

## **SUGGESTED ADVOCACY POINTS FOR LETTERS AND PHONE CALLS TO LEGISLATORS ABOUT THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS**

The general message to your Legislators should be:

*I am a relative, friend or staff person assisting a person with a developmental disability. I ask you to strongly oppose Governor Paterson's proposed severe and disproportionate budget cuts to the OMRDD service system. Cuts of this size will result in the loss of matching federal Medicaid funds, and will devastate OMRDD's ability to meet the basic needs of our loved ones with developmental disabilities. Implementation of the proposed cuts will endanger the health and safety of children and adults who are extremely vulnerable without proper support.*

Here are additional specific points that you can feel free to incorporate into your message. Use any, all or none of them, as you see fit. Above all, personalize your message as much as possible.

**\*OMRDD provides critical supports and services to meet the basic human needs of individuals with developmental disabilities—food, shelter, clothing, safety and health. These are NOT luxury services. Without them, people will be in danger.**

**\* The budget reductions that have already occurred have had a profoundly damaging impact on thousands of New York's families. Families cannot support their loved ones with developmental disabilities without help. Their abilities to maintain their jobs, keep themselves healthy and keep their loved ones safe and well depend on their ability to have support. No one can do this work 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for years on end, without help and without hope.**

**\*Previously enacted budget reductions have already transformed the OMRDD service system into a "crisis management" system in which only the needs of people in severe crisis can be met, and wait lists for services that people need to survive are growing exponentially. Additional cuts will essentially destroy what is left of OMRDD's ability to even respond to crises.**

**\* OMRDD should not be subjected to the same "across the board" 10% cut in funding as other agencies that do not provide human services. Those other agencies can potentially absorb the cuts through "administrative efficiencies" like reductions in travel expenses, office supplies and other "non-personnel" cost savings. OMRDD cannot.**

**\*OMRDD already absorbed any and all possible "administrative efficiencies" in the first round of budget cuts. There is no expendable funding left in the system, and any further funding reductions will directly jeopardize the lives, safety and wellbeing of real, live human beings.**

**\*Non-profit organizations provide over 90% of the supports and services that are delivered in NYS to people with developmental disabilities and their families each year. The Governor's previous budget deductions precluded cost of living increases in the already depressed salaries of the voluntary sector direct support professionals directly responsible for delivering those supports and services.**

**\*Non-profit organizations are already having great difficulty filling necessary direct support positions as a result of this reality. If additional direct support employees begin to leave their positions for employment in other fields because they can no longer make ends meet in this career path, NYS does not have the capacity to meet the needs of the individuals who would be displaced by the failure of the voluntary service sector.**

**\*Some voluntary non-profit human services organizations will be forced to lay off essential staff in response to the proposed budget cuts, and others have already done so in response to previous budget reductions. Increased demands for government subsidies such as unemployment benefits, public assistance, food stamps and the like have resulted. This just shifts costs from one funding stream to another—it does not result in any savings to the state, and along the way, human lives are placed at risk.**

**\*Almost all OMRDD programs receive not only state funding, but matching federal Medicaid funds as well. In many instances the federal matching funds are several times the amount of state dollars put into the system. If state funding is withdrawn, the matching federal Medicaid funding will also be unavailable.**

**\*The Governor has proposed a 10% reduction to OMRDD funding in the amount of \$65.4 million dollars. However, that reduction is only the reduction in state funds that would be implemented for the remaining 5 months of this fiscal year. If it is calculated over the course of an entire fiscal year (which is the Governor's ultimate intent to manage future year budget deficits) and if the loss of matching federal Medicaid funds is also included, the actual reduction to OMRDD's funding will amount to over \$370 million a year. This is a far deeper and disproportionate cut than the straight 10% reduction proposed for other state agencies that do not provide essential supports and services to human beings in need.**