PCPA Calls for Cuts to Intellectual Disability Services to Be Restored!

Families and people with intellectual disabilities will be hurt by the governor’s proposed block grant and by significant cuts in funding to the Intellectual Disability Community Base Program funding allocation.

The Block Grant
The administration is proposing a massive redistribution of funds from several budget lines into a new human services block grant, along with a 20 percent reduction to these funds. The proposed block grant marks a major shift in public policy that was developed with little or no outside or stakeholder input. There appears to have been little, if any, utilization of industry experts. The process lacks the typical approaches used to develop sound public policy and the result is, therefore, flawed public policy. Funding streams for these services have been carefully thought out over the years, informed by a wide range of stakeholders, experts, and past administrations. Systemic changes have taken place through transparent public processes of deliberation educated by the realities of consumers, families, and communities. The promise of flexibility and opportunities for better integration of programs and services has merit, but this model is untested. The massive transfer of human services funds to the Human Services Development Fund, with promise of flexible spending, will decimate the infrastructure that has developed over multiple administrations. The proposed block grant is wrong and must be opposed.

The Funding Cuts
The Corbett budget proposes a significant $30 million cut in state funding to the Intellectual Disability Community Base Program allocation. These funds offer crucial supports to Pennsylvanians with intellectual disability and their families. These cuts were made ignoring the consequences of cutting critical services provided to Pennsylvania’s most needy.

Over $150 million has already been taken from the intellectual disability service system, outside of the appropriations process, in the past year. A six percent rate adjustment factor will retroactively cut provider reimbursement for services that they were contractually required to render. The tsunami of challenges to the fiscal viability of providers of intellectual disability services has left the network of care for Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable population at severe risk.

The proposed budget also fails to recognize the needs of individuals and families who must cope with changes in circumstance. This includes hundreds of young adults who are graduating from high school who will be excluded from opportunities for a productive life in the community. This is the third year in a row that the budget provides no funding for the Intellectual
Disabilities Waiting List, ignoring the thousands of aging parents who fear that no one will care for their child when they are gone.

It is recognized that these are difficult times for the state’s budget. However, the proposed cuts are excessive and devastating to the system. These cuts target the truly needy. They will hurt individuals who have long been the responsibility of the state, dating back to its founding. The community service system, authorized by the legislature in the 1966 Mental Health/Mental Retardation Act, needs to be maintained and made stronger, not weakened. These vulnerable individuals should not be sacrificed during this time of more limited resources, but should be among the first that are protected. **These cuts must be restored!**

**Action Steps:**

1. Contact Mental Health/Intellectual Disability county administrators, Single County Authorities, and county commissioners to explore possible avenues of joint action. Discuss and demonstrate the devastating effects on services.

2. Contact legislators in the district to communicate the impact of these devastating cuts and policy shifts.

3. Contact local media – write an op-ed or a letter to the editor. Tell your story!


5. Watch for additional announcements and alerts from PCPA about further actions needed.

**In summary, the block grant is wrong and must be stopped and the massive cuts must be restored!**