

BACKGROUND PAPER FOR CHAPTERS ON BUDGET CUTS



State Elected Officials Must Promote Innovations in Human Services... Not Just Propose More Cuts.

- There are ways of providing disability services that spend our tax dollars more efficiently.
- Giving families more control over the funding and staffing for their loved ones with disabilities can not only improve services; it can save money.
- Giving people more choices in their housing and helping them move into a home of their own can mean spending state dollars on an apartment instead of more expensive residential or institutional settings, as well as greater control over their living situation.

Human Service Cuts are Taxes on Our Most Vulnerable Citizens. These Cuts Mean They Can't Maintain Their Independence, Be Part of Their Communities, or Stay Healthy.

- For the past seven years, people with disabilities and their families have been required to bear the cost of \$500 million in budget cuts, fee increases, and service reductions.
- About half of Minnesotans who receive PCA services (7,000 in all) will receive fewer services this year, because of last year's cuts. Five hundred Minnesotans are projected to lose all PCA services. This support helps them live on their own, get ready for work, and be part of their communities.
- The Governor's budget proposal this year cuts \$347 million more from human services, including services to people with disabilities. His human services cuts are larger than cuts proposed for any other area of the state budget.
- The Governor's cuts would eliminate physical, occupational, and speech therapy for adults on Medical Assistance; reduce rates to service providers; cap the number of new services for the 4,000 Minnesotans who are waiting to live in the community; and eliminate specially-prescribed diets for low-income Minnesotans with serious medical conditions, among others.
- Because of human service cuts, primary care clinics and other service providers are increasingly limiting access to (or refusing to accept) clients and customers on Medical Assistance.
- Dentists working with persons with developmental disabilities say cuts to dental services mean that these individuals will lose teeth that otherwise could be saved.
- Cuts to housing for persons with disabilities have reduced staffing levels. Housing providers now can do little besides comply with regulations to ensure the health and safety of their residents; there's little funding to allow individuals with disabilities to get out into the community.
- One House proposal this session accelerates cuts to PCA services beyond what was approved last year. About 2,400 will lose services completely on July 1, 2010 if the House cuts are approved.

Deep Cuts Today Cost More Tomorrow.

- People who receive cuts in the physical, occupational, other therapies they need to maintain independence and functioning will see their capabilities deteriorate; this could require more care later.
- The Governor's 2.5 cut % from payments to long-term care providers will likely mean layoffs of direct care staff at a time when everyone is concerned about job loss.
- A cutoff in funds for low-income persons to pay for diets that are medically-prescribed and deal with serious medical conditions may result in more expensive emergency care.
- One Maplewood dental clinic estimated that they will refer hundreds of patients to emergency rooms for dental pain and dental problems that are no longer covered by MA at their clinic.