

May 16, 2024

Senator Caroline Menjivar
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 on Health and Human Services

Assemblymember Dr. Corey A. Jackson
Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget, Subcommittee #2 on Human Services

RE: Dep't of Developmental Services (4300) – May Revision of the Governor's 2024-25 January Budget

Honorable Senator Menjivar and Assemblymember Dr. Jackson:

California's regional centers are a network of 21 community-based non-profits, represented by the Association of Regional Center Agencies (ARCA). The regional centers coordinate services for, and advocate on behalf of, over 430,000 Californians with developmental disabilities. We thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Governor's proposed May Revision, specific to the Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

Service Provider Rate Delay

The most significant element of the May Revision is what it does not contain. The Governor's proposal from January, delaying by a full year a long-promised and critically important final adjustment to service provider rates, remains unmodified.

Both the facts and history behind the service provider rate increase, as well as our opposition to this delay, remain unchanged. The long process that led to both the rate increase and its specific timelines was rooted in the need to stabilize the service system and improve access equity. Throughout this, our system has continued to grow. Even in this May Revise, the projected population has been revised upwards yet again. But population growth without reality-based rate growth functions as a barrier to access, and rations services without any reference to actual need.

The operational needs of service providers, and support needs of our diverse community of Californians with developmental disabilities, have not changed. We urge a rejection of the July 1, 2025, start date for the final service provider rate adjustment.

New Cuts Proposed

The May Revise contains four new proposed cuts. While each of these is comparatively small, it is worth noting their disproportionate impact on underserved and diverse communities. Tribal Engagement for Early Start is a targeted program intended to better connect tribal communities to these critical services. Health and safety waiver assistance was originally structured to prioritize underserved communities. The DSP Internship program was meant to better connect diverse labor forces to the DSP career track, diversifying the service provider labor pool. And emergency preparedness resources are of particular benefit to those individuals and families with the least access to other options to support these needs.

Supporting the Needs of Today

ARCA remains appreciative of the Administration's support of ongoing IT modernization. Ensuring the Uniform Fiscal System can operate in an efficient fashion supports not only service providers, but the people they work with every day. Separately, the Consumer Electronic Records Management System (CERMS) will provide individuals and families with ready access to their own information via a portal system.

ARCA will continue to build on our long-standing collaborative relationships to partner with those served, family members, the Legislature, the Administration, and community organizations. We look forward to continuing to build on the promises of the Lanterman Act for this generation and the next.

Sincerely,

/s/

Amy Westling

Executive Director

CC: Elizabeth Schmitt, Consultant, Senate Budget Subcommittee #3 on Health and Human Services
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