



DELAWARE ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES

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**To: Ms. Ann S. Visalli, Director
Office of Management and Budget**

**From: Tom Barlow, Chairman
DelARF Physical Disabilities Commission**

Date: November 23, 2009

Re: Governor's FY11 Budget Hearing

Good afternoon. My name is Tom Barlow and I direct adult day and personal attendant programs at Easter Seals. I am speaking today as Chair of the Physical Disabilities Commission of the Delaware Association of Rehabilitation Facilities.

One year ago, we spoke of the value of Personal Attendant Services. PAS is a low cost, dignified way for people with disabilities to live in their own homes and participate in their communities. Today, we want to thank you for preserving the funding for PAS and to give you a sense of the value that you added to lives in Delaware by so doing.

The PAS program allows people with disabilities to hire and schedule their own attendants. The duties of an attendant are flexible and can extend beyond the home. Here are three examples:

- Sumner uses a power wheelchair to get around. With support from the attendants he hired, Sumner completed his college degree and is now employed at a law firm.
- Amanda has spent her life in wheelchair. Her grades in high school were exceptional and it was her lifelong dream to graduate from college. With the support of her attendants, she is now attending college and pursuing her dream. And in July 2010, Amanda is getting married.
- Vickie (who some of you met this past March at JFC) is a bright and creative entrepreneur. With the help of her attendant, she has developed exercise and training programs for people with disabilities at the Brandywine YMCA and other locations. She is also a guest lecturer at the University of Delaware, the MS Society, and Del. Tech.

PAS makes it possible for people with disabilities to live, work and contribute to their communities. I need to tell you two more things about PAS. First, it is very economical. The total cost to the State is less than \$16 an hour and the average cost per-person is just over \$14,000 for a full year.

Second, there is a situation looming with PAS that may jeopardize Delaware's relationship with the federal Medicaid staff. Under a new, federally funded, program called Money Follows the Person, some people have started to hire and schedule their own attendants. They are only funded for this for one year. When they complete that year they will go on the waiting list for the state PAS program.

As it looks now, they may wait a year or two for services to resume. Delaware promised CMS services, not waiting lists. A small amount of funding during FY 10 will solve this. Directors Mahaney and Perrotti could tell you the amount. (An addendum about this Money Follows the Person issue is attached.)

To remain in their own homes, some people receive other services in addition to their hours of PAS attendant care. For example, one person might receive personal care service and adult day care, in addition to PAS. Together, these services come to \$32,500 a year. Compare that to the average cost of \$78,000 a year for such a person to live at a nursing facility. More important than cost, PAS improves people's lives. Like all of us here today, people with disabilities want to live in their homes and communities, as long as possible.

Each of the community services I've mentioned is a part of Delaware's support for people who are elderly or disabled, and each has a waiting list. The continuing fiscal crisis will make it a challenge to fund the PAS waiting list. However, Delaware's good standing with Medicaid is at risk. That mandates a very serious look at Director Perrotti's tobacco fund request.

ADDENDUM TO BUDGET HEARING TESTIMONY

DHSS 11-23-09

Tom Barlow, Chair

DeLARB Physical Disabilities Commission

Money Follows the Person is a federally funded program that provides states with a higher Medicaid match for activities that support people moving from nursing facilities into community services. When Delaware first applied, the application was rejected by CMS. One of the reasons for rejection was that Delaware showed so little prior experience with self-directed programs. In a self-directed program, the person getting the service makes decisions about that service. At this time, the only relevant self-directed program in Delaware is Personal Attendant Services. In this program people are taught to interview, hire, train, and pay their own attendants.

With some clearer explanation of the PAS program, and some other improvements to the application, CMS did approve Delaware for the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. When a person moves out of a nursing facility under MFP, the community services that they receive are funded only for one year. After that year is up, the person must be included in the same services under other funding. In the case of PAS, the existing program under state and tobacco funds is full, and someone new can join it only if someone else leaves. The program has very low turnover. At this time, people receiving one year of PAS under MFP are being added to the waiting list for PAS under state and tobacco funding. However, when their year is up, they are going to stop receiving PAS services. This will not be well received by CMS staff.

Director Perrotti has requested additional tobacco fund dollars to address the PAS waiting list. Given what is at stake in Delaware's relationship with CMS (across several Health Department divisions), this PAS waiting list problem makes sense to solve. The additional tobacco fund dollars that Director Perrotti seeks for FY11 should be approved. A small amount is needed for MFP continuity of service in PAS this year as well.