

June 4, 2020

The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Chair
Senate Budget Subcommittee

The Honorable Phil Ting, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee



Re: Support For The Legislature's Proposed 2020-21 Budget

Dear Senator Mitchell and Assemblymember Ting,

In response to the global pandemic health crisis brought on by Covid-19, the intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) community - including direct support staff, service providers, and regional centers - has responded heroically to protect a population recognized by the CDC as especially vulnerable to this virus. The Governor's May Revise budget, however, proposes to cut staffing and services by more than \$500 million while our response to this pandemic continues. This proposed cut will immediately hinder our community's ability to continue to keep Californians with IDD and their families safe and will critically deteriorate an already underfunded safety-net.

As a result of your leadership, the Senate and Assembly have rejected the cuts proposed in the May Revise and have instead proposed a budget that preserves California's safety-net services for people with IDD. We thank the Legislature for their commitment to our community during this health crisis and beyond. As you negotiate a final budget deal we strongly urge you to include the following items from your budget:

- **Reject the Governor's withdrawal of the supplemental rate increases for Early Start Specialized Therapeutic Services, Infant Development Programs and Independent Living services.** As recognized in the Governor's January budget, three service types should have received the supplemental provider rate adjustment last year but did not due to incomplete data in the DDS rate study. The Legislature's budget recognizes this error and corrects it with appropriate investment.
- **Reject the Governor's proposed \$300M payment reduction to provider rates and expenditure trends.** As demonstrated in DDS' rate study and as discussed by the Legislature, developmental services are already underfunded by \$1.4 billion. The community cannot survive further underfunding to these critical services.
- **Reject the Governor's proposed implementation of the uniform holiday schedule.** Our community is quickly entering a subsequent crisis as a result of closures to early intervention

programs, special education, and adult day programs, and that crisis is a deterioration of mental health, physical health, and family health. The proposed Uniform Holiday Schedule (which is nothing more than a mandatory furlough schedule) will exacerbate this crisis by telling individuals with IDD and their families that although they may have already used up all of their paid time off from work, and although they have been away from their community, now the state is requiring 14 more days off. This is the exact opposite of supporting our families as they recover from this crisis.

- **Reject the Governor's proposed cost-sharing program.** The Governor's May Revise includes a proposal to increase existing cost-sharing for families. Not only do we reject this proposal, but we strongly urge the Legislature to end all family participation and cost sharing programs that were enacted during the Great Recession. These proposals save very little money (\$2M in the Governor's May Revise) but have a much larger impact on trust and coordination between regional centers and families. These proposals turn the regional centers into tax collectors and erode mutual trust; exactly the opposite of what is needed during our pandemic response. This is why DDS waived the Family Cost Participation Program and Annual Family Program Fee in their March 25 directive, and why we strongly encourage the Legislature to permanently end this practice.
- **Reject the Governor's proposed onerous penalties on families of children with IDD.** The Governor's budget forced approximately 40,000 families to apply for their child to be institutionally deemed by Medicaid or face the penalty of paying for the portion of their services that would have been reimbursed by federal funds. This requirement comes at a time when families and children are already facing deterioration in mental health and family health due to closures of special education services, and when many families are facing financial challenges. This is the wrong approach to maximizing federal dollars and contradicts the intent of the Lanterman Act.
- **Reject the Governor's proposed cuts to regional center operations.** Service coordination provided by regional centers are more important now than ever, as families face a new reality of school closures and changes in service delivery.
- **Extend the deadline for counting federal funds.** Any federal stimulus funds received should not be constrained to be counted for this budget only if they are received by July 1.
- **Reject the Governor's proposed elimination of CBAS.**
- **Reject the Governor's proposed 7% cut to IHSS.**
- **Reject the Governor's proposal to withhold the January 2021 cost of living adjustment to the SSI portion of the SSI/SSP grant.**
- **Reject the Governor's proposed cut to Medi-Cal optional benefits.**
- **Reject the Governor's proposed elimination of Prop-56 funding to Medi-Cal providers.**

We are grateful for the commitment the Legislature has demonstrated thus far toward the health and safety of Californians with IDD and we are hopeful that the final budget will continue to include the items above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan Lindsey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jordan" and last name "Lindsey" clearly distinguishable.

Jordan Lindsey
Executive Director
The Arc & United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration