

ABCD Alliance for the Betterment of Citizens with Disabilities

127 Route 206, Suite 18, Hamilton, New Jersey 08610
Email: Lowell@abcdnj.org

Phone: 609-581-8375 Fax: 609-581-8512
www.abcdnj.org

Governor Corzine's Proposed FY 2008 Budget

Based upon conference calls from the Departments of Children and Families and Human Services on the day of the budget address, discussions with the Governor's Office, and others, after the budget address and other information, this is what we know about the FY' 08 budget at this time. The Budget in Brief will not and the full budget are not yet available.

Cost of Providing Care: There is a 2% increase in the budget for cost of care increase that will be effective in January '08. Although this in effect provides only 1% in the current budget it will provide a baseline increase of 2% for the '09 budget. We will of course, through the Coalition, continue our fight for the 4.1%.

Division of Developmental Disabilities" \$10 million increase for community capacity, Real Life Choices, Family Support, Residential Waiting list and Transition from school to adult life. (We have heard that this will be for: an expansion of day programs for 150 people; Real Life Choices for 150 people; waiting list initiative to place 124 people over four years; family support services of about a \$1.1 million) This is an add on to the \$50 million in funds over three years that was included in the budget from last year. There are also still some capital dollars left from the Department of Community Affairs.

Autism: Received \$5 million in funds for research and services. We do not yet know how this will be broken out between research and services nor what types of services.

Division of Disability Services: \$3.5 million for the Personal Assistance Services Program (PASP), the state funded program. This should eliminate the waiting list of 150 individuals for PASP services. There is also a \$16 million cut in Personal Care Assistance (PCA) services under the Medicaid State Plan.

Medicaid: There are co-pays in the budget for prescription drugs of \$2 per drug with a monthly limit of \$10 co-pay. The State annually includes this in the budget and we, the advocates, always get it eliminated in the final budget. Also in the Medicaid budget is the continuation of the moratorium on new Medicaid provider. This is an issue of access for our clients because new pharmacies cannot become Medicaid providers and people may not be able to find a pharmacy to get their prescriptions.

Medicaid Reimbursements: There is a \$5 million increase for pediatric Medicaid fee for service reimbursement rates. This is for both doctors and dentists. This is an acknowledgement that Medicaid reimbursement rates are too low across the board.

Mental Health: Is receiving an increase in funding. We have heard rumors that it could be as high as a \$20 million increase. When we get additional information we will let you know.

Dually Diagnosed Children: There is no increase in the Department of Children and Families funds for dually diagnosed children; however the same amount as last year (\$2.45 million) is in the budget for FY'08.

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): Which is the tax credit for low-income individuals will be expanded to be the same as the federal rate.

Hunger: There is \$4 million for hunger initiatives this year (Food Banks, etc).

Abbott School Districts: There is a co-pay for child care for families that can afford it in Abbott School districts. It is not clear at this moment how much those co-pays will be.

Early Intervention: Although the final budget is not yet out, we understand that the FY'08 budget includes \$17 million in additional funding for EI. That includes the \$12 million in additional funding for the next fiscal year to allow the Early Intervention program to be whole as well as \$5 million in funds for expected growth in the program and for a 2% cost of living adjustment for reimbursement rates. In addition, for FY' 07 there will be a \$12 million transfer of funds from the Treasury that will deal with the shortfall, including the funds that were expected due to the increased Family Cost Participation but did not arise because of the delay.