



The Arc of NC

2007 Policy and Funding Legislative Priorities

Direct Care Worker Crisis

In NC we have a severe shortage of qualified direct care workers to work with people with developmental disabilities. This crisis is undermining the ability for families to provide quality care for their family members. We recommend that NC enact legislation that will allow for a direct salary pass through for these workers. In addition we would encourage the General Assembly to explore methods through which health care benefits could be accessed at a reasonable rate for workers in this arena.

Family Support and Respite

Many families who are on waiting lists for services would be able to support their family member at home with a little additional help. NC has a Family Support model, First in Families, that is highly successful but is not available statewide. We encourage the General Assembly to fund expansion of the First in Families program statewide. To do so is would cost 1.7 million dollars in state funding. An additional service that would assist families who are waiting for service is Respite care. We would ask the General Assembly to provide additional funds for respite.

The CAP-MR/DD Waiver

This program is the most efficient method for NC to provide needed community services for individuals with developmental disabilities. NC is scheduled to have additional 660 slots available in FY 2007-08. An additional appropriation of 9 million in state dollars is needed to draw down the federal funds.

Housing

The Housing 400 Initiative recommended and funded by the Legislature in 2006 is an important step in providing needed housing. For some individuals with developmental disabilities, to take advantage of this program, state funds will be needed to provide services in the homes. Additionally The Arc, along with other developmental disability agencies, has been awarded HUD grants for additional housing units. The individuals in the units will require state funds in order to live in the homes. Finally we would recommend that the Legislature continue its work from last year by recommending funding more units through the Housing Trust Fund.

Vocational Services

The Division of MH/DD/SA has developed a new service definition for vocational services. The definition will enhance the ability of providers to move people with developmental disability into the work force. We recommend the Legislature include funding in its recommendation for this change.

Adult Care Homes

Many people with developmental disabilities are inappropriately placed in Adult Care Homes. We encourage the General Assembly to include people with developmental disabilities in any proposals to assist individuals to move into community settings.

Early Intervention

Services for young children with disabilities are a critical step in alleviating future difficulties. We ask that the General Assembly provide full funding for this program.

Dental Care

For individuals with developmental disabilities access to quality dental care can be very difficult. The Access to Dental Care program is a best practice model that should be expanded statewide.

Mental Retardation Centers

North Carolina continues to house more individuals in our state mental retardation centers than most states. The General Assembly should direct the Division of MHDDSA to develop and implement a plan to downsize our facilities by at least 7% per year.

Crisis Services

Lack of adequate community crisis services continues to create hardships for families and people with developmental disabilities. The General Assembly should assure that these services are in place and adequately funded for people with developmental disabilities.

Public Education

A number of bills will likely be introduced as a result of the recommendations of the House Select Committee on the Education of Students with Disabilities. Some of these are related to the recent re-write of the NC Special Education Law, known as Article 9. Issues of particular interest include: criteria for utilization of homebound services, consideration of appropriateness of IEP and/or placement in discipline procedures, discipline protection for unidentified students whose past performance/behavior indicated need for referral, study of teacher preparation programs, and Medicaid reimbursement for school-based services. We will also be following and supporting an anticipated bill addressing funding.