

79 Advocacy Needed for Disabilities TODAY!

Dearest Advocates:

The time is now to get involved and express your concerns with **NO NEW FUNDING** for disability waivers for the 2010 budget that starts July 1, 2009!

In addition, the legislature is proposing rate cuts of 6% to Medicaid providers. This is **UNACCEPTABLE!** As parents, I know you understand- it is hard enough to find providers that accept Medicaid to begin with now due to the current **LOW** provider rates. Reducing the rates further would mean **NO** access to providers using our Medicaid for our children's healthcare. **As parents, we need to advocate now!**

Below are is an advocacy emails I have received from the Occupational Therapy Association. They did a great job putting together the list of legislators you need to contact. This is globe issue that needs to be addressed for **all** providers that accept Medicaid (including therapists).

See below there advocacy updates and who to contact. I strongly recommend you call the list below of legislators. Email is not an effective tool right now.

THE LEGISLATORS VOTE TODAY. THEY NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU TODAY!

PLEASE CALL TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR CHILDREN & ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES!

“UNITED – WE WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!”

Sincerely,

Heidi

(Proud Mother to Jacob - 9 yrs old with Down syndrome and Jared - 7 yrs old)

“Help the Children Now, So They Can Help Themselves Later!”

www.heidijmoore.com

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From Unlock the Waiting Lists:

[Click here to go to the Unlock Action Alert web page](#)

This may be the first time in **SIX YEARS** that there are **NO NEW FUNDS** to unlock Georgia's waiting lists for persons with disabilities. The waiting list of over 6,800 people will grow by over 1,000 people by this time next year, but it does not have to be this way - you can make a difference!

And I have made it very easy for you to help. All you have to do is clicks nine times to send e-mails to nine key legislators making decisions right now. Please go to <http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/advocate.html> to help.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR YOU TO ACT!

The House Appropriations Health Subcommittee will meet Monday the March 16, 2009 to vote on their portion of the FY2010 budget.

Dave Blanchard
www.unlockthewaitinglists.com

Another Update from Unlock:

Yesterday afternoon the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Human Development met to discuss the fy2010 budget for the department of human resources. This is the committee that is responsible first to look at funding for unlocking the waiting list for DD waiver services in the Senate. To see who is a member of this committee, go to <http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/legislative.html>.

Things will now begin to move quickly, so it is imperative that you call, write or email your legislator today asking them to fund the help that families and individuals need so that we can see Georgia's waiting list unlock for the over 7,000 people currently waiting.

Georgia has a chance this year to use money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that was passed by Congress to expand disability supports with only a 25% investment. This means that it used to take around 35 cents to get a dollar of services in Georgia, and now it only takes about ONE QUARTER to get a dollars worth of disability supports! This makes no sense when we have over 7,000 people with disabilities waiting for much needed help!!

We have had 210 emails go to key legislators in just one day! But that is only 7% of our goal, so I still need your help. Please go to <http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/advocate.html> to help today.

Yesterday an updated Olmstead plan was released for public comment. You can find a copy at http://www.files.georgia.gov/DHR/DHR_CommonFiles/3-05-09%20Olmstead%20Draft%20FINAL.pdf

It very timely that this proposed plan states that in response to Olmstead v. L.C., the state undertook a number of initiatives to shape the development of Georgia's Olmstead Plan. The first of these was a Blue Ribbon Task Force on Home and Community-Based Services that convened in December 1999...The Task Force, comprised of consumers, family members, advocates and professionals, presented a final report in January 2001 giving recommendations for developmental disability services. ***Their number 1 recommendation was to "implement a multi-year funding plan for the developmental disability waiting lists."***

You can find this multiple year funding plan at
<http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/pdf/UnlockMultipleYearPlan.pdf>

Did You Know?

Caring for a loved one with a disability costs 2-3 times higher than someone without a disability. 53.8% of Georgia families with disabilities have family incomes under 30K, with 29% having family incomes under 15K. 28% of children with disabilities live in poverty. These families and individuals are very vulnerable and desperately needs these services.

Please go to <http://www.unlockthewaitinglists.com/advocate.html> to help today.

Dave Blanchard
www.unlockthewaitinglists.com

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From: GAOTA- Georgia Occupational Therapy Association:

A budget proposal has been made to Congress that will cut Medicaid provider rates by 6% for the 2010 fiscal year. Your help is needed immediately to stop this decrease in occupational therapy rates. Please e-mail or call the attached list of representatives as well as your local representatives to get this decrease stopped. It looks like the budget will be up for a vote on Monday so action is needed today and tomorrow. DON'T WAIT – CALL AND EMAIL TODAY! An example letter is attached to help make this process easy for you. It is important to stress the affect this will have on access to services for our patients. I would also recommend forwarding this email to any of your patient's parents and asking them to respond too. Frankly, legislators don't really care if therapists make money or not but they do care that their constituents receive the services they need and from past experience, we all know that a cut in reimbursement will mean a cut in
> services available.

