

Talking Points – District Visits

A System in Crisis

California's unique service delivery system for persons with developmental disabilities is teetering on the edge of collapse. We have sustained cut, after cut, after cut while the population we serve continues to grow. We simply can't take any more cuts.

Community-based services traditionally bear the brunt of cuts to California's DD system. We appreciate efforts made this year to disperse the painful reductions more equitably across the entire system and to secure additional federal funding to offset the needs for deeper cuts. However, without significant structural change, it will be impossible to keep future cuts as far away as possible from the lives of people with disabilities. The lives of 240,000 (and growing!) persons with developmental disabilities, and their rights under the Lanterman Act, hang in the balance. Specific points that should be made when talking with Legislators are:

- **Service providers are terrified of the impending January trigger cuts and the 2012-13 budget.** The resourcefulness of service providers has been tapped out; we have no more flexibility to respond to additional budget cuts.
 - **Ask:** Does your legislator or their staff believe that the trigger will be pulled?
- **Funding for community-based services has not kept pace with the cost of providing services.** For nearly two decades funding has been inadequate and inconsistent in direct service programs, large and small, across the State.
 - **Most of the day program rates have been frozen for more than a decade.** When they were created they were based on actual historical costs that are far out of date.
- **In the last two years, developmental services have been cut nearly \$1 billion in State funds alone!** Add in the loss of Federal matching funds and the results are staggering – countless families throughout the state have had their services dramatically reduced, or even eliminated.
 - My organization has had to absorb... *detail the cuts that your organization has had to absorb over the last 2-5 years here.*
- **The average annual cost of services for the approximately 1,700 consumers living in the developmental centers is about \$346,000 per bed. Annual community-based services cost about one third of that, per person.** We must do all that we can to quickly and effectively transition these individuals into more cost-effective, community-based care.
 - State owned and operated developmental centers (institutions) house just 0.7% of the total population of persons with developmental disabilities in California, but consume 14% of the Department's budget.
- **DDS appears to be out of touch with their own system and continue to make incorrect savings assumptions.** For example, their proposal to achieve a \$2 million reduction in program costs from a cap on respite service hours resulted in savings closer to \$70 million - at the expense of families who need respite services the most.
- **Talk about your personal experience.** My organization have been in operation for **XX** years, employs **XX** people and serves **XXX** people with developmental disabilities ranging from **XXX** to **XXXXX**. We have... *talk about how you have had to adapt here - i.e. sacrificed raises for our staff for X years, cut back on employee benefits, laid off employees, closed programs, etc.*