



Information Alert - What You Need to Know About Constitutional Amendment #1

On November 4th, Louisianans will be asked to cast their vote on a constitutional amendment that could have a negative impact on home and community-based services for individuals with developmental disabilities in the future.

Constitutional Amendment #1 reads: "Do you support an amendment to authorize the legislature to create the Louisiana Medical Assistance Trust Fund, for the payment of Medicaid reimbursement to the health care provider groups paying fees into the fund?"

Simply reading the text of this amendment tells the voter nothing about the consequences of a vote for or against the amendment. What are those consequences?

- Constitutional Amendment #1, if passed, would make it very difficult for the legislature to reduce rates for nursing homes and institutions for people with developmental disabilities in times of budget deficits.
- By protecting rates for nursing homes and other institutions, this amendment will negatively impact many people with developmental disabilities, seniors, and other vulnerable populations, as well as higher education.
- When budget cuts are necessary, the legislature is limited in which areas they can cut because most of the state budget is protected or "dedicated," meaning the funds can't be spent on anything else. The portion of the budget that can be cut includes health care and higher education, so these areas take a disproportionate share of the cuts.
- If nursing homes and other institutional rates are protected, the already small piece of the "budget pie" that would be left "unprotected" will shrink even further, leaving other health care and support services, and higher education, left to take an even larger percentage of future cuts.
- People with developmental disabilities and seniors with declining health are often in need of support services to enable them to remain in their homes. The overwhelming majority say they want to live at home or with their families as opposed to moving to a nursing home or other institutional setting.
- Many receive the support services they need to continue living in their own homes through a program called the home and community-based waiver.
- Unfortunately, tens of thousands of Louisiana citizens are on waiting lists for home and community-based services due to the scarcity of funds, including:
 - 13,000 people with developmental disabilities
 - 36,000 senior citizens or those who acquired a disability later in life

- The average cost of waiver services is less than the average cost of a nursing home or other institutional setting. However, funding for home and community-based services is very limited. People are waiting over ten years to receive the support services they need now.
- Constitutional Amendment #1, if passed, will likely result in a longer wait for people to receive the support services they need to live at home and be productive, contributing, and included members of their communities.

Click the link below to read the opinion of The Advertiser in Lafayette on this issue.
<http://www.theadvertiser.com/story/opinion/2014/09/25/amendments-may-lead-deeper-budget-cuts-later/16235365/>

Contact Us

If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact LaCAN by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below.

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LaCAN is an initiative of the [Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council](#).