

ID/A COALITION

THE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES AND AUTISM SERVICES COALITION OF PENNSYLVANIA

August 18, 2011

The Honorable Gary D. Alexander
Secretary
PA Department of Public Welfare
333 Health & Welfare Building
P.O. Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2675

Dear Secretary Alexander,

RE: *Olmstead* Implementation and ID Waiting List in DPW's FY2013 Budget

The Intellectual Disabilities and Autism (IDA) Coalition is a group of statewide advocacy and provider organizations that have advocated for more than twenty years for the policies and resources necessary to meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities in communities across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Each year, the Coalition focuses much of its attention on the development and passage of the state budget.

As you undertake the task of preparing your recommendations on behalf of the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) for submission to the Governor's Budget Office later this fall, the IDA Coalition is requesting a meeting with you during the month of September to discuss with you two major policy issues that have significant budget implications: (a) DPW's plans for continued deinstitutionalization, in accordance with the U.S. Supreme Court's *Olmstead* decision, and (b) the urgent and growing need to address the ID Emergency Waiting List. We had a productive discussion of these matters during our July 21st meeting with ODP Deputy Secretary Kevin Friel, and we would now like the opportunity to continue the discussion of these issues with you directly.

In our discussion with you, we would like to elaborate on several of our recommendations on DPW's FY2013 budget:

- As you look to identify waste and promote efficiency within the operations of the Department of Public Welfare, we ask that you pay particular attention to the costs of institutional services managed directly by DPW. For example, the \$262,042 projected FY2011-2012 cost per resident at Hamburg Center, is a significant cost driver in DPW's budget. These high costs will only increase in future years as the state's multi-year contracts with its employee unions are funded and the huge, outdated campus-based facilities that serve as state ID centers require continuing infusions of capital spending.
- As you and Deputy Secretary Friel review the recommendations of the ODP Planning Advisory Committee for a multi-year DPW plan consistent with Olmstead requirements, we ask you to consider an expeditious implementation of this plan during the next few years in order to reduce the very large commitment of taxpayers' monies that the continued operation of state ID centers requires annually.
- The savings resulting from the closure of state ID centers through the development of community-based services for their residents with intellectual disabilities has historically been a significant source of funding for the ID Waiting List in Pennsylvania. The IDA Coalition asks you to support and adopt a policy of reinvesting any and all savings resulting from the closure of state ID centers in the ID Waiting List.
- As state governments across the nation work to meet their constitutional mandates for balanced budgets during this period of economic slowdown, it is still possible to give the needs of families of people with intellectual disabilities waiting for community services high priority within available state funds. For example, Governor Chris Christie in our neighboring state of New Jersey has included over \$250 million in state and federal funds in this year's budget in the Department of Human Services for the development of community-based services for people with intellectual disabilities in that state. We ask you to consider including in your recommendations to the Governor's Budget Office new funding to meet the emergency needs of those families on the ID Waiting List who are waiting for services.

Finally, we would like also to take the opportunity during our meeting with you to discuss with you the issue of providing community services to people with intellectual disabilities in one-person settings. You may recall that we recently shared with you our briefing paper on this issue which argues that the need to make community services available to all people with intellectual disabilities may result in higher than average costs for only a very small percentage of people receiving services in the community.

THE ID/A COALITION CONSISTS OF STATEWIDE ADVOCACY AND PROVIDER ORGANIZATIONS ADVOCATING FOR SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES AND AUTISM IN PENNSYLVANIA.
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, CONTACT ANY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS LISTED:

PA ASSOCIATION OF REHABILITATION FACILITIES (717.657.7608)
PA WAITING LIST CAMPAIGN (877.372.WAIT)

DISABILITY RIGHTS NETWORK (1.800.692.7443)
PA COMMUNITY PROVIDERS ASSOCIATION (717.364.3280)


PA ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCES FOR AUTISM AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (717.236.2374) THE ARC OF PA (717.234.2621)
UNITED CEREBRAL PALSY OF PA (717.975.0611)

We recognize the daunting challenges you face in developing a realistic plan to keep DPW's budget for this fiscal year in balance. We also understand the economic and budgetary environment within which you are developing your recommendations to the Governor for the overall budget for your Department for the next fiscal year. We look forward to a productive discussion with you on these issues prior to your submission of your recommendations to the Governor's Budget Office for the FY2012-2013 state budget.

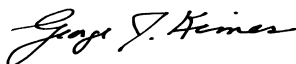
Sincerely yours,



Ilene Shane, Chief Executive Officer
Disability Rights Network of PA



Shirley A. Walker, President and CEO
Pennsylvania Association of Resources
for Autism & Intellectual Disabilities



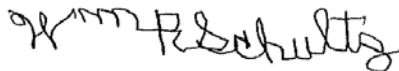
George J. Kimes, Executive Director
Pennsylvania Community Providers Association



Eugene Bianco, President and CEO
Pennsylvania Association of
Rehabilitation Facilities



Maureen Westcott, Public Policy Advocate
The Arc of Pennsylvania



William R. Schultz, Board President
United Cerebral Palsy of Pennsylvania

cc. Deputy Secretary Kevin Friel

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