



# RICH/LEX NEWS

## A DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS BOARD UPDATE

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

#### WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THE BUDGET?

Because of revenue shortfalls resulting from the current economic conditions in the state, the General Assembly passed a bill to enact targeted reductions in State Appropriations to state agencies this fiscal year. These reductions were necessary to balance the appropriated dollars to the current estimates of state revenue collections for the year.

Initially, DDSN's budget had been reduced by \$21.5 million, which was 11.2% of the agency's state dollars. Because DDSN uses Medicaid funding in many programs, when State dollars are cut, the matching Medicaid funding is also lost. On December 11, 2008, the Budget and Control Board approved an additional reduction for this current fiscal year. This cut is an additional 7% reduction. It reduces state funding to DDSN by an additional \$11.9 million. Once again, matching Medicaid funding will also be lost.

SCDDSN and the service delivery system have taken cuts totaling approximately \$64 million (this number includes both State and Federal dollars).



**WHAT DO THESE CUTS MEAN?** DDSN had to develop reduction plans to address both cuts. The plan follows the policy set by its Commission that people who are at the greatest risk with the most complex needs are the top priority of the agency for continued service funding. Cuts were made in **all** areas.

#### STATEWIDE EFFORTS TO MANAGE THE CUTS INCLUDE:

- Contacting people who have been Medicaid eligible in the past but are not eligible at this time to try to regain their eligibility. We are asking those people who can/should be Medicaid eligible to make application as soon as possible.
- Enrolling eligible consumers in the rehabilitation supports program (this involves people in vocational programs who are Medicaid recipients who do not have the MR/RD Medicaid waiver).
- A new Community Supports Medicaid Waiver will be implemented.
- Moving consumers from Level I Service Coordination to Level II. Level II means consumers will not receive active service coordination, they will be contacted yearly for updates.
- Service Coordination caseloads will increase to at least 38 consumers for each service coordinator. In addition to the 38 consumers on caseloads, Service Coordinators will have more people in Level II status on their caseload.
- Family Support Funding and Respite Funding will be significantly decreased.
- Some consumers in residential placements will be targeted to move into less restrictive settings such as Enhanced CTH I's or Supervised Living options.
- Residential Development has stopped. Placements are made only for the most critical situations.
- Early Intervention eligibility is being reviewed. Some children will no longer be eligible to receive services.
- Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Acute Rehabilitation funding has been cut.
- Day Program and Job Coach slots are frozen.

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- Summer Supports have been eliminated.
- All positions at the Rich/Lex DSN Board are frozen at this time.
- We implemented a 5 day furlough for all Rich/Lex DSN Board employees.
- We have eliminated positions and have implemented a Reduction in Force (we have laid-off 15 employees year to date and will lay-off more by the end of February 2009 (as consumers are moved into Level II status).



*All cuts are not listed in this article. AND—DDSN had to prepare and present a budget for next year that included **MORE CUTS!***

**THESE CUTS WILL IMPACT SERVICES. CONSUMERS WILL LOSE SERVICES.** We will be doing the same job with fewer employees. It will be challenging. We are working very hard to minimize the impact of the cuts to you, our consumers.

We want you to know we are committed to providing quality services to our consumers, and we will continue to strive to meet our goal: **100% CONSUMER SATISFACTION.**



**Budget Cuts WILL Impact Family Support and Respite**

We have been notified State Funded Family Support Funds and State-Funded Respite will be decreased. The South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs is currently working to calculate the impact of these cuts for each county in the state.

Both Family Support and Respite funds help us to meet needs for many of our consumers. These cuts will be difficult for many people we serve. We will notify each Family Support recipient individually regarding their funding.

We will need to wait to see the impact of the cut to our contract before we know how we will be able to manage it. We will work to keep you updated.

**Summer Supports Funding**

**Because of Budget cuts we will not receive any summer supports funding this year.**

Please remember—we also have cuts in respite and family supports, so those funds will not be available to meet this need.

We know this will be challenging for many of the families we support. We will work to address each situation individually.



**ADVOCACY**

Do you know who your legislators are? Who represents you and your family member? Do your representatives know the impact of the budget cuts on people with disabilities and special needs? Call or write your Senator and Representative. Tell them your story, send a picture. Personal stories put a real face on services and what they mean to you and your family. **Schedule a visit and introduce them to your family member with a disability. Don't be intimidated—your representatives represent YOU!**

If you don't know who your legislator is, you can use the website below to get the information you need. You will need to enter your 9 digit zip code. If you don't know your 9 digit zip code there is a link on the website below that will find it for you.

<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/cgi-bin/zipcodesearch.exe>



# Greater Columbia Disabilities Foundation

## Fourth Annual Golf Tournament Sponsors

The following sponsors support people with disabilities. Please remember then next time you are out shopping or need a service.

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- Wal-Mart
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- Whit Ash
- Wild Wings Café

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## March is Disabilities Awareness Month

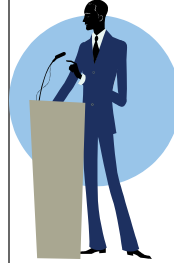
We will be holding Public Hearings on March 17, 2009 to solicit your input.

6:00 pm at 420 Rivermont Drive, Columbia

We will also hold a meeting in Lexington County earlier in the day, but the time will be announced



If you can't attend the public hearing you can send your comments to our office or e-mail us.



Disabilities Advocacy Day at the South Carolina Statehouse

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

9:00 am—2:00 pm

The goal in 2009 is to restore and maintain essential services for people with disabilities and their families

Rich/Lex DSNB is located at:  
420 Rivermont Dr.  
Columbia, SC 29210

Our Phone and Fax:  
802-252-5179  
803-252-5981 (fax)

Our website:  
<http://www.rldsn.org/>

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