

Developmental Disabilities Coalition

Supporting people with developmental disabilities in their communities throughout Maryland

The Arc of Maryland

49 Old Solomon's Island Rd. Suite 205
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-974-6139



November 8, 2011

The Honorable Joshua Sharfstein, M.D.
Secretary
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
201 W. Preston St.
Baltimore, MD 21201

MD Association of Community Services

8835 Columbia 100 Parkway, Suite P
Columbia, MD 21045
410-740-5125



Dear Secretary Sharfstein:

We are writing in follow-up to our meeting with you regarding the reversion of Developmental Disabilities Administration funds to the state's general fund, and significant related financial management problems. We appreciate that you recognize the gravity of this situation and are personally involved and taking steps to address the short and long-term problems. Thousands of people currently receiving services and those on the DDA Waiting List are affected.

Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

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It is outrageous that under-spending of this magnitude could happen at a time of tremendous unmet need and budget cuts that have threatened the stability of the DD community service system. The fact that this occurred in fiscal years when DD services were cut by 2%, resource coordination was cut by 15% and LISS was cut by \$1m, and over 6,500 people languished on the DDA Waiting List, is unacceptable. We know that you understand and are taking immediate action. However, we must reiterate that these cuts and under-spending are even worse knowing that Maryland already ranks 43rd in the nation in terms of spending on services for people with developmental disabilities.

Maryland Disability Law Center

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We want to support the Department in your efforts to "make this right." As a first step, as we agreed, the Coalition is providing input about how the \$12m in FY11 funds should be allocated in FY12. **We also strongly urge you to attend a public forum to explain what happened and the steps DHMH is taking.** This would provide an opportunity to address concerns and seek input from a wider group of individuals with developmental disabilities, families, and advocates.

People on the Go of Maryland
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In light of the impact of FY 10 budget cuts on people with developmental disabilities receiving DDA services, we strongly believe that the highest priority should be restoring funding to the DDA community services operating budget for people receiving supports. This would include the two largest areas cut in FY 10 – community services and resource coordination. The budget cuts in these areas had a direct impact on the services people receive. Under-funding combined with budget cuts have made it difficult, if not impossible, for most providers to give even nominal increases to direct

support staff. The quality and retention of direct support staff is critical to the safety, health and success of people receiving supports. Other critical components that impact the lives of people with developmental disabilities, including transportation, employment support, and quality assurance, continue to suffer as funding for community supports erodes.

Additionally, resource coordination services have become more important than ever, in light of efforts to serve people on the DDA Waiting List. DDA has placed significant additional demands on resource coordination agencies during a time of budget cuts and inadequate funding. The reversion of \$25 million in FY 10 general funds is a devastating blow to Marylanders with developmental disabilities, their families, and the staff and agencies that provide supports.

The trust of the citizens of Maryland in the Administration's ability to utilize precious resources has been broken. **On behalf of all of our stakeholders, we urge Governor O'Malley to restore the reverted funds to the FY 13 budget of DDA.** The DD Coalition would like to discuss further with you our recommendations for the best way to allocate these funds.

Thank you for reaching out to the DD Coalition. We recognize that you took immediate steps to address these problems as soon as you were made aware and that significant personnel changes have already occurred. We feel strongly, as do other stakeholders, that the full amount of unspent funds from FY 11 must remain with DDA and the lost FY10 funds must be included in DDA's FY 13 budget.

We look forward to further discussion.

Sincerely,



Laura Howell
Chair, MD Developmental Disabilities Coalition
Executive Director
Maryland Association of Community Services



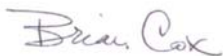
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Cc:

The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor

The Honorable Edward Kasemeyer

The Honorable James Robey

The Honorable Richard Madaleno

The Honorable Thomas Middleton

The Honorable Norman Conway

The Honorable Mary Dulaney-James

The Honorable James Hubbard

The Honorable Robert Costa

Peggy Watson, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor

The Honorable Eloise Foster, Secretary, Department of Budget and Management

Frank Kirkland, Executive Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration