

February 7, 2013

## Budget Ax Looming – It's Time to Take Action

The public has largely grown accustomed to headlines of “More Budget Cuts,” but to the Louisiana citizens who depend on the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) for vital support services and health care, anticipation of additional budget cuts can be nerve-racking. Advocates need to be prepared for the release of the Governor’s Executive Budget for Fiscal Year 2014 which will be presented to the House Appropriations Committee later this month. **With an expected \$1.2 Billion budget shortfall, it is more important than ever for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to communicate the importance of home and community based services to their legislators.**

DHH has taken a beating over the past five years as the state has dealt with recurring budget deficits. The cuts have adversely affected Medicaid provider rates and programs in every DHH office. A couple of the Human Services Districts and Authorities, and the vital community services they provide to individuals with disabilities and their families, have been hard hit by the continuing budget reductions. These budget cuts directly impact the Districts and Authorities’ ability to provide services such as Individual and Family Support and crisis intervention for people with developmental disabilities.

The impact of the cuts to DHH would have been far greater had it not been for savings realized through the closure and privatization of developmental centers, the implementation of resource allocation in the New Opportunities Waiver and numerous other “cost efficiencies.” But the days of finding savings appear to be over. DHH’s budget is down to the bone and the thought of additional cuts is truly frightening.

***It is time to take action! To avoid cuts to home and community based services it is vital for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to communicate with their legislators to share the importance of these services. It is also vitally important for individuals and families still waiting for services to communicate their need for services with their legislators.***

If you are not already a member of LaCAN, the Council’s grassroots network that advocates for individual and family supports, [sign up](#) today for assistance in contacting your legislators and to receive information throughout the budget process.

Don’t simply wait for the next budget ax to fall. Be proactive and take action today!

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