



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 28, 2011

Contact: Chris Rice
crice@cal-dsa.org
916-441-5844 x106
Cell: 916-317-8648

Service Providers Statewide Applaud Lawsuit Filed on Behalf of Californians with Developmental Disabilities

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The California Disability Services Association (CDSA) supports The Arc California and United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) San Diego’s lawsuit challenging the State’s funding of programs supporting people with developmental disabilities.

“It is ironic that in the year that disability advocate Ed Roberts will be inducted into California’s Hall Of Fame, suing the state is the only way to bring attention to the fact that California has walked away from its promise to help our citizens with epilepsy, cerebral palsy, autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities,” said Christopher Rice, Executive Director of CDSA.

The lawsuit, filed today in federal court in Sacramento, accuses the State of violating federal law, specifically the Home and Community Based Service (HCBS) waiver program, by reducing rates and reimbursements without federal approval, and without considering impacts on federally required health and safety safeguards.

The suit also accuses the State of violating California’s landmark Lanterman Act, first signed into law by Gov. Ronald Reagan in 1969. The groundbreaking Lanterman Act was part of a movement to close large institutions by guaranteeing individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities the right to obtain the support services necessary to live as independently as possible in their own communities. Approximately 1,800 people still live in institutions in California at an annual cost to taxpayers of \$570 million---well over \$300,000 per person - and nearly three times the cost of community-based support.

“In the Lanterman Act, the State made a promise to Californians with disabilities, their families, and the network of provider organizations that support their lives,” continued Rice, “However, the state hasn’t backed that promise with adequate funding. Instead, they have frozen rates and cut payments year after year.”

“Without adequate funding, the health and welfare of the people our organizations have been serving for decades is at risk, and the only alternative is much more expensive care in state-owned institutions or nursing homes. Hopefully, this lawsuit will bring the proper attention to the community-care crisis,” said Ron Killingsworth, President of CDSA and Director of Business Services at Porterville Sheltered Workshop.

#

CDSA is a statewide trade association representing 100 community-based organizations that help persons with developmental disabilities throughout California find meaningful employment, live independently, and participate in a broad range of activities. For more information about CDSA and the services our member organizations provide, visit www.cal-dsa.org.