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- >
- > Your Name
- > Your Address
- > Address
- >
- >

March 12, 2009

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- >
- > The Honorable _____
- > House of Representatives/Senate
- > Address
- > Address
- >

> Re: Please Do Not Support Medicaid Provider Cuts

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> Dear Representative/Senator _____:

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> Please do not support the reduction in Medicaid provider payments for therapy services including occupational therapy, physical therapy and speech and language pathology currently proposed in the FY 2010 budget under the following programs: Aged, Blind and Disabled, Low Income Medicaid, and PeachCare for Kids.

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> I implore you to use the federal Medicaid stimulus money as it was intended for the states to use -- for Medicaid purposes. I urge you not to leave money "on the table" by not using State funds to help Georgia draw down the matching federal funds. Please use state funds to leverage as many federal dollars as possible to fund Medicaid and Medicaid programs.

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> Rate cuts, CMO denials and burdensome paperwork requirements have already resulted in increased administrative expenses and decreased revenues to the point that many therapy practitioners have gone out of business and many others are no longer accepting Medicaid and or CMO clients. The affect of this has been a significant decrease in access to services to children with special needs. The rural areas have been adversely affected the most however, many therapy clinics in the urban and suburban areas that take Medicaid and CMO patients have waiting lists and physicians do not know where to refer their patients for these vital services. This is a clear violation of EPSDT and causes undo suffering for the children and families with children with special needs in our state. A reduction in provider payment for therapy services will surely result in a further reduction of available services and necessary healthcare for children with disabilities.

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> Continued state and federal funding is necessary to ensure that children in Georgia receive the therapy services they require to become functional adults.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this matter.

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> Sincerely,

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>

> Your Name

> Your Phone Number

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> Please send an email/letter not only your personal Representative and Senator which can be found at www.votesmart.org but also to the following:

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> Sen. Jack Hill (R-Reidsville) - Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee

> jack.hill@senate.ga.gov

> 234 State Capitol

> Atlanta, Georgia 30334

> Phone: 404-656-5038

> Fax: 404-657-7094

- >
- > Sen. Greg Goggans (R-Douglas) - Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee's Community Health Subcommittee
 - > greg.goggins@senate.ga.gov
 - > 303-A Coverdell Legislative Office Building
 - > Atlanta, Georgia 30334
 - > Phone: 404-463-5263
 - > Fax: 404-656-6484
- >
- > Sen. Tommie Williams (R-Lyons) - President Pro Tem of the Senate
 - > tommie.williams@senate.ga.gov
 - > 321 State Capitol
 - > Atlanta, Georgia 30334
 - > Phone: 404-656-0089
 - > Fax: 404-463-5220

- > Sen. Chip Rogers (R-Marietta) - Senate Majority Leader
 - > chip.rogers@senate.ga.gov
 - > 236 State Capitol
 - > Atlanta, Georgia, 30334
 - > Phone: 404-463-1378
 - > Fax: 404-463-2535
- >
- > Rep. Ben Harbin (R-Evans) - Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee
 - > ben.harbin@house.ga.gov
 - > 245 State Capitol
 - > Atlanta, Georgia 30334
 - > Phone: 404-463-2247
- >
- > Rep. Mickey Channell (R-Greensboro) - Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee's Community Health Subcommittee
 - > mickey.channell@house.ga.gov
 - > Room 608 Coverdell Legislative Office Building
 - > Atlanta, Georgia 30334
 - > Phone: 404-656-7856
- >
- > Rep. Mark Burkhalter (R-Johns Creek) - Speaker Pro Tem of the House
 - > mark.burkhalter@house.ga.gov
 - > 340 State Capitol
 - > Atlanta, Georgia 30334
 - > Phone: 404-656-5072
- >
- > Rep. Jerry Keen (R-St. Simons Island) - House Majority Leader
 - > jerry.keen@house.ga.gov
 - > 338 State Capitol
 - > Atlanta, Georgia, 30334

- > Phone: 404-656-5052
- >
- > Speaker Glenn Richardson
- > glenn.richardson@house.ga.gov
- > 332 State Capitol
- > Atlanta, Georgia30334
- > Phone: 404-656-5020
- > Fax: 404-656-5644

Lt. Governor Casey Cagle

- > ltgov@georgia.gov
- > 240 State Capitol
- > Atlanta, Georgia30334
- > Phone: 404-656-5030
- > Fax: 404-656-6739
- >