

ADDP

Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers
Community for Living. Community for Life.

Briefing for Massachusetts Legislators

Dear Gary,

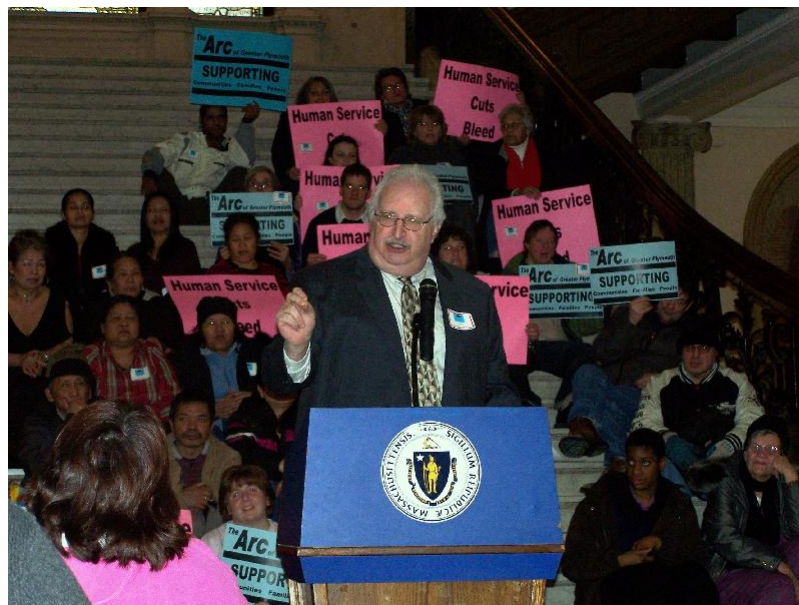
Please Support the Following Disability Budget Restorations.

Without these restorations, 11,000 people with disabilities will lose services and over 1100 direct support professionals will lose their jobs.

Please protect the most vulnerable people in the Commonwealth during this vexing recession.

These restorations represent President Barack Obama's recommended use for Enhanced Medicaid Stimulus dollars. We simply request you use a portion of the Enhanced Medicaid Stimulus for this purpose.

- **Line Item 5911-2000 Community Programs** which has been cut by \$45 million. If this cut takes effect 11,000 Commonwealth citizens with disabilities will lose



 THE METROWEST DAILY NEWS

Blumenthal: Use stimulus cash to avoid cuts

By Gary Blumenthal/Guest columnist

GHS

Posted Mar 08, 2009 @ 12:33 AM

Now that ink is dry on the president's signature on the Federal Stimulus Package, long lines are beginning to form in each state capital, asking for a slice of the new dollars coming to each state.

essential services that keep them from being placed in more costly state institutions.

Services that are jeopardized include Family Support, Respite, Day and Employment Services, and services for students leaving special education programs turning 22.

- **Line Item 5920-2000 Residential Programs.**

This line item has been cut by over \$8 million jeopardizing community residential programs at the same time that the Commonwealth is trying to close state institutions and move people into the community. Failure to fund this line item also makes it very difficult to comply with last year's enactment of Rate Reform.

- **Line Item 4120-3000 Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.**

The House One budget eliminates the Extended Employment Program for People with

Massachusetts is no exception.

Over the next three years, the Commonwealth will receive over \$8 billion in federal dollars, an amount that seemed impossible a mere two months ago.

As the national economy continued to crater under George W. Bush's watch, the newly elected president, with the support of Gov. Deval Patrick and Senators Ted Kennedy and John Kerry, began to assemble a massive economic stimulus package to help save jobs, prevent states from economic collapse, protect poor and disabled citizens and hopefully give the national economy a jump start toward recovery.

Gov. Patrick is correct in warning local communities that much of economic stimulus is tied to specific program goals, thus some with their hands out may only get a handshake instead of a wad of cash.

One area that of particular importance to the Commonwealth will be the nearly \$3 billion Massachusetts will receive as part of the enhanced Medicaid Stimulus provisions of the bill.

Those dollars represent one of the few agreements between the U.S. House and U.S. Senate, and between Democrats (and the few Republicans) that worked on the bill. Both the House and Senate set aside \$87 billion to states to ensure that human service needs would be met during this vexing recession.

These monies were intended to make sure that numerous states encountering horrific budget problems did not balance their budgets by gutting human service programs.

Thus advocates for human services, including programs serving Commonwealth citizens with disabilities, are eager to see the governor of Massachusetts and the leaders of the Massachusetts Legislature commit to using the Medicaid Stimulus dollars for its intended purpose, to protect the needs of poor and vulnerable people. Despite the stated intent of the president and Congress, states have wide digression on how to use these funds.

The human services community, and most specifically

Severe Disabilities. This will cause hundreds of people with multiple disabilities to lose their jobs.

- **Line Item 1599-6901 Salary Reserve.**

The House One budget fails to provide a salary increase for direct support workers earning low wages. The absence of this \$23 million line item hurts the lowest paid workers in our state, predominantly hurting working women.

We understand the difficulties you face this year in balancing the budget.

Thank you on behalf of the Commonwealth's citizens with disabilities and the people who provide them with supports and services. We appreciate the job you do on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Gary H. Blumenthal
Executive Director
ADDP

cc: ADDP Members

advocates for people with disabilities will be profoundly disappointed if a share of these funds are not used to prevent thousands of poor and disabled Commonwealth citizens from losing the very services which are sustaining their lives in the community.

When Gov. Patrick submitted his FY 2010 budget, he did so based upon revenue known to the state in early January. That resulted in his having to recommend program cuts that even he found anathema to his progressive agenda.

The governor's House One budget contains draconian cuts to disability services including a \$78 million cut to the Department of Mental Retardation, which if enacted will cause over 11,000 of our state's citizens with disabilities to lose critical services including family support programs, residential supports, employment and day services, transportation and respite services.

Sadly the budget even contains the elimination of a program at the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission that employs people with severe disabilities.

Without restoration, these budget cuts will balance the budget on the backs of the Commonwealth's poorest and most vulnerable citizens.

The governor and the Legislature can stop this tragic outcome by devoting a share of the Medicaid Stimulus for the purpose intended by our President and Congress.

Gary Blumenthal is the executive director of the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers.



Restore Disability Funding