



2011 Arc of Florida Legislative Priorities

Purpose

The purpose of this legislative platform is to communicate with legislators and other policymakers, the public and the media where we stand on issues which impact the quality of life for Floridians with developmental disabilities.

General Principles

Community life is enriched when individual with developmental and other disabilities have the opportunity to become contributing members and are included in the life of their communities. Individuals with developmental disabilities can become active members of their communities when the necessary supports and services are provided to assist them in maximizing their potential and protect their health and safety.

Issues

Issue: Funding is key to providing the necessary services and supports for Floridians with developmental disabilities. The current Medicaid waiver tier system and long waitlist for services is inadequately funded to meet the health and safety needs of these constituents. At the Arc of Florida, we are interested in solutions that are fair and efficient to both the consumers of these services and the taxpayers who fund them. We neither promote nor endorse statewide managed care as a vehicle for this necessary change. As stakeholders, the Arc of Florida values our role in advancing dialogue and will continue to advocate for alternatives that are person centered. We welcome the opportunity to review and assess all proposals that offer solutions to Florida's current situation, realizing that no complete solution exists unless additional dollars are devoted to the population we serve, including those on the Medicaid Waiver waiting list.

Solution:

- Allow no funding cuts to the already devastated funding system for the developmental disabilities Medicaid waiver system administered by the Agency for Persons with Disabilities.
- Implement the iBudget system as proposed in the 2010 Legislative session
- Florida should apply for and receive a Federal Grant for a "Money Follows the Person" initiative used by other states to fund people who wish to move out of more costly institutional settings and move into the community.



Issue: *Florida has over 19,000 individuals on a waitlist for services from the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Waiver.*

Solution:

- Create a strategic plan that will reduce the waiting list for services for Floridians with developmental disabilities.
- Work with families on the wait list to identify, develop and utilize as many forms of community supports as possible.
- Develop projected budgets and timelines for all people on the wait list;
- Identify stable and dedicated sources of revenue.

Issue: *Adult Handicapped Funds have been decreased over the past few years. These funds are vital in order to provided much needed educational services in local communities.*

Solution:

- Allow no funding cuts to the Adult Handicapped Funding in the Department of Education Budget.

Issue: *Create opportunities for families to participate in the cost of care for their sons and daughters exiting high school Exceptional Student Education programs.*

Solution:

- Support legislation proposed by Senator Thad Altman and Representative Clay Ford which creates a savings plan for children with developmental disabilities to assist their families in participating in their care in the years immediately following high school.

Solution:

- Support a Memorial bill to the U.S. Congress asking them to support “*The Able Act*” proposed legislation which would allow parents to create tax deferred savings accounts to provide funding for disability related services for their children.

Issue: *The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities has changed the diagnosis of mental retardation to intellectual disability. The Federal Government has changed all references to mental retardation in Federal laws to intellectual disabilities.*

Solution:

- Support a bill to strike the term mental retardation in state statutes and replace it with intellectual disabilities.

November 28, 2010

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November 28, 2010
For Distribution