



Self-Advocates & Families Speak Out Against Medicaid Cuts

Monday, 25 February 2013 07:54

Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families are expressing serious concerns about Governor Andrew Cuomo's proposal last week for an across-the-board 6% cut in funding for nonprofit providers of developmental disabilities services. The cut – a \$120 million reduction in Federal Medicaid funding which will translate into an approximately \$240 million in total cuts to services – are part of an overall package of savings designed to fill a \$500 million State budget hole resulting from a Federal reduction in reimbursement for New York State's DD Centers. The Federal Government is accusing the State of submitting claims for these services which were excessive by as much as \$1 billion annually.

"The board of the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State, (SANYS), believes it is a mistake for New York State to cut 240 million dollars from agencies that provide supports for people with developmental disabilities," said Stephen Holmes, Administrative Director for SANYS. "In our statements of the last few years, we have said that in resolving the funding problems with CMS, New York must ensure that OPWDD keep all of the funds it currently has in support of people and transform how it spends that money over time into a truly people first system. And we need all those dollars as we move to managed care and at the same time try to meet the needs of the thousands of people and their families who are waiting for supports to live and work and do the things that are meaningful to them in their communities."

Margaret Pudington, a parent and founder of the Coalition of Families for Direct Support Staff in Services for People with Developmental Disabilities, spoke in powerfully personal terms about what the proposed cuts could mean for her son and herself, as well as for other families of individuals with developmental disabilities.

"The announcement of the magnitude of the proposed cut to OPWDD frightened me so deeply that I literally had nightmares all night about my son with developmental disabilities being lost on the street," said Margaret Pudington, a parent and founder of founder of the Coalition of Families for Direct Support Staff in Services for People with Developmental Disabilities. "Those nightmares are about to become reality if this 6% cut to OPWDD is enacted. Because of previous sizable cuts, providers have already taken every conceivable efficiency. There is nothing left to cut but staff. And that is why I am so afraid. This cut will punish those least able to care for themselves, those who rely on staff for their very safety as well as for the quality of their lives."

The proposed package cuts and savings was announced last week as part of Governor Cuomo's 30-Day Amendments to his Executive Budget proposal for FY2013-14 which begins on April 1. For more reaction on the proposed cuts to OPWDD provider agencies as well as potential impacts on the plan for other Medicaid-funded human services, see "[DD Providers Face 6% Rate Cut as Feds Slash Medicaid](#)" in last Friday's NYNP E-Newsletter.