



Action Alert!

Bringing You Advocacy Issues from The Arc of NC

**E-alert Budget Crisis
Action Desperately Needed!
July 7, 2009**

Even if you have called before **CALL AND E-MAIL AGAIN THIS WEEK!**

We need everyone to do two things this week

1. **E-mail** your senator and representatives **AND**
2. **Call** your senator and representatives. Ask to speak to your legislator. If they are out of the office, ask the receptionist if your legislator can call you back and leave a call back number. Try to talk personally to your elected official. They need to hear personal stories about what these budget cuts will mean to their constituents.

To find out who represents you go to: <http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/> Scroll down on the right hand side and you will see "Who represents me?" Follow the instructions to find your representatives.

We have provided a budget update below this call to action but here are key talking points for your e-mails and phone conversations. **Please tell them how the cuts will personally affect your family!**

The LME cuts for services will mean

- Severe reduction of hours in day programs
- Loss of day program placements
- Loss of placements in group homes
- Severe cuts or elimination of supported employment and long-term follow along services
- Some group homes and day programs may close

The case management cuts will mean:

- Case managers won't be able to write comprehensive person-centered plans
- There will be no one to assist families with benefits coordination
- No one will be available to help connect people to generic community resources
- Service authorizations will be delayed
- Case management jobs will be eliminated
- Some agencies will close limiting provider choice and adding thousands to the unemployment rolls

The provider rate reductions will mean:

- Direct support staff salaries will be reduced further adding to the shortage of qualified direct support personnel
- Thousands of jobs will be eliminated
- Some agencies will close adding thousands to the unemployment rolls

Additionally, with the continuation budget cuts, people who currently have CAP-MR/DD services may see a reduction in service hours or if they have a crisis, may not be able to get additional hours if needed. For example, if a person who is a primary caregiver becomes ill or breaks their leg and cannot care for their son or daughter, they will not be able to get additional CAP services while they are incapacitated.

Hot Off the Presses.....Just in.....Breaking News

The Governor is urging legislators to raise 1.6 billion dollars in revenue to protect education, public safety and health care services!

Here's part of the release: ...”We must make deep cuts, even to many good programs in our state, but we must also raise additional revenue. Yet I do not believe that the revenue packages presented by either the House or the Senate are sufficient to meet our goal of protecting North Carolina’s classrooms and vital services.

.....Today I would like to present you with a pathway to achieving that goal, which includes elements from each of the existing proposals and is based on four key principles:

- Protection of education and core public safety and health care services
- Fairness to working families
- Modernization of the tax code with permanent rate reduction
- Targeted tax relief.....”

Read the entire document on our website at www.arcnc.org

Action Needed!

At this time we think it critical for each person to talk to their Senator and their Representative about these cuts. We all know the state and nation face an unprecedented economic crisis and we all are willing to participate in the solution. What we can't do is destroy the fabric of our state's system and whatever savings we can find should be through a thoughtful deliberate process. The Arc along with others anxious to work together to find solutions but **these cuts are not the way to go**

Tell your legislators your story and why cuts of this magnitude are wrong. **Let them know you will support higher taxes to support these services** and work with them to assure our system is efficient and equitable.

SEND YOUR E-MAILS AND MAKE YOUR CALLS PLEASE. WE MUST TELL OUR STORIES AND KEEP TELLING OUR STORIES UNTIL WE ARE HEARD! TELL THEM HOW THESE CUTS WILL PERSONALLY AFFECT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

Budget Up-date

After a long 4th of July break both the Senate and House are back in session today. [The Senate had only a small crew in yesterday] It looks as though budget negotiations have reached a stand still. The issues are two-fold...the significant differences on how to raise money...and once the money is raised, how to allocate it to the sections of government.

The Senate has a package that will raise around 1.2 billion dollars the first year by radically changing how taxes are collected. This package would expand sales tax collections to services while over time, lowering the rate. The House uses a more traditional approach including sales tax increase and an increase in income tax for the highest tax brackets. Regardless of how revenue is raised we must have more funds available. Cuts to education, justice and particularly HHS will send our state backwards and hurt people throughout North Carolina.

For people with Developmental Disabilities the following are the cuts we are most concerned with in HHS

- 58 million out of Case management (the program is a 118 million dollar program). Our calculations show that for the Department to get this amount of savings the first year they would have to eliminate all of case management.
- 65 million dollars in cuts to LME's for services. This includes a 50 million dollar cut to services without specifics, a 16 million dollar cut to services provided to people with DD who also have a CAP slot (8 million of this is reallocated to provide Tier 1 CAP slots and to allow for a few Comprehensive Waiver Slots to open) and a 4 million dollar cut to "non-core " services.
- 3% rate cut to Medicaid services. This cut coupled with the others will cause serious cut backs by providers and reductions in already inadequate staff salaries.
- We are also concerned with the depth of the cut to Medicaid personal care services, the Community Support program , and statewide contracts [The Arc has a long standing contract to provide Guardianship services which is slated for a 25% reduction], and many other smaller reductions. All of the cuts are serious and would be problematic by themselves but the cumulative effect will be devastating. Our belief is that these cuts will severely reduce services for thousands of NC citizens with disabilities!

One area we have been reluctant to talk about but feel that now we must is the loss of jobs. In addition of the devastating loss of service, thousands (**we believe potentially 40 – 50 thousand jobs lost**) of North Carolina citizens will lose their jobs causing a worse economic downturn.

Thank you for your advocacy and as always, feel free to call The Arc of NC with any questions at 1-800-662-8706

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