



March 24, 2016

All Waiver Services Survive This Year Next Year's Fate in the Legislature's Hands

After months of worrying if the waiver services they need to remain in their own homes and communities would be eliminated, people with developmental disabilities and their families can take a breath, at least for today. [Governor Edwards announced earlier today that the \\$70 Million in cuts](#) necessary to address the remaining deficit for the current fiscal year (FY16) would all come from the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), but the four waivers for people with developmental disabilities will remain intact.

Unfortunately, the fate of services for people with developmental disabilities next fiscal year (FY17) is still uncertain. When the Governor prepared and presented his Executive Budget for FY17 prior to the Special Session it was based on a \$2.1 Billion shortfall. Funding for the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) was included, but adequate funding for a long list of other DD services was not. The Governor/Division of Administration will recommend a set of amendments to the Executive Budget to add the revenue raised in the Special Session, but the ultimate decision on what gets funded rests with the legislature. And... the FY17 budget is \$750 Million short.

Since the Special Session ended without a plan to fill the remaining \$750 Million gap for FY17, the legislature must decide whether to fund the other three DD waivers (Children's Choice, Supports Waiver, ROW), Human Services Districts/Authorities, Families Helping Families Centers, OCDD Resource Centers, EarlySteps, LA Rehabilitation Services, and other programs benefiting people with disabilities. To avoid cuts to any DD services, the legislature would have to take money from somewhere else in the state budget (which is difficult), or the Governor would have to call the legislature into another Special Session to raise additional revenue.

The Council encourages individuals who are concerned about the fate of these vital services to [contact their legislators](#), especially those on the [Appropriations Committee](#), and join the Council's grassroots advocacy network, LaCAN, at www.lacan.advocates.org. LaCAN members receive action alerts with updates on the budget situation and opportunities to advocate.

Please note, the Council acknowledges all the individuals and families who are still waiting for waiver services. We began last fall advocating for funding for additional waiver slots, but it soon became evident that our focus needed to shift from expanding to saving the home and community based system from sheer elimination. This includes not only waiver services, but Individual and Family Support, Flexible Family Fund, and the other support services that help people endure the eleven year wait for the waiver. Please know that as soon as the system is stabilized, our advocacy efforts will resume to expand waiver services to all those who are waiting.