



## CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION FOR THE RETARDED

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March 4, 2005

The Honorable Wilma Chan, Chair  
Assembly Committee on Health  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **Budget Item 4260** - Department of Health Services - Medi-Cal.  
**March 7 Joint Hearing** of Assembly Committee on Health and Assembly Budget  
Subcommittee #1 on Health and Human Services

Dear Assemblymember Chan,

On behalf of the California Association for the Retarded, I am writing to express opposition to elements of the Department of Health Services' (DHS) Medi-Cal Redesign. CAR is a nonprofit statewide organization with 10 local units that include family advocacy organizations, operators of day programs, and parent groups at state developmental centers.

**Reduction in Dental Benefits:** CAR opposes the Governor's Budget proposal to establish a \$1,000 per adult annual limit on Medi-Cal dental benefits. People with developmental disabilities are particularly prone to chronic and difficult to treat dental problems. Even though the limitation would exclude services provided by physicians or in emergency rooms or hospitals, we believe that the \$1,000 limit would not be sufficient to ensure adequate dentistry treatment and prevention care.

**Expansion of Medi-Cal Enrollment in Managed Care.** CAR recommends the Legislature direct the Department of Health Services to provide information on consumer access to care and efficacy of care when the department expands enrollment in managed care in 35 counties. Even though the department intends to implement new projects and protocols as part of its managed care expansion, we are concerned about the overall effect of the proposal on people with developmental and other disabilities. These individuals often have severe, unique and difficult to manage conditions and may find it hard to find appropriately trained and available health care providers within a managed care system. For this reason, it is imperative that the department periodically monitor the effect of the new delivery system on patient care and report its findings to the Legislature during the period of proposed implementation.

We appreciate your attention to these issues as the Legislature fashions its response to the Medi-Cal Redesign project.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman, President

cc: Members of Assembly Health Committee  
(Same letter sent to Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1 on Health and Human Services)