



## Information Alert #7 - Advocacy Update

June 15, 2017

### **Budget Update - House Bill 1 (HB1)**

The State FY18 Budget ([HB1](#)) passed the House yesterday and Senate Finance Committee this morning with funding for vital DD services restored. HB1 in its current state is considered the best case scenario for people with disabilities and other vulnerable populations.

Thanks to your persistent advocacy efforts, funding was included and/or restored for the following services/programs:

- \$1.6 million in state general funds (SGF) to fill 627 vacant, existing waiver slots for people with developmental disabilities.
- "LINCCA" funding which many Human Services Districts/Authorities use to fund the Individual and Family Support and Flexible Family Fund programs, Families Helping Families contracts, and other programs for people with behavioral health needs.
- EarlySteps funding is expected to be maintained at current levels.
- State Personal Assistance Services (SPAS) program which provides services to individuals with physical disabilities needed to keep them at home and at work and out of nursing homes.
- Most of the \$235 million in cuts to the LA Department of Health (LDH) originally proposed by the House were restored.
- Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) has \$1 million of SGF, which is a more stable funding source than the current year.

HB1 will be considered by the full Senate this evening, where it is expected to pass. For more information about the budget approval process, check out The Advocate's latest article [here](#).

### **Final Thoughts**

Please take a moment to celebrate the results of your advocacy efforts. While advocates are VERY appreciative the massive cuts to LDH were restored, the needs of many people with developmental disabilities remain unmet and must not be forgotten. The budget does not include funding for the following:

- To adequately address the waiver waiting list of over 15,000 people.
- To restore cuts to the Human Services Districts/Authorities made this year and over the past several years, leaving these agencies far short of the funding necessary to meet all the needs in their regions.
- To restore all cuts to EarlySteps.
- For an enhanced waiver rate to serve those with complex behavioral and/or medical needs.
- For overtime for Direct Support Professionals or to increase rates for waiver providers.
- To enable LA Rehabilitation Services to draw down its full federal allotment.

## Advocacy works!

### Thank You

Over twenty LaCAN members attended the House Appropriations committee meeting on Tuesday, June 13, 2017 for public testimony. Six of these members provided testimony before the committee on the importance of funding DD services by restoring all cuts to LDH. Click [here](#) to watch the video. Testimonies begin at the 98:34 mark.

Thanks to all who traveled to the Capitol in their yellow to show support for DD services. A special thanks to Randall Brown, Maria Caserta, April Dunn, Konstance Causey, Julie Folse, and China Guillory for representing our group with their compelling testimony.



### Contact Us

LaCAN is an initiative of the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

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