



California Association for the Retarded

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April 21, 2004

The Honorable Wesley Chesbro, Chair
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #3 on Health
State Capitol
Sacramento, California 95814

CAR Opposition to Reductions in IHSS Residual Program Budget

Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #3

Item 5180 – Department of Social Services

Set for hearing Thursday, April 22, 2004

Dear Senator Chesbro:

The California Association for the Retarded, a statewide parent/family organization with 13 local units, asks that you vote NO on the Governor's Budget proposal that would eliminate the In-Home Supportive Services Residual program. We oppose the Governor's proposed BUDGET reduction because it would:

- Reduce or eliminate in-home supportive services (IHSS) for some 57,000 clients by cutting \$366 million from the state-funded IHSS Residual program.
- Drastically reduce the quality of care - and hence the quality of life - for most of these individuals.
- Result in cost transfers rather than cost savings as many of these individuals could be institutionalized at a higher cost because they no longer would be able to remain in their own homes.

Most of the caseload in the IHSS Residual program consists of people who receive (a) care from a relative as their provider (generally the parent of a minor child or spouse), (b) protective supervision services, that is, watching someone with a severe mental impairment on a 24-hour basis so they don't hurt themselves, and (c) domestic services such as cleaning, shopping, laundry and meal preparation. The Residual program screens parents to make sure they are precluded from working full-time because of the severity of their child's need and lack of an adequate alternative.

Elimination of this program would require approximately 18,000 people to switch to providers who are not relatives and/or receive reduced or modified services in order to qualify under the federally-funded portion of the IHSS Personal Care Services program. The remaining 57,000 people would be left without services unless their needs are redetermined at a higher level than currently exists.

We urge you to consider the effects of this proposal not only on people with disabilities and the elderly but also on children and adults with developmental disabilities. Approximately 68 percent of the people with developmental disabilities who are regional center clients and reside in the community live at home with a parent or guardian. A number of these are able to do so because they receive IHSS Residual program services. This program allows parents to care for their minor or adult children in the most nurturing and supportive environment possible without threat of loss of income.

The service changes, reductions or eliminations that would result from the Governor's proposed reduction would have the following effect:

- ★ **Unnecessary human anguish and suffering.** Some clients have severe and complicated medical and developmental needs and have been cared for by parents and relatives all their lives. Yet many parents would be forced to reenter the work force to support themselves and their families and would not be able to continue to provide care. The substitution of the impersonal care of a stranger for the loving care of a parent could have a damaging effect on a client's development and well-being.
- ★ **Institutionalization of many regional center clients and others who currently are able to reside in the community.** Some Residual program clients simply would be unable to remain in their homes and would be forced to turn to institutionalized forms of care including nursing homes because of their medical or behavioral needs. This would move us away from provisions of the Lanterman Act and the recent *Olmstead* court decision requiring that individuals be allowed to live in the least restrictive environment possible.
- ★ **Cost transfers to other programs rather than cost savings.** Under the Lanterman Act, people with developmental disabilities are entitled to certain identified services to enhance their quality of life. If state-funded programs such as the IHSS Residual program are no longer available, clients will be forced to turn to other programs. It costs under \$10,000 annually to provide services to most individuals under the Residual program, while it can cost five times as much to provide services through a nursing home.

Because of the short-sightedness of this reduction, the Legislature voted to reject the Governor's mid-year proposal to eliminate the IHSS Residual program. We urge you to reject this proposal in the budget year as well. It is the humane and fiscally responsible thing to do.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman
President

cc: Members of the Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee #3
Directors of Social Services, Health Services, and Developmental Services