



The Arc of Cumberland & Perry Counties

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Advocacy

S. Wilson Pollock
Center for
Industrial Training

Life Time
Adult Day Care

Family Education

Early Education Center
of Perry County

Residential Services



Program Partner

November 15, 2011

Dear Family Member and Friends of CPARC:

In mid October, we received notice from the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) that funding for services for people with intellectual disabilities would be cut by over \$150 million dollars, statewide. DPW has imposed an overall 8 ½ % cut in funding of services over the past and current year resulting in an additional \$560,500 shortfall that will be felt by **The Arc of Cumberland and Perry Counties** through June 30, 2012.

These cuts will mean people may lose their group home placements, longer waiting lists for families needing services, fewer qualified staff and less access to quality care. In addition, cuts may result in changes and/or disruption of vocational options and adult day services.

The Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) is dramatically decreasing funding for therapeutic and medical leave, time that is essential for periods when people are in the hospital or at home with their family. For many people, this means they may lose their residential placement if they have an extended hospital stay. It may also mean that people will have to decide if going on an extended vacation with their families or going home to visit with their family every weekend is worth the risk of losing their residential placement.

DPW-ODP has also decreased the amount of funding it will pay service providers for mortgages, utilities, food and repairs to housing units. Funding cuts such as these to community residential programs are especially devastating because of fixed staffing requirements and increasing utility, food and benefit costs. In addition, they have imposed a prudent pay policy which adds an additional 21 days to DPW's payment cycle, adversely impacting service provider's cash flow. This means that bills a provider has already paid, will experience an additional three-week delay in payment for services rendered.

The Arc views these cuts as unprecedented, and hurtful to those with intellectual disabilities. We understand that the Commonwealth has deficit budget issues to deal with, but it appears that providers of services to people with intellectual disabilities are being targeted to shoulder the responsibility of government. We take exception to the recent Senate hearings, which bring to the public's attention problems with the provider system, a system created by and monitored by government. Media reports grossly misrepresent the extensive and exhaustive accountability that we must adhere to in order to meet requirements of the Federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

The Arc of Cumberland and Perry Counties has been functioning as an advocacy organization and service provider for nearly 60 years in central Pennsylvania. We believe in the quality of our services and going the extra mile to help people. No



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one is getting rich off salaries here, but our work is fulfilling. We have a proud and long history of families standing up to voice their concerns about less than equal opportunities for their family members with disabilities. Parents and siblings want their family member to live an “everyday life” in the community. All those who work for The Arc of Cumberland and Perry Counties are deeply committed to providing the highest standard of care to individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families.

We denounce what is being asked of us by ODP. We know that these draconian cuts are deep and will result in program and service disruption. The Arc is not alone in alerting families to what will become a desperate situation in service provision. Other providers have sent similar letters to the families they serve. I expect all other providers to do the same.

This is the second attempt by the new Administration in a very short period of time to cut services available to folks with intellectual disabilities. We believe that the Administration will continue to impose radical cuts in order to help the Administration balance the Commonwealth budget.

In his inaugural address to the people of Pennsylvania, Governor Tom Corbett stated that he would protect the most vulnerable citizens in Pennsylvania. His promise will be broken if these cuts occur.

Our professional provider and advocacy organizations will continue to work with the Corbett Administration and all elected officials to come to some type of reasonable solution to this problem

As we have seen recently, the power of the people can be an important tool for change. Your law makers need to hear from you concerning these planned cuts. You need to voice your opinion and represent the needs of those who can't represent themselves. Your voice is important, and you need to contact your State Representative and Senator by phone, email or by letter. Your legislators contact information can be found at www.legis.state.pa.us . Simply click on county and use the map provided. Legislators are listed by municipality; hyperlinks are available. You certainly may contact our office at 249-2611. Please ask for Pam Shenk or Lucy Zander if you need help drafting talking points.

Sincerely,

Vincent “Jim” Gurreri
Executive Director
The Arc of Cumberland and Perry Counties