

## #126 NOW-COMP Proposed Rate Changes – Concerns from DD Providers.

Dearest Advocates:

WOW- What a response from yesterday's newsletter. There is truly a lot going on in Georgia right now!

I wanted to give you some additional information I received from a Press Release by the Service Providers Association for Developmental Disabilities, Georgia Association of Community Service Boards, Inc. and Georgia Association of Community Care Providers. Many of these organizations provide services to individuals with disabilities in Georgia and have concerns about the proposed NOW-COMP Waiver rates as well. See below. Those rates and how you can express any comments can be found at: [www.dch.georgia.gov/nowcompnotice](http://www.dch.georgia.gov/nowcompnotice). Please take the time to see how these proposed rates impact YOUR family and express your concerns to DCH!

In addition, wanted you all to be aware that Unlock the Waiting Lists has a FaceBook page as well to follow the latest advocacy efforts. Please take the time to "like" them.

Have a great day!

*United- We Will Make a Difference!*

Heidi J. Moore

(Proud Mother to Jacob – 12 yrs old with Down syndrome and Leukemia and Jared- 10 years old with amazing spirit & love for his brother)

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### **Press Release from: Service Providers Association for Developmental Disabilities, Georgia Association of Community Service Boards, Inc. and Georgia Association of Community Care Providers**

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### **Advocates Say Proposed Funding Cuts Will Harm Individuals With Developmental Disabilities Statewide**

**Atlanta, Georgia, January 23<sup>rd</sup>** --The Service Providers Association for Developmental Disabilities (SPADD) along with the Georgia Association of Community Care Providers and The Georgia Association of Community Service Boards are warning that proposed funding cuts will have a severe impact on the lives of more than 11,000 individuals with developmental disabilities receiving services in the State of Georgia.

The Georgia Department of Community Health via its Medicaid Program and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, have released a new funding models and rates which will leave individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in peril, risking a reduction of services and the potential closure of programs which support this group of people. Many of the individuals impacted by these rate reductions receive daily around the clock support from the organizations these Associations represent, host homes, group homes, day support programs or with direct care staff in their own home. Many of the organizations represented by the Associations are not for profit or faith based.

“This new funding model and the resulting proposed rates of reimbursement, will severely impact services for a fragile and vulnerable population where current funding levels are already grossly inadequate,” said SPADD President Diane Wilush. “Organizations providing these services have not received a rate increase since 2004 as a result it is a continuous challenge to deliver the quality supports people with disabilities and their families need. The economy, coupled with the increasing needs of those in community based services, has strained the ability of organizations supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to the breaking point. How these groups will be able to continue to operate with further reductions in funding is difficult to imagine” Wilush continued. “There is a growing concern that we may not be able to continue provide vital support to people with developmental disabilities and remain financially viable organizations, with some funding reduced nearly 50% or more.”

In 1999 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the State of Georgia was operating in violation of ADA rights of individual's with disabilities, by failing to provide its citizens with disabilities access or choice in acquiring community based services. Currently, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities is operating under a U.S. Department of Justice settlement agreement (2010), due to historical weaknesses in quality service delivery to Georgia's most vulnerable citizens and failing to comply with the Olmsted ruling by the high court. Those who advocate on behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities believe the proposed cuts in funding will force many organizations to close their doors, reduce vital services and lay off staff members. These cuts will further diminish the pool of service providers available and leaving many without any services at all.

"Georgia lost many quality small developmental disability providers with the implementation of a new Medicaid service structure in 2008 which resulted in a loss of service to many individuals and created hardships on many families. The proposed new Medicaid funding will further diminish the choice and availability of providers. This will result in limiting and reducing quality provider capacity and eliminating individual opportunity and choice. Providers and family members are urging the Department of Community Health to study the impact of the proposed new rate structure prior to implementing this drastic change", states Georgia Association of Community Care Providers President, Lynnette Bragg.

Moreover, establishing these new service rates will cost the State of Georgia an estimated \$6 million according to estimates made by DCH staff, recently during a Department of Community Health Board Meeting (1/9/12) – as compared to the \$4.5 million a modest 3% increase in service funding would cost.

“The Associations and their member organizations are committed to doing everything possible to help people with disabilities and their families remain in their communities and maintain the quality of life that supports their health and safety,” said Eve Bogan, President Elect of SPADD. “But we need viable solutions to the ongoing funding challenges our service providers face if we are to secure a safe and healthy future for people with developmental disabilities who are Georgia’s most vulnerable citizens.”

A public hearing on the proposed rate cuts will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, at The Department of Community Health, 2 Peachtree Street, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, Atlanta. The Associations are urging everyone concerned about this vital issue to attend and voice their concerns before the plan is implemented.

For more information about the proposed funding reductions in services for individuals and the Associations partnering to protect their rights and funding please contact those listed above. Also refer to the attached DCH Public Notice and the Associations Joint Position statement.

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If you would like to receive Jacob Moore's updates or post prayers, please go to:  
<http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/prayforjacobmoore> or [www.teamjacob.org](http://www.teamjacob.org) . To watch Jacob's Cancer Journey video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GjPfmIZ76g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2GjPfmIZ76g)

For disability information and previous newsletters, please go to [www.heidijmoore.com](http://www.heidijmoore.com) .

*"Help The Children Now, So They Can Help Themselves Later!"*

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