



# California Association for the Retarded

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February 23, 2009

Ms. Terri Delgadillo, Director  
Department of Developmental Services  
1600 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Controlling Regional Center Costs

Dear Ms. Delgadillo:

We are aware of the hard choices you and this community face during these difficult times, and appreciate the work you and your staff are doing. After years of permanent cuts and freezes that have already diminished the ability of small business and not-for-profit operators to survive, we now see further erosion of mutually supportive services like SSI/SSP, IHSS, and health services, among others. The continued existence of the service delivery system may well depend on it being recognized as a system and not simply a list of expenditure categories. This system has been battered into efficiency and effectiveness over the past almost twenty years, and more cuts hold only the promise of chasing out workers from minimum wage earners to medical professionals. If we are to avoid such cuts as will generate inefficiencies and ineffective practices, we must ensure that reduced expenditures are kept as far from the lives of consumers as possible.

DDS has called for public comment on suggestions to control regional center costs by \$100 million. We find it necessary to make the following recommendations based primarily on DDS' report to the Legislature in fulfillment of section 102.5, chapter 188, statutes of 2007:

- Implement uniform holiday schedules among day program operators – coordinated with adult schools whose students receive transportation services but which do not otherwise cost regional centers;
- Ensure maximum use of generic resources thru a review of each service's appropriateness, type, amount, duration and scope;
- Allow delivery of services in a group modality where appropriate;
- Examine supported living services for excessive costs;
- Develop best practices per evidence-based interventions for services to those with autism spectrum disorders;
- Generate operational savings by consolidating regional centers;
- Outsource and consolidate regional center billing/accounting services;
- Consolidate quality assurance evaluation procedures;
- Review transportation costs;
- Increase regional center service utilization review authority with appeal protections;
- Define 'cost effectiveness' – without losing the entitlement in the small print;

- Expand access to preventive dental and medical services to avoid more costly health care costs in the future;
- DO NOT reduce clients' rights advocate positions, as all these cuts would then leave many with no where to turn for help;
- Allow, with the consent of the consumer and family, IPPs to be held every third year, with a provision for an earlier IPP should a need arise.

As with any exercise of this nature, it would appear that after working so long at building a service system, we are now in the process of cannibalizing it. We must again therefore emphasize that cuts must be kept as far away from consumers as possible, protections built in to any new approaches to service delivery, and this and all social service systems diced up by current economic forces be given a chance to recoup some rationality in cost reimbursements as soon as possible once recovery occurs.

Sincerely,

Marion Lieberman  
President