin by saying that we have reviewed the Governor's Recommended Budget, specifically the three Divisions within DHSS that impact services provided by our members. For the Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) and for the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) we were pleased to see no appreciable cuts in funding for services provided to these populations. We support the Governor's proposed budget, reflecting level funding from FY 10, for these two Divisions. We ask the Committee to approve these amounts in the current budget in order to preserve basic and essential services in these programs.

For the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) we have seen some rather significant cuts in funding. My reading of 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. We understand that funding for important support services such as psychiatry, dental care and counseling may be significantly reduced. 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 are two groups within DDDS that will be particularly hard hit by this year's budget: the 77 special needs grads who will be leaving high school this June and those who live at home with their families who may need emergency placements. In the past, the Division had to make about 30 emergency placements per year. We understand that DHSS is committed to finding resources to support both of these groups and we are hopeful that the Department working with the Budget Office will be able to restore these funds. If they are unable to do this, however, we ask the Committee to restore these necessary funds to the budget.

This year we know that you may be forced to make budget cuts but we believe that **these cuts need to be cost effective. Cuts to our community-based services are not cost effective.** For example:

Those 77 special needs graduates cited above all want and need to continue on their path to independence. The cost to serve ALL of them in community based day programs – approximately \$19,000 per person, per year -- is less than the cost to place just five of them at the Stockley Center – at a cost of \$331,000 per person per year.

We do understand how severe the state's fiscal crisis is. As your partners in delivering care, we are committed to working with you and doing all that we can to preserve CORE Services to these very vulnerable populations. Our goal is to work with the state to find a way to provide quality programs to as many people with disabilities as we can. I would like to publicly acknowledge the very high levels of cooperation we experienced this year in working with Secretary Landgraf, her staff: Directors Doyle, Huckshorn, LaFontaine, Mahaney, and Perrotti, and the Budget Office staff. This level of cooperation allows us to use our collective creativity to meet these challenges.

In closing, I ask the members of the Joint Finance Committee to continue to invest in the community-based care that our members provide. Services to people in their own homes and communities are better, more cost effective, and they allow us to give them the right service at the right cost.

Thank you for your consideration.