

October 10, 2019

Governor Gavin Newsom
1030 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Department of Developmental Services (4300) – Governor’s FY2020-21 Proposed Budget

Honorable Governor Newsom:

The Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA) represents the network of 21 non-profit regional centers that serve over 330,000 Californian children and adults with developmental disabilities. We would like to take this opportunity to request you give consideration to three requests as you develop your proposed Budget for FY2020-21 for the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). California has a long-standing public policy commitment to support individuals with developmental disabilities to meet their unique goals in their home communities. As California continues to grow, so too does the developmental services system. While the state considers reforms to strengthen the system and improve individual outcomes, it must invest resources to ensure stability in the interim.

Early Intervention Access

The Family Cost Participation Program and Annual Family Program Fee programs charge parents for their children’s needed developmental services. Some families, through a process called “Institutional Deeming,” are eligible to avoid these barriers to service. But this option is not available to infants and toddlers receiving critical Early Start services. It is those children who most desperately need immediate access to services that can change their lives. The long-term benefits to them, their families, and the state are far in excess of the minor funds recouped by the state through either program.

We request that the Annual Family Program Fee and Family Cost Participation Program be repealed for children receiving Early Start Services.

Rate Study Implementation Follow-Up

California embarked on a comprehensive study of service provider rates in 2016, which was provided to the Legislature in March 2019. Subsequently, you signed the FY2019-20 Budget, which included a short-term funding increase for many service providers. We continue to be appreciative of this step towards stability. However, due to a variety of data and process gaps, two types of service providers, one that teaches adults skills to live independently in the community and another that provides comprehensive services to infants and toddlers to help them maximize developmental gains, were not included in these short-term rate increases.

We request that Independent Living Services and Infant Development Program providers be allocated an 8.2% funding increase of the same duration as other providers.

Regional Center Operations Funding

Each person served by a regional center is paired with a service coordinator to help them plan for the future, overcome current challenges, and secure services and supports to meet their unique needs that arise from the combination of each person's diagnosis, age, support needs, preferences, and cultural values. The funding for these and other regional center positions is based on an antiquated formula, which when combined with over \$60 million in additional annual reductions, leaves regional centers unable to meet statutorily-required caseload ratios that are consistent with California's long-standing commitment to the federal government. In March 2019, regional centers were short nearly 700 service coordination positions statewide. This shortcoming deprives at least 80% of people with developmental disabilities of the level of service coordination time they have been promised, which translates into less individual support.

We request the full funding of regional center caseload ratios needs, inclusive of the staffing needs to support service coordinators required to meet statutory caseload requirements.

ARCA will continue to collaborate with the Administration, the Legislature, and our partners in the community to meet future challenges and to keep the promise of the Lanterman Act for hundreds of thousands of Californians who rely on it.

Sincerely,

/s/

Amy Westling

Executive Director

Cc: Nancy Bargmann, Director, Department of Developmental Services
Ali Bay, Deputy Director, Office of Legislation, Regulations & Public Affairs, Department of Developmental Services
Michelle Baass, Undersecretary, Health and Human Services Agency
Mark Ghaly, Secretary, Health and Human Services Agency
Tam Ma, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Senator Pan, Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #3, Health and Human Services
Assemblymember Arambula, Chair, Asm. Budget Subcommittee #1, Health and Human Services
Renita Polk, Consultant, Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 on Health and Human Services
Nicole Vazquez, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #1 on Health and Human Services
Bernadette Sullivan, Legislative Director, Office of Senator Pan
Marla Cowan, Legislative Director, Office of Assemblymember Arambula
Rebecca Hamilton, Human Services Fiscal Consultant, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
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Marisa Shea, Principal Consultant, Senate Human Services Committee
Kelsy Castillo, Senior Consultant, Assembly Human Services Committee
Joe Parra, Principal Consultant on Human Services, Senate Republican Caucus
Mareva Brown, Policy Consultant, Office of the Senate President Pro Tempore
Gail Gronert, Policy Consultant, Office of the Speaker
Myesha Jackson, Policy Director, Office of the Speaker